

A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO  
ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD'S  
SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO IN G MAJOR, OP. 6

by

EMILY RUTH LAMINACK

(Under the Direction of Michael Heald)

ABSTRACT

This document examines Erich Wolfgang Korngold's Violin Sonata in G Major, op. 6. Intended for violinists who might study and perform the work, this guide includes a historical context for the piece, a musical analysis, and a discussion of performance issues. In addition to direct details of the piece's composition and performance history, the historical context includes broader cultural information that I find pertinent, such as some of Korngold's musical influences and the political circumstances he faced as a Jewish music critic's son in early 20th-century Vienna. Musical analysis is limited to what I consider the most interesting style traits and thematic content, especially features that might influence a performer's interpretation. My discussion of performance issues examines the violinists who worked directly with Korngold, including Carl Flesch, Arnold Rosé, and Adolf Busch. I also explain the technical difficulties of the work, sharing some practical suggestions and solutions.

INDEX WORDS: Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Violin Sonata, Vienna, 20th-Century Music, Music Analysis, Violin Technique

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## DEDICATION

In loving memory of my grandmother,  
Marilyn Brown,  
and her inspiring legacy of creativity.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Erich Wolfgang Korngold's Sonata for Violin and Piano in G Major, op. 6, was premiered on October 21, 1913, in Berlin by its dedicatees, violinist Carl Flesch and pianist Artur Schnabel.<sup>1</sup> Flesch is known to nearly every violinist for his pedagogical work, especially his scale system. Schnabel is known both as a performer and a composer, and he had a particularly focused musical taste, summarized by the statement: "I only play music that is better than it can be played."<sup>2</sup> This opinion generally limited him to the works of long-standing giants such as Beethoven and Schubert, and he shunned works by the more contemporary Franck and Debussy, even avoiding Chopin and Liszt.<sup>3</sup> However, he developed a respect for Korngold's Piano Sonata No. 2 and performed it often.<sup>4</sup> He then suggested the writing of a violin sonata for himself and his usual sonata partner, Carl Flesch.<sup>5</sup> After premiering the sonata, Flesch and Schnabel retained the work in their regular recital repertoire for many repeated performances.<sup>6</sup>

It is surprising therefore that, after such an auspicious birth, the sonata is virtually unheard of today. Though a substantial forty-minute work of rich texture, harmonic complexity, and motivic interplay, it is very seldom heard in recital programs and holds only a few recordings to its title.

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<sup>1</sup> Brendan Carroll, *The Last Prodigy* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1997), 92.

<sup>2</sup> Cesar Saerchinger, *Artur Schnabel* (NY: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1957), 198.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>5</sup> Guy Wagner, *Korngold. Musik ist Musik* (Berlin, Germany: Matthes & Seitz Berlin, 2008), 83.

<sup>6</sup> Saerchinger, 106.

There are several reasons that might have contributed to the sonata's disappearance. First, the work was written while the composer was only a boy of fifteen and still dependent on his father, Julius Korngold, who was the leading music critic in Vienna as Eduard Hanslick's successor at the *Neue Freie Presse*. Julius had many artistic enemies, which often complicated the career of his son. Secondly, as Korngold was of Jewish heritage, his works lost favor in Europe just prior to and during the Second World War. Thirdly, taking refuge in the United States in 1938, Korngold found financial security in scoring Hollywood films, causing many musicians to disregard his earlier absolute works. Fourthly, Korngold's preference for tonality and romantic melodies became "old-fashioned" as 20th-century music found new paths in the wake of Korngold's compatriot, friend, and fellow Zemlinsky student, Arnold Schoenberg. And lastly, the work itself demands an intellectual understanding and virtuosic ability that could be daunting to many performers.

### **Purpose of the Study with Delimitations**

My goal for this project is to help bring the sonata to a new generation of violinists, exposing its merits while making it a more accessible work. My study includes a historical context for the piece, a musical analysis, and a discussion of performance issues.

In addition to the direct details of the piece's composition and performance history, the historical context, found in Chapter 2, includes broader cultural information that I find pertinent, such as some of Korngold's musical influences and the political circumstances he faced as a Jewish music critic's son in early 20th-century Vienna.

Chapter 3's musical analysis is limited to what I consider the most interesting style traits and thematic content, especially features that might influence a performer's interpretation. The

commentary will be devoted to aspects of the formal structure, harmonic language, and thematic motives that could influence a performer's tone color and expression.

In dealing directly with performance issues in Chapter 4, I discuss the violinists who worked with Korngold. These performers include Carl Flesch, who premiered the sonata, Arnold Rosé, who premiered Korngold's Piano Trio in D Major, op. 1, in 1910,<sup>7</sup> and Adolf Busch, who performed the sonata with Korngold himself playing the piano part in 1914.<sup>8</sup> I also examine the technical difficulties of the work, sharing some practice suggestions and solutions.

### **Methodology and Literature Review**

Research for this project began by studying sources on Korngold's life and musical style. By far the most important source is Brendan Carroll's definitive biography of the composer, *The Last Prodigy*. Also invaluable are the memoirs Julius Korngold published about his son's early works in *Child Prodigy: Erich Wolfgang's Years of Childhood*. My research also includes the study of early 20th-century Vienna, looking into both the musical trends as well as broader cultural and political aspects. Michael Haas's *Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis* provides enlightening background to the world Korngold was born into and the forces that would drive him and his works from Vienna. In addition, I examined some of the music of Korngold's influences and contemporaries, especially compositions for the violin, such as works by Johannes Brahms, Claude Debussy, and Richard Strauss. Finally, I studied the performers who worked with Korngold to further understand his approach to the instrument. Though meeting Korngold long after the writing of the sonata, violinist Louis Kaufman offers information about his experience with Korngold's music and under Korngold's conducting in his memoirs, *A Fiddler's Tale: How Hollywood and Vivaldi Discovered Me*.

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<sup>7</sup> Carroll, 63.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

There are several studies and dissertations on Korngold's works, including his operas, songs, film music, piano sonatas, cello concerto, and chamber music. The only document I have found to directly overlap with my study of the Violin Sonata is Miles Goldberg's dissertation "The Piano Chamber Music of Erich Wolfgang Korngold," which includes a detailed formal analysis of the violin sonata that I used as a starting point for my own musical analysis. Goldberg includes a few paragraphs on performance, but only from the perspective of the pianist and the ensemble, so I have focused on more detailed discussion of violinistic aspects.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

#### The Prodigy Son of a Music Critic

The year 1897 was important in the history of music in Vienna: Johannes Brahms died as one of Vienna's most beloved composers; Gustav Mahler began his career at the Imperial Opera in Vienna;<sup>1</sup> and Erich Wolfgang Korngold the Viennese prodigy was born. The lives, careers, and music of these three composers were strangely linked. Erich's father Julius Korngold, a would-be musician steered by his parents into law, had found an outlet for his suppressed musical instincts by writing a glowing review of Brahms' Symphony No. 4. The symphony had until then been harshly treated by critics other than Brahms' personal champion, Eduard Hanslick.<sup>2</sup> Hanslick himself, the music critic for Vienna's *Neue Freie Presse*, was the terror of most composers to come through Vienna, except for Brahms. There were harsh musical and even political battle lines drawn between Brahms' supporters and the followers of the recently deceased Wagner.<sup>3</sup> Julius Korngold's excellently written pro-Brahms review drew him immediately into the Brahms, and therefore Hanslick, musical-political camp. Hanslick made him a sort-of protégé in the *Neue Freie Presse*, and upon his own death, thwarted fellow critics' ambitions by appointing Julius his successor as the paper's lead critic.<sup>4</sup>

At the beginning of his career in the *Neue Freie Presse*, Julius Korngold won the attention of his audience by supporting the then little known and little respected opera director,

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Haas, *Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 62.

<sup>2</sup> Brendan Carroll, *The Last Prodigy* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1997), 24.

<sup>3</sup> Haas, 43-61.

<sup>4</sup> Carroll, 25-27.

Gustav Mahler. This began a relationship between critic and composer very similar to that shared by Hanslick and Brahms.<sup>5</sup> The two would remain friends until Mahler's death, and Julius' son Erich would later dedicate his violin concerto to Mahler's widow, Alma.<sup>6</sup> Both Julius and Mahler had taken courses with Anton Bruckner during their university days in Vienna, which led the *Neue Freie Presse* to a new appreciation of Wagner and his chromaticism.<sup>7</sup> The Brahms-Wagner war was now essentially over, but a new rival would soon be the atonality of the Second Viennese School.<sup>8</sup>

Young Erich meanwhile was proving to follow in his musical father's footsteps. At the age of three he was beating in perfect time with a cooking spoon, and it soon became clear he had perfect pitch. By age five he was playing opera themes by ear at the piano and knew all triads, 7th chords, and 9th chords in every major or minor key.<sup>9</sup> His first compositions trickled out at age seven and eight: little pieces for piano and voice.<sup>10</sup>

At age nine he had already moved on from his small vocal and piano pieces to a cantata for solo singers, chorus, and piano. Julius describes his young son's work in his memoirs, explaining how it evoked elements of Wagner and D'Albert along with a voice already unique to the young composer:

How changed were the melodic elements! Hardly pointing to D'Albert, they had, like all the other thematic material, a peculiar chromatic streak. The whole composition, with its lyric or descriptive ideas, was atrociously replete with dissonances and harmonized in deviation from every norm. I had the choice of recollecting the word "Rubbish" said by Tschaikowsky about Mussorgsky's harmonization; or of assuming an inexplicable advance infection by the corruption destined to shake the tonal foundation of music soon afterwards. Incidentally, this—so to say—bodily experience was one of the reasons that caused me to regard, for a long time, the negation of derivative tones—later on raised to a

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<sup>5</sup> Haas, 62-79.

<sup>6</sup> Erich Wolfgang Korngold, *Concerto for in D Major for Violin and Orchestra, op. 35* (Mainz: Schott Music International, 1950), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Haas, 65.

<sup>8</sup> Carroll, 44.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 399.

principle—as something immature, primitive and childish. At any rate, the excesses, acerbities and violent sounds of this immature product announced an individual note of abruptly emerging “Modernism.” In the case of every precocious composer mentioned by music history—including the most exalted names—the first attempts followed the traditional diction of the masters. But Erich, who had listened at home to classics and romantics—especially Brahms—seemed to have retained particularly the ultra-modern music he had heard. At ten, eleven, and twelve he seemed to emanate from, and even transcend, Strauss, Reger, and Debussy; a trend terrifying to serious musicians not yet softened up by Schoenbergism, Linearism, Constructivism.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the father’s terror of his young son’s “Modernism,” others noticed the great talent of the young boy. Gustav Mahler heard Erich’s cantata and proclaimed the boy a genius. He also recommended that rather than sending the boy to a conservatory, Julius should have Erich study privately with Alexander von Zemlinsky.<sup>12</sup>

Erich until this point had taken piano and theory with a family relative, Emil Lamm,<sup>13</sup> and then from 1906-1908 with Robert Fuchs, who had taught Franz Schreker, Hugo Wolf, Franz Schmidt, Gustav Mahler, and Alexander von Zemlinsky.<sup>14</sup> Julius placed Erich with Zemlinsky from 1908-1910.<sup>15</sup> Zemlinsky’s other students included Mahler’s wife, Alma, and Arnold Schoenberg, who would also become Zemlinsky’s brother-in-law.<sup>16</sup> With Fuchs, Erich had gained a foundation in traditional compositional technique; with Zemlinsky he developed his own individual voice.<sup>17</sup> Julius approved of his son’s new tutor, and though it is clear he was initially wary of increasing “Modernism” through Zemlinsky’s influence, he found reassurance in Zemlinsky’s adherence to tonality:

Zemlinsky, having taught music theory to his brother-in-law Arnold Schoenberg, was now introduced in his turn to the latter’s rebellious ideas. Thus he began to soar, like Mohammed’s coffin, between heaven and earth: between Schoenberg’s hazy sky and the

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<sup>11</sup> Julius Korngold, *Child Prodigy: Erich Wolfgang’s Years of Childhood*. (NY: Willard Publishing Company, 1945), 14.

<sup>12</sup> Carrol, 34.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

solid earth of classic tradition. Out of the two souls dwelling in his breast—on natural-musical and the other intellectual-musical—the one clinging to evolution and not to revolution, to tonal order and not to atonal disorder, proved to be the stronger. He could not renounce the singing melodic line, the meaningful tonal speech, the naturally given relation of chords. Though fond of skipping—with the subtlest technical knowledge of cadence progression and modulation—the intermediate chords, he did not deny their existence and postulations. I remember that he could not hide his bewildered skepticism when Schoenberg fully succumbed to the construction of his twelve tone scale—and this despite his reverence and sympathy for the master who was also his friend and brother-in-law.<sup>18</sup>

While studying with Zemlinsky, the eleven-year-old Erich composed a two-act ballet<sup>19</sup> that was premiered the following year on October 4, 1910, fully orchestrated, at the Vienna Court Opera.<sup>20</sup> The premiere was arranged without his father's permission, as Julius had wished to avoid any political turmoil that might arise from revealing his son's musical talent to the general public.<sup>21</sup> The performance was, however, a raging success, and the young Korngold was called onstage to receive his applause and was welcomed back for numerous curtain calls.<sup>22</sup>

The young boy received much praise from other established musicians, many of who wrote to the boy's father, who had shared some of Erich's scores. Among these musicians were Arthur Nikisch, Engelbert Humperdinck, Karóly Goldmark, and Richard Strauss.<sup>23</sup> Strauss wrote to Julius:

Today I received your son's compositions and have read them with the greatest astonishment. This case hardly calls for mere congratulations: the first feeling one has when one realizes that this was written by an 11-year-old boy is that of awe and concern that so precocious a genius should be able to follow its normal development, which one would wish him so sincerely. This assurance of style, this mastery of form, this characteristic expressiveness in the sonata, this bold harmony, are truly astonishing... I am looking forward to making the personal acquaintance of this arch-musician.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Julius Korngold, 19.

<sup>19</sup> Carroll, 32.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

<sup>21</sup> Julius Korngold, 33.

<sup>22</sup> Carroll, 60.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-44.

<sup>24</sup> Carroll, 43.

Strauss and the young Korngold would continue in their mutual respect for many years to come. Alban Berg was apparently impressed by Erich's work and wished to meet the young boy as well, but the elder Korngold prevented this, afraid Berg's compositions would negatively influence the boy's work.<sup>25</sup>

Erich's opus one Piano Trio in D Major, his first chamber music including the violin, was premiered in Munich on November 4, 1910, by the Heinrich Schwartz Trio and a week later by the Margulies Trio in New York. Its Vienna premiere took place in December by pianist Bruno Walter, cellist Friedrich Buxbaum, and violinist Arnold Rosé.<sup>26</sup>

### **Composition and Premiere of the Sonata**

Erich would later describe his life in three periods: prodigy, opera, film.<sup>27</sup> At age fifteen, he had just composed his first symphonic work, entitled *Sinfonietta* in B Major, op. 5. Although the title denotes a small work, it was a large work for full orchestra worthy of the genre of symphony. In just a few months he would turn to his first opera, *Der Ring des Polykrates*, op. 7, but it was in this brief span in between symphony and opera that he would explore the genre of the violin sonata, arguably his last "Prodigy" work.

Erich's father Julius describes some of his son's stylistic influences and creative processes during his later "Prodigy" years:

Linguistic elements of French impressionism, as well as some vocables of the Strauss- and Reger type, emerged more and more distinctly; in a certain respect also Mahlerian peculiarities, such as chord formation founded on free voice movement. All this without external incentive, without knowledge of the literature that influenced him. However—more striking than anything else—this sonnambulistic union with modern diction did not prevent the composer from holding fast to a melodic structure and especially to an ever plastic sense of rhythm preferable devoted to soaring, fiery, ecstatic expression. I confess that I have influenced the boy's melodic thinking by always admonishing him to "continue." Not to be satisfied with beginnings, but to breathe out any melodic phrase he

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<sup>25</sup> Carroll, 44-45.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

had started and to follow up, as if answering a question, an anterior period with a posterior one. Nature had given him not only the sense of form, needed to articulate and round out his work, but as well the ability of carrying on motives and themes or of developing, spinning out and transforming the basic thoughts. Once the first measures of the principal themes had been expounded he was wont to think already of the culminating points, forming the crescendo passages before the reprise and especially before the end. Thus he proceeded in his very first sonata, thus in all following works. Did not the future dramatist manifest himself in this trait? In terminating his movements he used extraordinary discernment. He was always searching for a yet undiscovered path and aspiring in general to new formal invention such as the insertion of lyric episodes into the development or the union of Rondo and variation.<sup>28</sup>

I will explore more specifically in Chapter 3 some of the formal, harmonic, and thematic peculiarities of the violin sonata, but the father's testimony is insightful, demonstrating how the composer was influenced both by his father's preferences and his own expressive imagination.

The manuscript of the second movement, the Scherzo, is dated June 30, 1913, in Karlsbad (Example 2.1), and the third movement is dated August 19, 1913 in Altaussee. Though the other movements are not dated, we can likely assume that most if not the entire piece was composed during the summer of 1913, while Korngold was on his seaside holiday. The Korngold family took annual summer trips to Altaussee, where their cottage was furnished with a piano.<sup>29</sup> An amusing anecdote from Erich's childhood, related by Karl Böhm, is that when Erich wished to go swim, his father Julius would exclaim, "Erich! Don't bathe—compose!"<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Julius Korngold, 41-42.

<sup>29</sup> Carroll, 110-111.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

**Example 2.1: Sonata in G Major, op. 6, second movement, mm. 845-847 (manuscript)**



**Example 2.2: Sonata, op. 6, third movement, m. 96 (manuscript)**



Another interesting fact about the sonata manuscript is that originally Erich had given it opus number 5, which was later granted to the Sinfonietta, which was still being orchestrated during the composition of the sonata and premiered one month after.<sup>31</sup> Opus 5 was also the number originally given to Erich's set of twelve Lieder, later partially published as *Sechs Einfache Lieder*, Op. 9.<sup>32</sup> Among these original twelve Lieder is the song "Schneeglöckchen," or "Snowdrops," the melody of which is used in the last movement of the violin sonata and will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 3.

<sup>31</sup> Carroll, 396.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

Erich had been acquainted with the pianist Artur Schnabel for a few years: Schnabel had premiered Erich's Piano Sonata No. 2 in E Major, op. 2, in October of 1911 in Berlin.<sup>33</sup>

Schnabel then suggested that Erich write the violin sonata, and Korngold dedicated the work to Schnabel and his sonata partner, the renowned violinist Carl Flesch. Schnabel and Flesch then premiered the work on October 21, 1913, in Berlin.<sup>34</sup> Richard Specht reviewed the performance for the *Neue Freie Presse* instead of Erich's father, who on principle would never review his own son's premieres. Specht wrote:

One can sense in this new sonata how much more freely, more relaxed, and more compatibly the interplay of forces now proceeds. Young Korngold's ability to forge everything into a whole, to develop one theme out of another, to make one theme dependent on the other, and to make the one heighten the effect of the other, has increased to an almost uncanny degree... the encircling power that makes everything into an organic whole, does not tolerate accidental or spontaneous improvisation... is wrought by a truly creative talent that is subject to an inner authority.<sup>35</sup>

Erich performed the work himself with the violinist Adolf Busch the following May at a music festival in Bonn.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Sonata's Fall to Obscurity**

In spite of all the precautions Julius Korngold took in dealing with his prodigy son, he could not avoid making enemies as a critic, and the more so for having a miraculously talented son. People accused him of writing the music rather than his son.<sup>37</sup> Others claimed he reviewed other performers and composers based on how they felt about his son's music. It cannot be proven, of course, how much if any of the praise given to young Erich was in fact in order to please or "buy" good reviews from his father. In at least one case a probable attempt to win over elder Korngold failed terribly: Felix Weingartner was responsible for the premiere of Erich's *Der*

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<sup>33</sup> Carroll, 396.

<sup>34</sup> Guy Wagner, *Korngold. Musik ist Musik* (Berlin, Germany: Matthes & Seitz Berlin, 2008), 83.

<sup>35</sup> Carroll, 92.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>37</sup> Julius Korngold, 41.

*Schneeman*, but this did not win him future favorable reviews from Julius.<sup>38</sup> By the time Erich came of age, Vienna seemed to be replicating the Brahms against Wagnerians war, which waged in Hanslick's time; now the war featured the Korngolds against everyone else. "Ceaselessly undermining antagonism was directed not only against me but also against the gifted child," Julius Korngold wrote. "In amiable alternation one wanted to hurt the son through the father, the father through the son."<sup>39</sup>

This war, like that of Brahms, was not fought just to win the critics. People also took sides for the sake of musical styles and principles. By 1913, atonality was beginning to take hold of Vienna's musical world. Julius Korngold fiercely opposed the new atonal trend, as if it were somewhat sacrilegious. Although young Erich was fond enough of chromatic dissonances, he was a firm believer in the tonal melodic line. Therefore Erich, the boy who was once heralded as the future of music itself, ironically became the figurehead of the conservative camp in Vienna. For instance, Erich's richly romantic and sophisticated opera, *Das Wunder der Heliane*, was set to premiere in Vienna at the end of 1927 along with Ernst Křenek's "jazz opera" *Jonny spielt auf*.<sup>40</sup> Julius Korngold's outrage that the administration of the Vienna Court Opera was going to stage Křenek's work led to a cultural divide in the city. The Austrian Tobacco Company even decided to fuel the debate leading up to the two opposing premieres, offering a cheap cigarette called the "Jonny" and an expensive, rose-shaped and perfumed cigarette called the "Heliane."<sup>41</sup>

The third problem facing the Korngolds was their Jewish race. Racial tensions between Jews and Aryans had existed for centuries, but Jews had enjoyed equal rights and privileges in

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<sup>38</sup> Julius Korngold, 52-53.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>40</sup> Carroll, 197.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

Vienna since the Austria-Hungary December Constitution of 1867.<sup>42</sup> Continued and renewed prejudice against them, however, began to spread at the turn of the century. Julius writes that some of the maliciousness directed to him and his son in the pre-World War I years had already taken an anti-Semitic tone.<sup>43</sup> When Hitler took over Vienna, the Korngolds had found sanctuary in the United States, but Erich's music would not enjoy the same safety. It would be over a decade before his music was heard again in Vienna, and by that time, the Viennese found the rich tonal melodies "outdated." When his opera *Kathrin*, banned in Austria just before its scheduled premiere in 1938, finally opened in Vienna after the war, it was a very changed audience that received it. The theater opening night was only half full and unenthusiastic, causing Korngold to remark sadly, "This is no Korngold house; I am forgotten."<sup>44</sup>

A fourth critique of Korngold is the nature his career took in the United States. Though Korngold found financial freedom by writing Hollywood scores and used his talents to revolutionize the film music industry, many others saw his artistic flexibility as "selling out" and ceased to regard him as a composer of "serious" music. This contempt is demonstrated through the reviews of his violin concerto in 1947, in which critics named the work "the Hollywood Concerto" and dubbed it "more Korn than Gold."<sup>45</sup>

Since the violin sonata belongs to Korngold's early Viennese works, it obviously would have not been performed in Europe during Hitler's occupation of Austria and Korngold's residence in California. And because the United States never completely accepted Korngold as more than a film composer, the sonata would likely not have been performed frequently there, either. After the war, when so much attention was devoted to experimentation in musical

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<sup>42</sup> Haas, 22-23.

<sup>43</sup> Julius Korngold, 57.

<sup>44</sup> Carroll, 345.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

languages, the sonata could easily be heard as being too “romantic.” These reasons, along with the physically and mentally taxing breadth of the work, account for the lack of exposure the sonata has received since its early successful reception in Europe before the Second World War.

## CHAPTER 3

### MUSICAL ANALYSIS

#### A Hybrid of Old and New

Korngold's music is a hybrid between the conventional and the innovative, a combination of 18th- and 19th-century practices with the new techniques of his 20th-century contemporaries. These various influences combined with a heavy dependence on chromatic yet hauntingly singable melodies create a musical language unique to Korngold, which can be retrospectively heard as "The Hollywood Sound," merely because Korngold's music would have such an impact on the film industry a couple decades after the violin sonata's premiere.

Korngold's 19th-century influences seem to draw equally from both the Brahms and Wagner sides of the spectrum. Like Johannes Brahms, Korngold proved that the Classical forms and tonal practices were not dead, but that they could be used as channels for new ideas. Also linking Korngold's violin sonata to Brahms is the title key of G Major, the key of Brahms' first violin sonata. Both Korngold and Brahms quoted their own songs in the last movement of their G Major violin sonatas: Brahms uses material from his songs "Regenlied" and "Nachklang" Op. 59, Nos. 3 and 4,<sup>1</sup> and Korngold uses material from his song "Schneeglöckchen," discussed in the second part of this chapter.

In addition to these ties with Brahms, Korngold's harmonic language closely follows Richard Wagner in its rapid chromatic transformations and parsimonious voice leading. Korngold's inclusion of non-diatonic scales, such as the Whole Tone Collection, resembles the

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<sup>1</sup> Rachel Massengill Fischer, "The Sonatas for Violin and Piano by Johannes Brahms: A Pedagogical Approach" (DMA diss., University of Georgia, 2011), 21.

style of his contemporary Claude Debussy, who would write his own violin sonata four years after Korngold's in 1917. Rich orchestral textures and sweeping gestures recall the language of Korngold's friend Richard Strauss, while the gentle Trio section of the sonata's second movement suggests a classic Viennese Waltz by Johann Strauss II, whose operettas Korngold would later enjoy arranging and conducting.<sup>2</sup> The expansive proportions of the sonata, its opposing characters, and its tragic undertone seem to point at Korngold's idol and mentor, Gustav Mahler.

Scholars have also associated Korngold's early works with Expressionism,<sup>3</sup> a German artistic movement that lasted roughly from 1910 to 1922.<sup>4</sup> Though it is not known that Korngold identified with other composers now associated with Expressionism, such as Schoenberg, some common compositional traits can be found. Schoenberg defined Expressionism as "the art of the representation of inner occurrences."<sup>5</sup> In music, Expressionism usually involves extra-musical programs: sometimes the program of a piece was known only privately by the composer, other times a piece had a more obviously public program, and sometimes the piece had both public and private programs. Expressionists also typically rejected traditional classical forms and the dependence on tonal centers or tonal function. Other Expressionist characteristics include abrupt shifts in direction, wide intervals, extremes in range, diverse tone colors, extended techniques, asymmetry in both melody and rhythm, variation principle, symbolic meanings attached to intervals or motives, and contrapuntal layering.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Brendan Carroll, *The Last Prodigy* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1997), 162.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Jacob Kubos, "A profile of Viennese society: an interpretative guide to Erich W. Korngold's second piano sonata and Artur Schnabel's sonata for piano" (DMA diss., University of Iowa, 2011), 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> John Willett, *Expressionism* (NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970), 8.

<sup>5</sup> John C. and Dorothy L. Crawford, *Expressionism in Twentieth-Century Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-21.

Although Korngold adhered to tonality and traditional forms, many of the other traits of Expressionist music can be found in Korngold's violin sonata. In the second half of this chapter, I discuss how Korngold's violin sonata as a whole could reflect the meaning of the song "Schneeglöckchen" that Korngold adapted as the theme of the last movement of the sonata. This song might be considered an underlying "program" of the piece. Recurring intervallic motives both within this sonata and between other of Korngold's works also hint at the private emotional symbolism central to the ideals of Expressionism. Korngold's melodic style and chromatic language also reflect the abrupt changes and asymmetry common with Expressionists.

Though it is possible for a performer to give a convincing performance of a work without understanding all the theory behind its composition, knowledge of the language and architecture of a piece can help the performer to guide the listener through the structure. In the following sections I will give an overview of the form of Korngold's violin sonata and highlight some specific types of chromatic language that I think will aid the performer in understanding Korngold's style and therefore in making his or her own artistic choices.

## **Form**

The form of Korngold's violin sonata adheres to 18th- and 19th-century practices while incorporating some of Korngold's unique ideas. The overall four-movement sonata structure became common for symphonies and quartets in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, and Beethoven set the precedent for extending this structure to some of his solo and duo sonatas.<sup>7</sup> Though many violin sonatas after Beethoven use a two- or three-movement structure, Korngold chose to use the larger layout for his sonata.

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<sup>7</sup> James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 320.

The first movement of a sonata is conventionally in “sonata form,” the expanded rounded binary structure that became a standard form included in sonatas, chamber music, and symphonies during the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Korngold follows this structural tradition with his first movement, and though we shall see that his harmonic language and key centers differ from eighteenth- and even nineteenth-century practices, we do find the three traditional parts that make up sonata form: Exposition, Development, and Recapitulation, with the Recapitulation restating the two themes of the Exposition in the tonic key of G major. Miles Goldberg provides a detailed formal analysis of Korngold’s Violin Sonata in his dissertation, “The Piano Chamber Music of Erich Wolfgang Korngold,” and I have included his summary of the first movement of the sonata below:

**First movement: Ben moderato, ma con passione, G major, 4/4 meter**

**Form: Sonata-allegro**

**EXPOSITION (mm. 1-61)**

**1st subject in G major (mm. 1-17)**

**Transition Part I in c minor (mm. 18-29)**

**Transition Part II in C major (mm. 30-42)**

**2nd subject in D major (mm. 43-61)**

**DEVELOPMENT (mm. 62-101)**

**Based on transition Part I counterpoint (see mm. 18-19, violin)  
and fragments of 1st subject (mm. 62-72)**

**Another version of transition Part I (mm. 73-79),**

**over dominant pedal, falsely suggesting a retransition**

**1st subject in C major (mm. 80-87)**

**Transition Part I (mm. 88-90),**

**e minor/G major ambiguity**

**Transition Part II (mm. 90-95),**

**instability moving to G major**

**Transition Part I and fragments of 1st subject (mm. 95-101),**

**instability moving to G major**

**RECAPITULATION (mm. 102-154)**

**1st subject in G major (mm. 102-108)**

**Transition Part I (mm. 109-122)**

**Transition Part II (mm. 123-135)**

**2nd subject in G major (mm. 136-154)**

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<sup>8</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 14-16.

**CODA (mm. 155-170)**

**Based on transition Part I and fragments of 1st subject (mm. 155-157)**

**1st subject (mm. 158-170)<sup>9</sup>**

In a traditional four-movement structure, the second movement of a sonata is often the slow movement, but Korngold follows an accepted but less common practice of saving the slow movement for third movement, writing a scherzo and trio as the second movement.<sup>10</sup> A scherzo with trio is typically a ternary form: an independent middle section, the Trio, is bookended by exact repeats of a contrasting section, the Scherzo. While Korngold follows this tradition, he goes one step further to make each of the three large sections themselves embedded sonata forms,<sup>11</sup> resulting in a movement of epic proportions, more typical of what some composers achieved within large symphonies,<sup>12</sup> but much more rarely seen in duo sonatas. Also somewhat abnormal is the Scherzo's tonic key of E major, a chromatic third relation to the first movement's G major. A Scherzo movement is traditionally in the same tonic as the first movement, even when placed before the slow movement.<sup>13</sup> Here is Miles Goldberg's outline of the form of the second movement:

**Second movement: Scherzo. Allegro molto (con fuoco), E major, 3/8 meter**

**Form: Scherzo and Trio**

**SCHERZO (mm. 1-395)**

**1st subject in E major (mm. 1-50)**

**2nd subject in F# major (mm. 51-109)**

**Closing subject in C# major (mm. 110-143)**

**New theme (development) (mm. 144-233)**

**Retransition (mm. 234-266)**

**Recapitulation**

**1st subject in E major (mm. 267-316)**

**2nd subject in E major (mm. 317-375)**

**Closing subject-transition to Trio (mm. 376-395)**

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<sup>9</sup> Miles Goldberg, "The Piano Chamber Music of Erich Wolfgang Korngold" (DMA diss., Boston University, 2005), 68.

<sup>10</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 322.

<sup>11</sup> Goldberg, 81.

<sup>12</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 330.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 339.

**TRIO (mm. 396-493) in B minor, Moderato cantabile, 3/4 meter**  
1st subject (mm. 396-435)  
2nd subject and development of 1st subject (mm. 436-464)  
1st subject (recapitulation) (mm. 465-493)

**SCHERZO**  
repeated but with closing subject material preceding 2nd subject  
in recapitulation  
2nd subject now treated as beginning of coda<sup>14</sup>

The slow third movement of Korngold's sonata has the loosest form of the four, which is not atypical for sonatas.<sup>15</sup> This Adagio maintains a somewhat through-composed fantasy-like facade, yet within this we find a subtle but well-organized ternary form.<sup>16</sup> This movement is in the dominant key of the sonata, D major. This is a more closely related key to the first movement's tonic than the Scherzo's E major, yet again this is a break with tradition, as in the rare cases when a Scherzo does not reassert to the original tonic, the slow movement typically has that role.<sup>17</sup> Below is Miles Goldberg's summary of the third movement:

**Third movement: Adagio. Mit tiefer Empfindung, D major, 4/4 time**  
**Form: Ternary**  
**A section, D major (mm. 1-25)**  
Part 1 (mm. 1-7)  
Part 2 (mm. 8-12), moves from D major to F# major  
Part 1 (mm. 13-25), moves from F# major back to D major  
**B section, begins in Bb major (mm. 26-70)**  
Part 1 (mm. 26-32)  
Part 2 (mm. 33-39)  
Part 1 (mm. 40-49), with interruptions of A section (m. 44, m. 48)  
Development/new theme (mm. 50-58)  
Part 1 and 2 combined (mm. 59-69)  
**A' section, returns in D major**  
Part 2 (mm. 70-73)  
Part 1 (mm. 74-82)  
**Coda, D major (mm. 83-96)**<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Goldberg, 81.

<sup>15</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 322-323.

<sup>16</sup> Goldberg, 92.

<sup>17</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 338-339.

<sup>18</sup> Goldberg, 92.

The last movement of Korngold's sonata is a theme and variations, a frequent form used for finales of sonatas and symphonies, and the movement reaffirms the home key of the sonata, G major, as is the sonata finale's traditional function.<sup>19</sup> Yet Korngold again very innovatively combines formal structures by letting the theme and variations fall into a sonata form: the melody introduced in B Major in Variation III acts as the exposition's second theme and returns in Variation VIII confirming the home key of G Major for the recapitulation.<sup>20</sup> Korngold also gives a nod to an even older tradition by featuring a full fugue embedded within the movement. Miles Goldberg's summary is again included below:

**Fourth movement: Finale. Allegretto quasi Andante (con grazia),  
G major, 3/4 and 4/4 meter**  
**Form: Hybrid of theme and variations and sonata-allegro forms**  
**EXPOSITION (mm. 1-63)**  
    **Theme/1st subject in G major, (mm. 1-16)**  
    **Variation I (mm. 17-34)**  
    **Variation II/Transition to 2nd subject (mm. 35-49)**  
    **Variation III/2nd subject in B major, (mm. 50-63)**  
**DEVELOPMENT (mm. 64-163)**  
    **Variation IV/beginning of Development (mm. 64-76)**  
    **Variation V-Sehr bewegt (mm. 77-92)**  
    **Variation VI-Fugue-Allegro giocoso/Retransition (mm. 93-163)**  
        **Part 1-Exposition of fugue (mm. 93-118)**  
        **Part 2-Development of fugue (mm. 119-144)**  
        **Part 3-Stretto and coda of fugue (mm. 145-163)**  
**RECAPITULATION & CODA (mm. 164-217)**  
    **Variation VII/1st subject, begins in C major,  
        moves to G major (mm. 164-176)**  
    **Variation VIII/2nd subject in G major (mm. 177-195)**  
    **Variation IX/Coda in G major (mm. 196-217)**  
        **Return of 1st subject of 1st movement at measure 208<sup>21</sup>**

The complex formal structures of this violin sonata demonstrate to the performer both Korngold's acceptance of traditions and his interest in adapting them to create something new

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<sup>19</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, 333.

<sup>20</sup> Goldberg, 103.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 103.

and unique. In the following section I will explore some of his specific uses of chromatic language which further display this duality between old and new techniques.

### Harmonic Language

The harmonic language of Korngold's violin sonata reveals the vast number of influences and innovations in Korngold's music. Although Korngold maintains tonal centers and tonal functions throughout the sonata, he constantly plays with the tonality by use of chromaticism and ambiguous modalities.

This tonal ambiguity can be heard in the sonata's opening theme, setting the tone for the entire sonata. Though the sonata opens clearly in the title key of G Major, within the second bar Korngold is borrowing tones from the minor mode (Example 3.1), with several German Augmented Sixth chords, borrowed flat-VI chords, a Neapolitan flat-II chord, and a minor tonic scattered throughout the first five bars.

Example 3.1: Sonata in G Major, Op. 6, first movement, mm. 1-6 (published piano score)

The image shows a musical score for the first six measures of the first movement of the Sonata in G Major, Op. 6, by Franz Korngold. The score is for Violin and Piano (Klavier). The tempo is marked "Ben moderato, ma con passione". The key signature is G Major. The score shows the first six measures. The piano part includes harmonic annotations: GER+6, bVI+, GER+6, bII6, and bVI i.

Korngold also favors the use of distantly related keys throughout the sonata, whether for an entire movement, such as the second movement's sudden appearance in E Major, or for short passages. Returning to the sonata's opening theme, for instance, in the second phrase (Example 3.2) Korngold passes through B-flat Major, F-sharp Major, B-flat Major again, D Major, and C Major before finally arriving back in G Major. Korngold accomplishes these modulations through use of German Augmented Sixth chords, fully diminished seventh chords, and parsimonious voice leading using chromatic third relations.

These chromatic third transformations could be described by using Neo-Riemannian labels. In Neo-Riemannian practice, an "R" is used to show a relative motion in a root relationship by third, such as a C minor chord to an E-flat major chord. An "L" is used to show a root relationship by a third in the opposite direction from relative, for instance, a C minor chord to an A-flat major chord. A "P" is used to show a parallel mode relationship, like a C major chord to a C minor chord. An "LP" label denotes a combination of these motions, as in a C major chord to an A-flat major chord. In this passage in Korngold's sonata, the motion from the B-flat major chord in m. 7 to the D major chord (ignoring the 7th) in m. 8 could be described by an LP transformation. The motion from the D major chord to the F-sharp major chord on beat three could also be described by an LP transformation, as can movement from F-sharp major to B-flat major and from B-flat major back to D major.



(Example 3.3), Korngold uses WT0, the six note whole tone collection that includes C-natural. And while never remaining long in one of the two whole tone collections, the middle section of the third movement also strongly features augmented triads and whole tone collections. Measure 43 (Example 3.4), for instance, sounds the entire WT0 in beat one, uses all but the D-sharp of WT1 through the first triplet of beat three, then the remainder of the measure sounds all of WT0 again.

**Example 3.3: first movement, mm. 64-66**

WT0-----

**Example 3.4: third movement, m. 43**

WT0----- WT1----- WT0-----

Although the use of modal mixture, chromatic transformation, and non-diatonic scales are only some examples of Korngold's harmonic language, the performer can use these as a

starting point to become acquainted with the composer’s unique style. In the next part of this chapter I will discuss more specifically the possible references and meanings within Korngold’s violin sonata.

### Motives and Meaning

One of Korngold’s practices was to use previously composed material in new musical settings. This method followed traditions set by composers such as Schubert famously using his song “The Trout” in his Piano Quintet in A Major, D. 667, or as was mentioned before, Brahms incorporating two of his op. 59 songs in his own G Major violin sonata, op. 78. Korngold would later use the same method to develop themes from his film scores into the themes of his violin concerto. In the violin sonata, Korngold adapted the melody from his song “Schneeglöckchen,” or “Snowdrops,” (Example 3.5) composed before the violin sonata in 1911<sup>22</sup> but not published until 1916 as part of the *Sechs einfache Lieder*, op. 9, as the theme for the variations of the violin sonata’s final movement (Example 3.6).

Example 3.5: *Sechs einfache Lieder*, op. 9, no. 1, “Schneeglöckchen,” mm. 1-7

<sup>22</sup> Carroll, 397.

Example 3.6: Sonata, fourth movement, mm. 1-9

*Allegretto quasi Andante (con grazia)*

*mp semplice ma con espressione*      *poco rit.*      *a tempo*

*pp legato*

*poco rit.*      *a tempo*      *dolce*

*pp*

“Schneeglöckchen” is a strophic song: the same melody is used for each stanza of a poem by Eichendorff. The melody for the first stanza and the theme for the violin sonata are almost identical, except for the transposition up one whole tone, either to fit the tonal scheme of the sonata or to better utilize the open strings and natural harmonics of the violin, or both. Eichendorff’s poem compares poets to flowers and remarks on how the beauty of each can perish too early when the world around is not ready for them. Here is the original text followed by a translation by Randel Wagner:

‘S war doch wie ein leises Singen  
in dem Garten heute Nacht,  
Wie wenn laue Lüfte gingen:  
“Süsse Glöcklein, nun erwacht!  
Süsse Glöcklein, nun erwacht!  
den die warme Zeit wir bringen,  
Eh’s noch jemand hat dedacht.”

‘S was kein Singen ‘s war ein Küssen  
rührt die stillen Glöcklein sacht,  
dass se alle tönen müssen  
von der kunst’gen bunten Pracht!  
Ach, sie könnten’s nicht erwarten,  
aber weiss vom letzten Schnee  
war noch immer Feld und Garten,  
und sie sanken um vor Weh.

So schon manche Dichter strecken  
sangesmüde sich hinab,  
und der Frühlin, den sie weckten  
rauschet über ihrem Grab.

It was indeed like soft singing in the garden this evening as when mild breezes blow: “Sweet snowdrops, now awake! because the warm time we bring is earlier than anyone expected.”

It wasn’t singing, it was a kissing that gently touched the snowdrop so softly that it couldn’t help show all its shades in an artful, colorful display! Ah, it couldn’t wait, but the field and garden were still white with snow, and the flowers wilted with sorrow.

So have some poets also fallen, song-tired, and the Spring which comes to wake them murmurs over their grave.<sup>23</sup>

In a way, the poem foreshadows Korngold’s own life: his talent bloomed young, but the war that drove him from his homeland would slowly drain his life, as well. He lived only eight years past the end of the war, and he died discouraged at how the once welcoming world now spurned his music. He was in the process of sketching his second symphony when he was diagnosed with a brain thrombosis, which together with depression ended his life at age 60.<sup>24</sup>

Though during the composition of the violin sonata Korngold had not yet written an opera or a film score, the seeds of his later dramatic compositions are already in the violin sonata. From the beginning of the first movement to the end of the fourth, motivic ties

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<sup>23</sup> Randel Wagner, “Wunderkinder Lieder: A study of the songs of Erich Wolfgang Korngold” (DMA diss., University of Nebraska, 1993), 24.

<sup>24</sup> Carroll, 360-364.

continually unite the work. These motives, when put in the context of either common usage or Korngold's other compositions, could be heard as telling the story of the "Schneeglöckchen."

One of the unifying features in the sonata is the similarity in contours between themes. For example, the opening of the third movement (Example 3.7), while not duplicating the exact melodic intervals of the first movement (Example 3.8), is similar enough in rhythm and contour for us to hear the new melody as a reference to the sonata's opening theme. With the slower tempo, new harmonies, and altered intervallic content, the third movement seems to be casting a dreamy shadow over the memory of the first movement opening theme. After the sprightly energy of the Scherzo movement, this solemn reminiscence could be heard as a foreshadowing of the tragic fate of the too eager "Schneeglöckchen."

**Example 3.7: third movement, mm. 1-3**

Interval labels: + = ascending, - = descending

+M6 +M3 +m2 -d5 +m2 +P5 -M2 -P5 -M2 +M7 +m3

**Mit tiefer Empfindung**

The musical score shows three measures. The first measure has a vocal line starting with a half note G4 and a piano accompaniment of a half note chord (F#4, A4). The second measure has a vocal line with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4, with a piano accompaniment of a half note chord (F#4, A4). The third measure has a vocal line with a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, and a quarter note B4, with a piano accompaniment of a half note chord (F#4, A4). Dynamics are *mf* for the vocal line and *p* for the piano accompaniment in the first two measures, and *mf* for the piano accompaniment in the third measure.

**Example 3.8: first movement, mm. 1-3**

+M6 +m6                    -d12                    +m2+P4+M2+M2+P4 +P5  
 (-d5)

**Ben moderato, ma con passione**

The musical score consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo/mood is 'Ben moderato, ma con passione'. The dynamics are marked 'p' (piano) and 'p espr.' (piano espr.). The score shows a melodic line with rising leaps and a piano accompaniment. Above the score, intervals are marked: +M6 +m6, -d12 (-d5), and +m2+P4+M2+M2+P4 +P5.

Rising leaps are a characteristic that pervades many of Korngold’s works, and for him they symbolize a positive outlook, such as joy or hope. For example, in his *Sinfonietta* in B, op. 5, the “*Motiv des fröhlichen Herzens*” or “Motive of a cheerful heart” is made of rising perfect fourths (Example 3.9). Perfect fourths and fifths are commonly associated with the sound of a horn call, so they could have represented to Korngold the thrill of the hunt, the excitement of anticipation. The *Sinfonietta* was still being orchestrated when Korngold was writing the violin sonata,<sup>25</sup> so the “cheerful heart” motive would have been very fresh in his mind. Rising fourths and fifths would again be heard in the opening of his *Violin Concerto*, op. 35 (Example 3.10), which quotes a theme from his film score to *Another Dawn*, a Warner Brothers Picture in 1937 directed by William Dieterle. This film theme first occurs when the protagonist, played by Errol Flynn, is making his entrance flying in on an airplane, and thereafter the theme becomes the two central character’s love theme. In the violin sonata, not only do the first and third movements begin with the rising leaps discussed above, but in the fourth movement, the “*Schneeglöckchen*”

<sup>25</sup> Carroll, 396.

theme features several perfect fourth and fifth gestures (Example 3.11). These could symbolize the optimism of the young flowers and poets rising too early in the snow.

**Example 3.9: Sinfonietta in B, op. 5, mm. 1-3a (score: strings)**

Motiv des fröhlichen Herzens:



Fließend, mit heiterem Schwunge (♩ = 72)  
*molto espr.*

**Example 3.10: Concerto in D Major for Violin and Orchestra, op. 35, mm. 1-5 (violin part)**

+P4 +P5 +P4 +A4

Moderato nobile (♩)

+P5+P4+P5+P5

Example 3.11: Sonata, fourth movement, mm. 1-4a

+P4      +P4      -P4                      +A4   -P5

**Allegretto quasi Andante (con grazia)**

*mp semplice ma con espressione*      *poco rit.*      *a tempo*

*pp legato*

While rising leaps and perfect intervals represent happiness or hope in Korngold's music, falling gestures and dissonant intervals typically represent tension, turmoil, grief, or mischief. One such gesture is the descending minor second, or *pianto*, associated since the Renaissance era with lament and mourning. In the violin sonata, Korngold uses the modal mixture discussed in the earlier part of this chapter to introduce an important E-flat to D-natural motive<sup>26</sup> in the opening theme of the sonata (Example 3.12). Following the hopeful rising leaps of the opening G Major gesture, this sighing motive is the sonata's first hint of the inevitable tragedy to come at the end of the piece. These falling seconds can be heard throughout the sonata as the foil of the rising leaps.

<sup>26</sup> Goldberg, 70.

Example 3.12: first movement, mm. 1-6

**Ben moderato, ma con passione**

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of a sonata, measures 1-6. The score is for Violin and Piano (Klavier). The tempo is marked "Ben moderato, ma con passione". The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The violin part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and an *espr.* (espressivo) marking. The piano part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *sub.mf*. There are also some boxed-in sections in the piano part.

Related to the descending minor second but carrying a very different meaning is the ascending minor ninth. This distinctive interval is heard most often in the Scherzo of the sonata (Example 3.13). Here, along with many prominent leaps of major sevenths, the ninth sounds playfully like it just missed being an octave, and the underlying harmonic change is a mischievous surprise. The interval of a minor ninth is again prominent in Korngold's violin concerto, introduced in the moment of greatest tension during the exposition of the first movement (Example 3.14). Korngold would also use minor ninths to convey the frightful or grotesque in his film scores, such as the memorable motive for the sinister character Guy of Gisborne in the Warner Brother's 1938 film *The Adventures of Robin Hood*.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ben Winters, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold's The Adventures of Robin Hood: A Film Score Guide* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 98-99.

Example 3.13: second movement, mm. 92-96

Example 3.14: Concerto, first movement, mm. 15-19

In addition to the motivic elements discussed above, Korngold further unites his violin sonata with direct quotes, especially in the last movement. During the course of the fourth movement's fugue, Korngold quotes all three previous movements. Korngold then concludes the final movement with multiple references to the first movement. In measures 201-217 (Example 3.16), the first movement's opening motive (Example 3.1, 3.8, 3.12) is directly quoted and intertwined with the "Schneeglöckchen" theme. Another reference to the first movement can be

heard in the piano part in measures 202-208, as the chord progression is the same as that in the last four measures of the first movement (Example 3.15).<sup>28</sup>

From this bookending of motives in the first and last movements, the sonata seems to reflect the meaning of the “Schneeglöckchen” poem: the flowers and poet wake up from the winter’s sleep, and then wither again too quickly. The piano texture at the *tranquillo* in measure 188 (Example 3.16) has a somber, almost dirge-like sound, and though the violin picks up the original “Schneeglöckchen” theme again in measure 196, this theme never regains the energy and spirit heard earlier in the movement. The note values are all augmented and the melodic line is continually interrupted and confused between the “Schneeglöckchen” theme and the references to the first movement. The final direct quote of the first movement’s opening motive in measure 208 is like the ultimate cry in the death-song, and then the music fades from there into silence.

**Example 3.15: Sonata, first movement, mm. 165-170**

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of a sonata, measures 165-170. It features a piano part with a treble and bass clef. The treble clef part has a dynamic marking of *mp* and the word *Ausdruck* above it. The bass clef part has a dynamic marking of *p*. A box highlights the last four measures (165-170) of the piano part, with chord symbols IV, *b*III, II9, and I written below the notes.

<sup>28</sup> Goldberg, 114.

Example 3.16: fourth movement, mm. 188-217

The musical score is arranged in three systems, each with a piano part (left) and a violin part (right).  
System 1 (mm. 188-197): The piano part begins with a *tranquillo* marking. The violin part starts with a *mp espressivo* marking. Dynamics include *pp* and *p*.  
System 2 (mm. 198-207): The piano part features a *poco a poco crescendo* instruction. The violin part has a *molto espressivo* marking. Pedal markings include *Pedal*, *IV Pedal*, and *bIII Pedal*.  
System 3 (mm. 208-217): The piano part includes a *molto cresc.* instruction. The violin part has an *espr.* marking. Dynamics include *mf*, *mp*, and *p*. Pedal markings include *Pedal*, *II9*, and *I*.

The motivic gestures and unifying elements within the sonata should help the performer understand the story he or she must convey through this piece to the audience. Although my reading of the underlying “Schneeglöckchen” program could be open to interpretation, my intent is that ideas will help fuel the performer’s insight and imagination in developing his or her own vision of the piece. In the following chapter I will address some of the practical applications of Korngold’s musical style and other performance related issues which could be useful to the performer.

## CHAPTER 4

### PERFORMANCE ASPECTS

#### Korngold as Performer

Korngold was a devoted performer in addition to being a composer. Although he did not play the violin, he never wrote a piece he could not reduce on the keyboard: he typically composed at the piano<sup>1</sup> and could play any of his works from memory there.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the sonata, he performed the piano part himself with renowned violinist Adolf Busch.<sup>3</sup> Although his formal piano training was very brief, he was known for his distinctive playing style until illness and age took it from him. His father described his piano playing in the early years:

His piano playing... was at first clean and musical, but without outstanding skill. Gradually, however, he developed a rugged style full of temperament, possessing through a peculiar self-created technique an orchestral character. This development went so far that, according to an opinion once expressed by Eugen d'Albert, Erich could have become one of the world's greatest pianists, had he only acquired the necessary technical brilliance.<sup>4</sup>

At Korngold's first major premiere, the ballet *Der Schneemann*, the pianist at the Vienna Court Opera found Korngold's keyboard writing too difficult, and the young twelve-year-old Korngold took over the part himself and oversaw all the rehearsals.<sup>5</sup> Korngold had a natural propensity for finding a large sonority on the keyboard—he could make the instrument sound like a full orchestra.<sup>6</sup> It is likely because of this that even his writing for sonatas look and sound almost like an orchestral reduction. Being used to reducing and playing any score at the piano by

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<sup>1</sup> Brendan Carroll, *The Last Prodigy* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1997), 258.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>4</sup> Julius Korngold, *Child Prodigy: Erich Wolfgang's Years of Childhood*. (NY: Willard Publishing Company, 1945), 43.

<sup>5</sup> Carroll, 58.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

ear, he would have found it a logical expansion to create a piano sonata that sounded like a large orchestral work.

In addition to his piano playing, Korngold was also known for his conducting. As a young boy, he admired Gustav Mahler's conducting, and when asked what he wanted to become in the future, Korngold would always reply, "Director Mahler."<sup>7</sup> As mentioned in the paragraph above, as early as his first premiere, Korngold was already overseeing rehearsals for his works. During World War I, he served in the army as a regimental band leader,<sup>8</sup> and afterward found a passion for arranging and conducting operettas.<sup>9</sup> Richard Strauss once offered him a permanent conducting position at the Vienna State Opera.<sup>10</sup> During his Hollywood years, he always conducted his own scores.<sup>11</sup>

What we can understand from Korngold's performing activities is that he did not compose in the abstract: he always meant for his compositions to be performed and enjoyed, because he never composed something he did not passionately enjoy and perform. Perhaps this explains his conviction that the melody always reign supreme—from his earliest childhood scribbles through his operas, his film scores, and his final concert works, the lyrical melodies are always the driving factors. This also likely accounts for some of his differences with his atonal Viennese colleagues. Schoenberg and Korngold became close friends in their Hollywood years, but they could never see eye to eye on their compositions. One anecdote related by Erich's son Ernst recounts how one day Korngold insisted to Schoenberg that a retrograde melody can no longer be heard as the same melody. To educate Korngold, Schoenberg then took up a pencil and asked, "Erich, what is this in my hand?" "A pencil," Korngold replied. Schoenberg turned it

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<sup>7</sup> Carroll, 55.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 248-250.

upside down, “Now what is it?” “It’s still a pencil,” said Korngold, “But now you can’t write with it!”<sup>12</sup>

Korngold’s writing in the sonata is extremely dense, especially in the piano part, which features complex chromatic chords and many doublings at the octave, aiding the impression of an orchestral sonority. The dialogue between instruments is intricate and sometimes humorous, as in one case in the Scherzo, when the melodic line falls below the range of the violin in measure 306: Korngold therefore lets the piano begin the line and then pass it back to the violin (Example 4.1).

**Example 4.1: Sonata, second movement, mm. 298-313**

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a violin and piano. Each system consists of three staves: a single staff for the violin and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for the piano. The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. The piano part is characterized by dense, complex chromatic chords and frequent octave doublings, creating a rich, orchestral texture. The violin part features a melodic line that is passed between the instruments. A rectangular box highlights the first measure of the second system, where the piano begins a melodic line that is then taken up by the violin in the following measure.

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<sup>12</sup> Carroll, 291.

## Korngold's Violinists

In addition to Carl Flesch, Korngold also collaborated with violinists Arnold Rosé, Adolph Busch, Louis Kaufman, and Jascha Heifetz, among others. Arnold Rosé was the concertmaster of the Vienna Court Opera at Korngold's first premiere, *Der Schneemann*, which featured several violin solos.<sup>13</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this document, Rosé was also the violinist at the Vienna premiere of Korngold's Op. 1 Piano Trio. Rosé would therefore likely have been the greatest violinistic influence on Korngold's early years. Korngold played the piano part of the trio himself with Rosé in a performance in 1911, when Bruno Walter became indisposed.<sup>14</sup> The Rosé Quartet also premiered several of Korngold's later chamber works.<sup>15</sup>

Rosé had become second leader of the Vienna Court Opera in 1880 at the age of 18, replacing first leader Jakob Grün as first soloist.<sup>16</sup> He continued with the opera orchestra under Gustav Mahler, and he married Mahler's sister, Justine.<sup>17</sup> Carl Flesch described his fellow violinist as "the type of natural, versatile, unintellectual Viennese music-maker... an ideal orchestral leader, irresistibly carrying others with him." Though Flesch describes Rosé's left and right-hand techniques as being virtually flawless, he adds, "For Rosé, as for all real artists, sound and technique were valued only as a means in the service of a higher idea." Flesch also notes that Rosé's original name was Rosenbaum, and like Korngold himself, Rosé had to leave Vienna when Austria was annexed by Germany. Flesch himself instituted a collection for Rosé, who was then able to settle in England in 1939.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Carroll, 58.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 397-398.

<sup>16</sup> Carl Flesch, *The Memoirs of Carl Flesch* (Edited and translated by Hans Keller, Harlow, Essex, UK: Bois de Boulogne, 1973), 19.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 50-52.

Carl Flesch himself is no stranger to the violin world. Although he left no known record of his experience with Korngold, he did leave behind several publications dealing with his career, philosophies, and techniques. His *Memoirs* have been mentioned above, relating his life and giving invaluable descriptions of his colleagues. He published *Urstudien* or *Basic Studies* in 1911, before the premiere of Korngold's Sonata. In the 1920's *The Art of Violin Playing* and his *Scale System* emerged. Flesch was known both as a technician and an artist, a teacher and a performer. He defined his generation of violinists through his passionate and yet well organized playing, and he raised the standards for violinists to follow.

Adolf Busch, who performed Korngold's violin sonata with the composer, is described by Carl Flesch as "above all a character, a personality, with whom purely instrumental considerations are secondary."<sup>19</sup> Hailed as one of Germany's greatest twentieth-century violinists, Busch's usual recital partner was his son-in-law, pianist Rudolph Serkin, with whom he made some recordings. Busch also led a renowned quartet, the Busch Quartet. Though Busch was not himself Jewish, it is notable that he canceled all his concerts in Germany after 1933, in solidarity with his Jewish colleagues. He came to the United States in 1939, and like many of his fellow ex-patriot artists, he failed to continue the success he experienced with his career in Europe. Rudolph Serkin said of him, "He was so German... and when that shame came, he felt responsible somehow. I think it would have been easier for him if he had been Jewish."<sup>20</sup>

Louis Kaufman and Jascha Heifetz would not meet Korngold until the composer's years in California. Kaufman became Korngold's concertmaster for the majority of the composer's films, and Heifetz premiered Korngold's violin concerto. Kaufman left a written account of his

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<sup>19</sup> Flesch, 265.

<sup>20</sup> Terry Teachout, "The Man Who Said No to Hitler" (*The Wall Street Journal* [updated 10 December 2010]), <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703296604576005193516575586> (accessed 19 January 2016).

experience working with Korngold, which is valuable to other violinists for understanding the composer.

Working under the baton of Erich Wolfgang Korngold, a splendid composer, conductor, and virtuoso pianist of winning modesty, fascinated me.

...Working with Korngold was pleasant. His Viennese tact and charm made him a devoted friend of everyone he encountered. He was exceptionally modest, and his bons mots became legendary. When someone at the Hollywood Bowl complained that airplanes flew over the site during the softest music, he quipped, "All the pilots have scores." My favorite was, "Even a *great* performance can't spoil a fine composition."

I played his scores for Juarez and all the swashbuckling films of Errol Flynn: *Captain Blood*, *The Sea Hawk*, *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *Anthony Adverse*, and *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*, among others. He was invariably polite and good-natured at recording sessions, although meticulous in achieving precisely what he wanted. He was unfailingly cheerful, and always inquired after our morning break, "How was the lunch, boys?"

...Korngold, Steiner, Waxman, Rózsa, and Herrmann all shared a comprehensive knowledge of music and orchestration, which their scores reflected. Many of today's musicians and composers lack understanding of the orchestra's capabilities, which accounts for the monotony of their sonority. Korngold, sitting at the piano, could approximate the range and color of an entire orchestral score and with a few gestures achieve exactly the performance he envisioned.

...Unfortunately, American critics were merciless in their contempt for composers, conductors, and performers who had "sold out" to Hollywood. This caused Korngold much sorrow. When Heifetz premiered the Korngold violin concerto in Dallas, it received great acclaim from the public and press, with the sole exception of one New York critic who couldn't resist a cheap-shot headline, dubbing the work, "more Korn than gold," which was widely repeated. This lyric concerto will long outlast many arid twelve-tone concertos now praised by self-styled "Beckmessers." Time alone will sort out the music and art worthy of enduring admiration.<sup>21</sup>

Another member of the Warner Brothers orchestra, violinist George Berris, recalled how Korngold transformed the Warner orchestra from a "glorified dance band" to a "full-scale symphony orchestra, second to none." Berris was a freelancer who also played for other studios. He noted of scores by Alfred Newman, "I realized that he was obviously very influenced by

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<sup>21</sup> Louis Kaufman, *A Fiddler's Tale: How Hollywood and Vivaldi Discovered Me* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 143-145.

Korngold, so much of his music was similar, especially in duel scenes or action scenes. But Korngold was the originator of the style... even though the other fellows would never admit it.”<sup>22</sup>

### **Technical and Pedagogical Concerns**

Many technical difficulties are found in this sonata, some intended to be virtuosic, some merely compositional choices that are violinistically awkward. First of all, there are many large leaps, due largely to Korngold’s motivic preferences discussed in Chapter 3. These leaps are difficult for the violinist, as the performer must either shift frequently or remain in extended positions for long periods of time. Dissonant intervals and chromatic passagework pose similar problems, as they cause the violinist’s hand to conform to an awkwardly spaced position and often constantly adjust that position. Achieving accurate intonation is also difficult in these cases, both as the wide or dissonant intervals can be elusive to a violinist’s ear, and as the awkward or changing hand position can be unpredictable.

A passage which combines all of these difficulties can be found in the sonata’s opening, measures 5-10 of the first movement (Example 4.2). One strategy that will help the performer through this excerpt is to re-spell some of the intervals enharmonically: for instance, understanding the diminished third from E-flat to C-sharp as a whole tone and understanding the F to B-sharp leap as a perfect fifth. Taking such steps will help make aural sense of a visually confusing passage and make fingering choices clearer. Similar steps can be taken in the third movement, in passages such as measures 54-57 (Example 4.3), when the diminished fourths can be better understood as major thirds.

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<sup>22</sup> Carroll, 258-259.

Example 4.2: first movement, mm. 5-12 (published violin part)

Example 4.3: third movement, mm. 54-57

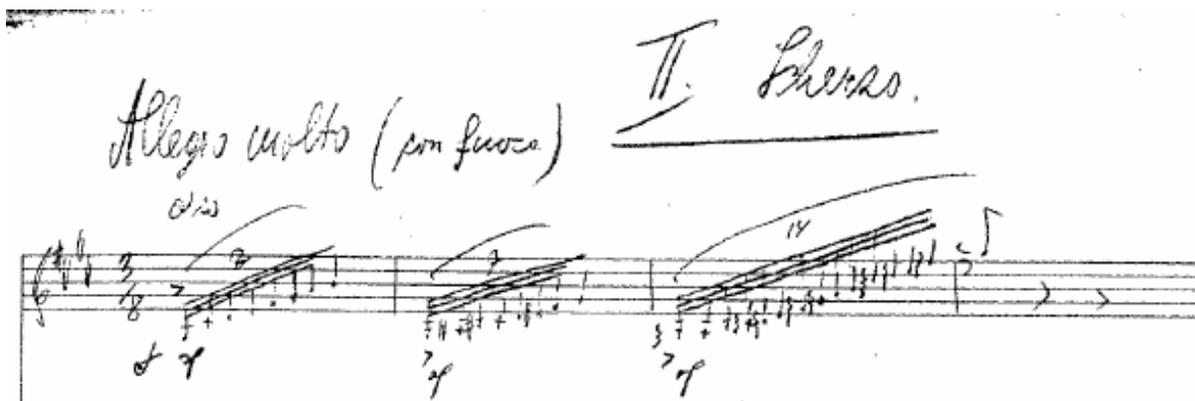
Some of the scalar runs in the sonata are non-diatonic or modal, such as the many ascending gestures throughout the Scherzo which begin in the opening bars of the first theme (Example 4.4). The runs throughout this theme are diatonic but begin on various scale degrees or chord tones, resulting in modal sounding scales, such as mixolydian, aeolian, or lydian. The performer must then take into account where the half steps are located within each run. The suggested fingering for this passage included in the published edition is a bit of a mystery, as no editor is listed on the score. It is likely that these fingerings belong to Carl Flesch, as the manuscript has no instructions for playing the scales *sul G* (Example 4.5). The published fingering is certainly very virtuosic, but I find the quality of sound is somewhat muffled. Perhaps for the sake of left hand speed and clarity of sound, a fingering crossing over to the D

string would be preferable. The sound would also be more consistent when the third scale crosses up to the A or E strings.

**Example 4.4: second movement, mm. 1-17**



**Example 4.5: second movement, mm. 1-4 (manuscript)**



Frequent or awkward string crossings are another result of the often jagged melodic lines, as seen in measures 95-103 of the first movement (Example 4.6). I would suggest practicing this passage on open strings to familiarize the right hand with the different patterns of motion.

Keeping the bow angle close to the middle string will help, as well, using that string like a pivot. For instance, in measure 96, I would start the sixteenth-note passage in fifth position for the first four notes, shifting to third position for the next four, and first position for the next four. The A-string is therefore the “middle” string for each of these groups, so one must keep the bow angle

as close to the A-string level as possible, gliding the right hand in a smooth figure-eight motion. For the last five notes of this passage, the “pivot” must move smoothly to the D-string. It is of course useful to begin this passage on a down bow, to make the transitions from and to the pizzicato chords easier.

**Example 4.6: first movement, mm. 95-103 (published violin part)**

The hemiola rhythm in this passage causes its own problems: I would try to keep an internal triplet pulse in spite of the groupings in four, so as not to lose the large quarter-note beat. The pianist is alternating between triplets and duplets in this passage (Example 4.7), so it is also paramount to hear how these rhythmic patterns line up.

**Example 4.7: first movement, mm. 97-98 (published piano score)**

Another example of Korngold's delight in using complex rhythms can be found in the third movement. Though slow, this movement has many two-against-three rhythms and alternating duplets and triplets, both between instruments and within each instrument's part. An example from the violin part is found in measures 28-30 (Example 4.8), featuring triplet sixteenths in the midst of duple sixteenths. My suggestion here is to keep a strong internal eighth-note pulse to more easily switch from duple to triple subdivisions. Another issue in this excerpt is that the published violin part and published piano score (Example 4.9) disagree in measure 28 as to the exact rhythm of the second beat. However, the manuscript (Example 4.10), agrees with the published piano score that the rhythm in beats two and four are identical.

**Example 4.8: third movement, mm. 28-29 (published violin part)**

Example 4.9: third movement, mm. 27-28 (published piano score)

The image shows a published piano score for measures 27-28. It consists of three staves: a treble clef staff at the top, a bass clef staff in the middle, and a grand staff (bass clef on the left, treble clef on the right) at the bottom. The music is in 3/4 time and D major. The treble staff begins with a rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in measure 27 and another triplet in measure 28. The middle staff has a rest in measure 27 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 28. The grand staff has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *poco rit.* marking in measure 27, followed by a piano (*p*) dynamic in measure 28. Performance instructions include *a tempo*, *pp*, *(zart)*, and *(mit Verschiebung)*. Two white boxes highlight the triplet figures in the treble and middle staves.

Example 4.10: third movement, mm. 27b-28 (manuscript)

The image shows a handwritten manuscript score for measures 27b-28. It consists of three staves: a treble clef staff at the top, a bass clef staff in the middle, and a grand staff (bass clef on the left, treble clef on the right) at the bottom. The music is in 3/4 time and D major. The treble staff begins with a rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes in measure 27b and another triplet in measure 28. The middle staff has a rest in measure 27b and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 28. The grand staff has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *poco rit.* marking in measure 27b, followed by a piano (*p*) dynamic in measure 28. Performance instructions include *a tempo*, *pp*, *(zart)*, and *(mit Verschiebung)*. Two white boxes highlight the triplet figures in the treble and middle staves.

On the subject of typographical errors, the last movement seems to have an impossible triple stop of G, D-flat, B in both the manuscript (Example 4.12) and the published violin score (Example 4.11). However, the published piano part (Example 4.13) contains the more

reasonable D-natural. It is safe to assume both from physical impossibility and the harmony in the piano part that the absence of the natural to cancel the D-flat was an oversight.

**Example 4.11: fourth movement, mm. 187b-188 (published violin part)**



**Example 4.12: fourth movement, mm. 187b-188 (manuscript)**



**Example 4.13: fourth movement, mm. 188-189a (published piano score)**



Of course, there are some more substantial changes between the manuscript and the published edition, such as in the fourth movement after the second theme or Variation III. In the manuscript (Example 4.14), there is a small eight-measure passage that is expanded to twelve measures in the published edition (Example 4.15), with some transfer from the violin part to the piano.

**Example 4.14: fourth movement, mm. 64-74 (manuscript)**

The image displays a handwritten musical score for measures 64-74 of the fourth movement. The score is written on ten staves, organized into five systems of two staves each. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and dynamic markings. The first system (measures 64-65) features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes. The second system (measures 66-67) includes the handwritten instruction *crescendo* above the staff. The third system (measures 68-69) shows further rhythmic development. The fourth system (measures 70-71) continues the intricate notation. The fifth system (measures 72-74) concludes the passage with a final cadence. The handwriting is clear but shows signs of being a working manuscript, with some ink bleed-through and corrections visible.



Trills are common and idiomatic features throughout the violinist's repertoire, but some passages featuring trills in Korngold's sonata prove tricky, such as the end of the Scherzo (Example 4.16). This passage requires the performer to shift between each trill, the climax being the high E two octaves above the treble clef. This is similar in effect to virtuosic passages in concertos such as Tchaikovsky's. I find the E jumps in measures 842-845 are actually simpler, however, than the two preceding measures, 840-841. Here, in order to have stronger fingers for the trill, the performer must use second and third fingers for the trill while extending down the interval of a minor third with the first finger, thus involving trills, shifts, and extensions. It is helpful to notice, however, that each minor third interval moves up chromatically (G-sharp/E-sharp to A-natural/F-sharp to B-flat/G-natural), and each trill is by half step. These observations will allow the hand-frame, the spacing between the left fingers, to be more consistent and predictable.

**Example 4.16: second movement, mm. 840-847 (published violin part)**



Korngold often takes advantage of the violin's highest registers, turning the instrument into a glorified coloratura soprano. An example of this can be heard at the end of the Adagio in measures 80-96 (Example 4.17), which features so many large leaps in such sustained high tessitura that the composer felt the need to add an optional version an octave lower in the published edition. Another example is in the last movement, in the second theme or Variation III. Here, the climax of the melody is on a D-sharp two octaves above the treble clef.

Example 4.17: third movement, mm. 80-96

sehr ruhig

*ff* *mp*

*mf* *fff* *p*

*p* *p* *p* *pp* *ppp*

Example 4.18: fourth movement, mm. 59b-63a

*delicatissimo*

Korngold is very detailed in his expressive markings, sometimes to the point where the marking's exact meaning can be inadvertently ambiguous. In movement one, measures 37-38 (Example 4.19), Korngold indicates a type of *portato* articulation by putting a diamond shape over every note, likely intending that each note should swell. Another example is in the last movement in measures 70-71 (Example 4.20), in which he puts accents above each double stop in the slur. This would seem to indicate a *portato* stroke again, but likely with a harsher attack than the one labeled with diamonds.

**Example 4.19: first movement, mm. 37b-39a**



**Example 4.20: fourth movement, mm. 70b-71**



Another marking that may not be familiar to the performer is the notation “flag.” used in the last movement (Example 4.21). The abbreviation is one used by some composers to mean “harmonic.” It stands for “flageolet,” a type of flute, or in this case the flute-like sound of the harmonic. In measure 14, I would suggest playing the natural harmonic on the G-string by lightly fingering middle C. In measure 18, play the artificial harmonic on B on the G-string. In both these cases I would make use of 2nd position for fingering.

**Example 4.21: fourth movement, mm. 14-20**



Other German terms that may be new to the performer are “bewegt” or “moving” and “zart” meaning “tenderly” (Example 4.22). In the first movement (Example 4.23), Korngold uses “hervortretend” meaning “to come forward” or bring out the primary line in the piano left hand, while the violin is labeled, “zurücktretend” meaning “to go back” or play underneath. Later in the first movement (Example 4.24), “am Steg” is used to mean “at the bridge.” An unaccompanied passage at the end of the first movement (Example 4.25) is labeled “edel” which

means “noble” or “regal.” In the trio of the scherzo (Example 4.26), “*drängend*” is used to mean “pushing.” The pizzicato of the trio (Example 4.27) is also labeled “*weich*” meaning “soft” or “pillowy.” In general, Korngold tends to use Italian terms mixed with German, sometimes both at the same time (Example 4.28).

**Example 4.22: first movement, m. 18 (published piano score)**

**Example 4.23: first movement, mm. 77b-78 (published violin part)**

**Example 4.24: first movement, mm. 109-112 (published piano score)**

Example 4.25: second movement, mm. 404-406 (published violin part)



Example 4.26: second movement, mm. 430-436



Example 4.27: fourth movement, mm. 93-103



The excerpts I have discussed in this chapter demonstrate the physical and mental challenges of performing this violin sonata, but my commentary will hopefully make these passages more accessible to the performer. These examples also reveal the diversity of characters and techniques found in Korngold's violin sonata. Discovering and demonstrating these many facets will add joy and depth to a performance.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Though performers, audiences, and critics have begun to rediscover and appreciate the works of Erich Wolfgang Korngold, the struggle against the legacy of prejudice and resultant anonymity remains. His works beyond those from Hollywood have yet to be fully appreciated, for the political and cultural reasons detailed in Chapter 2: his critic father's enemies, his musical preferences, his Jewish heritage, and his career in Hollywood.

In addition, like many of his works, the Violin Sonata is very physically and intellectually demanding. Chapter 3's music analysis displays some of the breadth and complexity of the work: the expanded form, the densely chromatic harmonies, and the motivic interplay. Chapter 4's performance discussion also reveals the virtuosity of this work. The sonata requires much of the performer, and many artists might therefore fail to take up the challenge. My project is meant to serve as an introductory overview of the history and content of this great piece, aiding the performer in the daunting task of learning a relatively unknown work.

In the future I would like to see a new performance edition of this piece. Some of the inconsistencies between the manuscript and the two published parts are discussed in Chapter 4, and I think these and similar instances could be explored further to create a cleaner edition. Some of the practical and technical advice given in Chapter 4 could also be revisited and inserted into the violin part of a performance edition. A slightly reduced optional piano score might be of use to pianists with smaller hands, since so much of Korngold's piano writing requires large note-spans. I aspire to hear this piece in the violin's most performed repertoire, as it had

potential to be when Carl Flesch and Artur Schnabel performed it together in 1913. It is my hope that this project will spark more interest in the beautiful musical language of this often overlooked composer.

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