In Third Symphony Concert

American Composers Saluted

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The significant and the not so significant in contemporary American music were given a hearing in the third concert by the Houston Symphony under Stokowski. It was an evening of music that enabled one to establish a revealing scale of values.

Two American Works

Stokowski centered his attention on two works by modern American composers, a Symphony for Strings and Percussion by the young percussionist of the Boston Symphony, Harold Farberman, and Variations for Orchestra by the aging iconoclast, Henry Cowell.

The works invite comparison, since both rely heavily on percussive effects. Faberman's work, despite its clever utilization of a variety of percussion instruments, cannot hide its thematic shallowness.

Cowell Very Good

Cowell's work, on the other hand, is a well worked statement of musical ideas, illustrating the composer's ability to use unusual orchestral effects and yet keep these within certain limits. What I mean to say is that the genesis of the Cowell work is a guiding musical idea or principal, while Farberman starts with an interest in a specific means of musical statement and ends there, with nothing in between.

The first part of the program saw Leopold Stokowski demonstrate three components of a symphony orchestra, and then, so to speak, put them together. A Sonata Piano Forte by Gabrieli was a revealing glance at the woodwind and brass sections, with woodwinds getting the upper hand although the brass turned in an astonishingly sure performance.