Henry Cowell (1897-1965) and the impact of his first European tour (1923)

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Abstract
In 1923, American composer and pianist, Henry Cowell (1897-1965) gave his first highly successful concert tour of Europe, playing his own unique compositions. This thesis details this tour and discusses its impact. Considering the enormous impact of Cowell’s tour, it has only been discussed briefly. Cowell performed in many European cities, especially in Vienna, Berlin, Paris and London, achieving positive reviews and some notoriety. I discuss how and why he created such an impact, not only during the tour but also immediately following it, in relation to musical life in Europe and the differences between his piano music and the piano music that was being heard at the time.

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Henry Dixon Cowell (1897-1965) was an inventive and productive American composer, pianist, teacher, and author. Henry Cowell was born March 11, 1897, in Menlo Park, Calif. Cowell became one of the most vocal champions of new and of older, neglected American composers. He founded the New Musical Quarterly, contributed to many musical magazines, and edited American Composers on American Music (1933). He and his wife wrote Charles Ives and His Music. Cowell conjured a special American musical form of his own in which one will find some of his most significant music, aside from his many symphonies. He called it “hymn and fuguing tune.”