

Phila Inquirer  
Dec 8 - 1940

# MUSIC HISSERS GIVEN REBUKE BY STOKOWSKI

## Conductor Admits New Composition Is Difficult, But Asks for Hearing

With something less than his usual fiery eloquence, Conductor Leopold Stokowski took time out from conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra last night to lecture his audience on the practice of hissing musical compositions.

A scattering of hisses from the audience at the conclusion of the first movement of the much-debated Arnold Schoenberg Violin Concerto—a composition which most critics seem to agree sounds like an exaggerated version of the testing room at an abrasive plant—was the occasion for the mild "calling down" that Stokowski delivered.

### HISSING OF MUSIC BEGINS

Louis Krasner, the soloist, had completed the first movement of the work, given its world premiere here on Friday, and had received a meed of applause from the listeners when the hissing of the music itself began.

Stokowski stepped to the front of the stage and said:

"Shall we forever make the same foolish, narrow-minded, unsportsmanlike blunders, upon only hearing a thing once?"

### AUDIENCE SILENT

There was an uneasy, if respectful silence, as if the audience expected a torrential burst of words, but the blond maestro continued calmly:

"Certainly Schoenberg is one of the greatest musicians alive today. His music is extremely difficult to understand. We don't ask you to like it or dislike it, but to give it a fair chance. That's American. But to condemn it after one hearing—that simply cannot be done."

### 'GIVE ART A CHANCE'

He explained that the Concerto is a difficult work even for the seasoned musicians of the orchestra, but added that "if Philadelphia is to grow culturally, we must give every kind of art a chance.

"If Schoenberg writes any more works, and you are willing, I would like to conduct more of them."

A shrill feminine voice from the balcony cried:

"Funny!"

### SUGGESTS WOMAN LEAVE

Stokowski looked up and asked, smilingly:

"Would that lady like to go out?"

Apparently the lady didn't care to, for no one left, and Stokowski went on to thank the audience for having received the Schoenberg composition "with the cultural and artistic hospitality that Philadelphia is noted for."

He concluded with a rather unexpected concession to the general verdict on the Schoenberg composition.

### SUGGESTS 24-YEAR WAIT

"Three-fourths of you are open-minded," he said. "As for the others, they can't help it—and perhaps they are right. We won't know for about 24 years, so we'll wait."

And with a wish for a "happy Christmas," he turned and resumed conducting.

None of the audience walked out during the Concerto—but it was noted that several of the audience didn't walk in until it was ended.