

Document Citation

Title	Aelita
Author(s)	Judy Bloch
Source	<i>Pacific Film Archive Calendar</i>
Date	1991 Nov 30
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	Theremin music Silent film music -- Soviet Union Constructivism (Art)
Film Subjects	Aelita, Protazanov, Iakov Aleksandrovich, 1924

Friday November 30

**Musical Score performed by The
Theremin Trio**

Aelita 7:30

Yakov A. Protazanov (USSR, 1924)

(Special Admission: \$10 general, \$8 members, UC students). We celebrate a beautiful new 35mm print of the famed Soviet science-fiction film *Aelita* with a new score showcasing the musical instrument, the Theremin. The score is composed by Dennis James with original music for Martian scenes composed by Miles Anderson. Dennis James will perform on piano and Theremin, which is played by passing the hands over the instrument without touching it. He will be accompanied by the group (trom-bown): Miles Anderson (baritone horn, voice and electronics) and Erica Sharp (5-string electric violin and electronics). The Theremin, an invention of the Russian Constructivist period (1920), was the first electronic synthesizer and a model for the Soviet (and Constructivist) aspiration to marry art with technology. Designed and initially used in concert performances, it made its way into Hollywood film scores such as those for *Spellbound* (1945) and *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951).

Aelita, based on a Tolstoy story, tells of three Russians—an engineer, a soldier, and a detective—who fly to Mars and become involved in a revolutionary uprising among the Martian people. While there, the engineer has a love affair with Aelita, Queen of Mars. The art direction is the most famous attribute of *Aelita*: costumes, and sets of the fantastic Martian landscape, reveal a Cubist design influence resulting from director Protazanov's experience in the French art world as well as the participation of artists from the Russian Constructivist movement.

• Written by Eleksei Faiko, Fedor Otsep, from a story by Leo Tolstoy. Photographed by Y. Zhelyabuzhsky, E. Suneman. With Valentina Kuinzh, Nikolai Tseretelli, Konstantin Eggert, Igor Illinsky. (90 mins, Silent with Russian intertitles with English subtitles, Live musical accompaniment, B&W, 35mm, Print from Walker Art Center courtesy Gosfilmofund and thanks to Bruce Jenkins)