

KURT WEILL AND ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD:
COMPOSERS OF TWO WORLDS

A Report of a Senior Study

by

Bonnie Pelsue Finn

Major: Music

Maryville College

Fall, 2011

Date Approved _____, by _____
Faculty Supervisor

Date Approved _____, by _____
Editor

ABSTRACT

This research follows the lives of two composers, Erich Wolfgang Korngold and Kurt Weill, ultimately looking at the effect they had on American music. Both were born at the turn of the 20th century, and composed classically in Europe prior to the Nazi takeover of Germany and Austria. An explanation is given of the political background of Germany prior to 1933, as well as how music and politics intertwined and affected many Jewish composers and musicians of the era. Brief descriptions of Nazi doctrines are also included.

Following the lives and musical output of these two composers, the first chapter focuses from birth to 1933. Their music and talents will be explored, as well as the political arenas they lived in and how they reacted to the changing times. Chapter Two will follow how becoming an American affected them and the effect they had on American music from 1933 until their deaths. The final chapter examines the music they created in each world and the changes imposed upon it through emigration.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1	
GERMAN POLITICAL BACKGROUND; KORNGOLD AND WEILL TO 1933	5
CHAPTER 2	
NAZI GERMANY, WEILL AND KORNGOLD IN AMERICA.....	47
CHAPTER 3	
WEILL AND KORNGOLD – THEIR MUSIC.....	90
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	98

CHAPTER 1

GERMAN POLITICAL BACKGROUND; KORNGOLD AND WEILL TO 1933

The long-term history of Germany is one of political and social turbulence. In order to understand how events leading to the Nazi regime came about in the German republics and follow the chain of reactions, it is important to have a backdrop painted of the social and political systems. When the industrial revolution came to Germany around the beginning of the German Reich in the 1870's, it developed much more rapidly than in other parts of the world. The transition from agrarian to industrialized society took over one hundred years to materialize in England. Germany's economy switched from farms to cities in just thirty years. During those years, huge swings between prosperity and depression were prevalent.¹ This rapid movement to the German towns and cities created a huge increase in the urban population. Around 1900, 24 million people lived in urban centers. By 1914, this figure increased to almost 68 million.² As a result, Germany could no longer support itself agriculturally. It depended largely on imports, which meant Germany had no way of sustaining itself for a long duration of war.

Most of the wars in which Germany had taken part finished quickly.³ When World War I began in 1914, citizens expected a quick end. When this was not the case, a

¹ Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History*, 219.

² Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History*, 221.

³ Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History*, 332.

large number of Germans became disillusioned with the political purpose. In August of 1914, the German banking system was almost defunct as a result of the loss of overseas assets and allied blockades cutting off markets. Germany was pushed further into economic collapse. Rationing due to scarcity of food was made worse due to bad harvests during the years 1916-17. Already low wages were cut further, greatly reducing the standard of living.⁴ As Koppel Pinson states in *Modern Germany*, “From a relatively free economy in 1914, Germany emerged in 1918 with a thoroughly militarized economy of state socialism in which government controls and regulation covered all phases of economic life”.⁵ This rapid change contributed greatly to the moral and social issues within the country. Military fracas were common in many cities, with strikes and revolts happening on a regular basis. The German Revolution would remain strong until the Weimar Republic became official in August of 1919.

By November of 1918, Germany had suffered a complete moral and political breakdown of dynasty. All presiding royalty was thrown out, and political parties all fought for their individual causes. A large conservative group was aligned against a small radical body, but the republican institutions came out of the negative situation created by the division in monarchist circles. In Pinson’s words, “The Republic was that form of government which divided the factions the least”.⁶ Large groups of citizens simply could not agree on the best way to run the tumultuous country.

When the World War I armistice was declared on November 11, 1918, the resulting Treaty of Versailles punished Germany in a stiff manner. Germany lost 13% of its territory, as well as nine-tenths of the German naval fleet. Returning soldiers flooded

⁴ Berghahn, *Modern Germany: Society*, 47-50.

⁵ Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History*, 322.

⁶ Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History*, 352.

the job market, many because they could not re-enlist due to the restrictions on the armed forces. Due to market restrictions, industrial production reached an all-time low.⁷

During the elections of 1918, Friedrich Ebert, a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands - SPD*) and Germany's oldest political party, was elected Chancellor of Germany. The SPD had been the strongest political party since 1890, and was Marxist in its beliefs. The majority of the political parties of the Weimar Republic were formed in 1918, with the exception of the aforementioned SPD, the Catholic party (*Zentrum-Z*) formed in 1893, which represented the Catholic ideals of the day, and the German National People's party (*Deutschnationale Volkspartei-DNVP*), formed in 1876. The DNVP had been known as the Conservative party prior to 1918. The Communist party (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands-KPD*) was supported by the factory workers, as well as the radical leftists. Citizens in academic, financial and professional fields usually upheld the German Democratic Party (*Deutsche Demokratische Partei-DDP*). The German People's party (*Deutsche Volkspartei-DVP*) tended to lean toward nationalist views. Although there were several other small parties, the last major political party active during this time was the National Socialist German Workers party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei-NSDAP*). This group became known to the world as the Nazis.⁸

Long before Hitler was a powerful presence, shades of anti-Semitism were already evident within the NSDAP. These attitudes also bled over to the attitudes within the German world of music. A publication for music known as *Zeitschrift für Musik* added a subtitle to the name in 1925: *Journal for a Spiritual Renewal of German Music*.

⁷ Berghahn, *Modern Germany: Society*, 67-68.

⁸ Stern, *Path to Dictatorship*, Appendix B.

After June 1929, during which the publication had been bought by a Regensburg publisher named Gustav Bosse, editorials in the section called *Kreuz und Quer* became more inflammatory against non-German music. Jazz, American “pop” music, as well as Schoenberg’s atonal music was attacked.⁹

Considered economically detrimental for the more traditional cabaret musicians, the *Zeitschrift* wrote of the “niggerizing (Verniggerung) of Germany, and of the German race, culture and soul”. Although the *Zeitschrift* claimed not to be anti-Semitic, below the surface were many comments against the influence of Jews in German culture. Articles claimed that threats to German musical culture came from abroad, speaking of composers such as Stravinsky and Debussy. The largest risk was said to come from those within the country that tried to become “internationalists”, also referred to as characterless. It was only logical that the *Zeitschrift* discussed the Jews as the only international people. No longer considered German citizens, they were truly rootless. Internationalism also threatened the country economically, as it could destroy the music exported from Germany. The *Zeitschrift* was also the only important German musical periodical to allow political advertising. The election of September 1930 encouraged musicians to become more politically active, and the periodical supported this view in order to gain financial support.¹⁰

Although the Weimar Republic, Germany’s first democratic government, existed from 1919 to 1933, Nazi agencies began to appear in the 1920’s. A political lobby, the *Kampfbund für deutsch Kultur* (Combat League for German Culture) was founded in February 1926 by Alfred Rosenberg. The purpose of this agency was to save German

⁹ Sachs, “Aspects of Musical Politics”, 74-77.

¹⁰ Sachs, “Aspects of Musical Politics”, 77,79,87,88,90.

culture from all art forms that the National Socialists considered corruption of the arts. Formed in 1931 in Munich, the National Socialist Reich Symphony Orchestra was a symphony in which only Aryans could participate.¹¹

The Weimar Republic played a large role in the development of modernism in music. With a strong emphasis on *Neue Sachlichkeit*, it combined an emotional neutralization with technical experimentation. Schoenberg, on one side of the existing musical forces, believed politics should not play a role in music. *Tendenzmusik*, however, contained a conscious social tendency, such as those performed by worker's choruses. Paul Hindemith, through his festivals, helped organize music in two directions. *Gebrauchsmusik*, otherwise known as utility music, was created for its accessibility to the people, and explored new technology for the transmission of culture to the masses. *Gemeinschaftsmusik*, was community music, and came about from contact with the German Youth Movement. At the festival in Baden-Baden in 1927, Kurt Weill and Berthold Brecht presented a new style of musical theatre. Socially and aesthetically radical, it was intended for a broad variety of audiences. *Mahoganny Songspiel*, a series of poems satirizing bourgeois life, connected six independent songs by orchestral interludes. The huge success showed the Weimar Republic's interest in American life, and tied avant-garde music to the whole revolutionary movement. The bulk of music in the Weimar Republic was artistically advanced and highly politicized. The Nazis classified this music as "cultural bolshevism" and abolished the movement, sending those involved into exile.¹²

¹¹ Kater, *Twisted Muse*, 214.

¹² Zabel, "Escaping the Dark Times", 621-623.

The changes continued for the Jewish citizens of Germany. When Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933, the alterations in the lives of musicians became even more pronounced. On February 13, Richard Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser* was at the Berlin Staatsoper. Otto Klemperer conducted, as he had there since 1927. The performance was criticized and Klemperer was accused of not understanding Wagner's music. They claimed he was incapable of such because he was a Jew. By the end of March all his scheduled orchestra concerts with the Berlin Staatskapelle had been cancelled. He left for exile in Switzerland.¹³

Bruno Walter, another Jewish conductor with an esteemed resumé, was to conduct at the Gewandhaus in Saxony. When he arrived to rehearse, all the doors were locked. The explanation he was given was that patrons were not happy a Jew was conducting, and the concerts were cancelled to prevent riots. A week later, the same thing happened when he was to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic. Representatives of the Philharmonic were told by Nazi administrators to hire an Aryan conductor if they wanted the concerts to go on. They complied by hiring Richard Strauss. Bruno Walter also chose this time to leave Germany. He went first to Vienna, then on to New York.¹⁴

Several weeks later, the president of the Prussian Theatre Commission, Hans Hinckel, explained their departure to the German populace. He claimed the public mood would no longer tolerate "Jewish artistic liquidators". His statement summarized that it was in the Jews own best interest to leave the country. Many other well-known artists

¹³ Goldsmith, *Inextinguishable Symphony*, 40.

¹⁴ Goldsmith, *Inextinguishable Symphony*, 41,42.

were also forced to leave. Composition teacher Arnold Schoenberg was dismissed from his school, and ended up in Hollywood.¹⁵ The exodus continued as conditions worsened.

The Nürnberg Race Laws were passed on April 8, 1933, and non-Aryans could no longer hold public positions, including municipal orchestras. Non-Aryan was defined as any person with a Jewish parent or grandparent. Thousands of Jewish actors and musicians suddenly had no job. This list included Düsseldorf Opera conductor Jascha Horenstein, Hans Wilhelm Steinberg of the Frankfurt Opera and Deputy Director of the Berlin City Opera, conductor Kurt Singer.¹⁶ The solo performances of musicians for special occasions were soon affected as well.

The 100 year celebration of Johannes Brahms' birthday was to take place in his hometown of Hamburg the week of May 7, 1933. The Hamburg Philharmonic Society planned to perform all four symphonies, as well as the violin concerto and two piano concertos. Soloist of the piano concertos was to be Rudolf Serkin. Hitler sent word to the Society that he would be there to honor Brahms. He mentioned that he had noticed the number of Jewish musicians in the program, and asked if something could change the situation. The Society removed all Jewish musicians, including Serkin.

This extended even to performances by students. Violinist Ernst Drucker was due to graduate from the Köln Conservatory that spring. He was assigned the Brahms Violin Concerto for a student performance. A Nazi administrator checked the program prior to the concert, and crossed off his name as a participant. Drucker's teacher protested, and a compromise was reached. Drucker was to play only the opening movement, but his name would be restored to the program. He performed the movement, and the following day

¹⁵ Goldsmith, *Inextinguishable Symphony*, 43.

¹⁶ Goldsmith, *Inextinguishable Symphony*, 49.

the student newspaper ran a wonderful review. The official Nazi newspaper, however, was quite derogatory. Despite the difficulties of being a musician in this culture, Drucker chose to remain in Germany, and would become a member of the *Jüdischer Kulturbund*.¹⁷

The *Jüdischer Kulturbund* (Jewish Culture League) was brought into existence in June of 1933. Kurt Singer, managing to find a Nazi ally in Hans Hinkel, set guidelines for the formation of this organization. Membership was only open to Jews, and each member paid a monthly subscription rate. All performance programs had to be approved by Hinkel prior to the beginning of rehearsals. The Jewish Culture League was a combination of arts for Jews, both performers and audiences that were no longer allowed in theatres or symphony halls. Over twenty thousand German Jewish citizens joined. Most major cities had their own orchestra, and it was the only place in Germany where Jewish music was allowed to be played.¹⁸ Many Jewish musicians who were musicians or actors in this league were offered opportunities to leave Germany early in the struggle, but they refused to think that these outrageous events could continue happening for much longer. Their loyalty to Germany kept them performing in the Kulturbund symphonies. Unlike many Jewish composers, the musicians still had a place for their performances.

As the separation between Jewish music and good German music became more pronounced, the Nazis also began to use music for conversion and pacification. The German Government Ministry of Propaganda used radio, press, theatre, cinema, the music industry and the beginnings of the television industry in order to influence the thinking of German people. The Nazis found that used in this way, the music could bring

¹⁷ Goldsmith, *Inextinguishable Symphony*, 44-45.

¹⁸ Goldsmith, *Inextinguishable Symphony*, 44-45.

a desired response from the masses.¹⁹ Germans, as leaders in arts and sciences, believed the traditions of the past could not change. In 1933, Hitler formed the Youth Drum and Bugle Corps, taking all the best musicians into the military bands. In addition, when Nazi leaders decided that all culture and media should serve propaganda purposes, the German artistic standard declined.²⁰

The Propaganda Ministry, led by Joseph Goebbels, controlled all press and radio. Shaping public opinion through broadcasting, they also told newspapers exactly what to write. Music broadcasts became a part of the day, with the number of broadcasts increasing from twenty-five thousand in 1932 to forty thousand in 1935. These broadcasts used for breaks at work and home aired three times daily. The music for concerts and broadcasts was split into ten categories: light entertainment, higher quality entertainment, cabaret and light variety, popular entertainment, serious but familiar, entertainment for armed forces, serious but not familiar, and popular classical music, soloists, features and dramas. Banning all syncopated music, Nazis created lists naming the acceptable and non-acceptable composers.²¹ Leon Batstein believed the list included Mendelssohn because he seemed like a good German in his music, and the Nazis did not want the affiliation of good music with Jews. Nazis based the ban of Erich Korngold's music on the premise that it did not create an emotional response, and lacked cultural roots. One Nazi commentator stated that all Jewish composers would make good film composers, as they could create assembly line music for every cinematic moment.²²

¹⁹ Moller, *Music in Germany*, 40.

²⁰ Moller, *Music in Germany*, 41.

²¹ Moller, *Music in Germany*, 42.

²² Gilliam, Bryon, "A Viennese Opera Composer in Hollywood: Korngold's Double Exile in America". In Brinkmann, *Driven into Paradise*, 229.

Lynn Moller stated the importance of understanding the musical ideology of the Nazis with this, “Music was used to help create an atmosphere that raised murder of the *Untermensch* (subhumans) to a service to one’s fatherland and people”. They learned that a pleasing tune, appropriately arranged with political text worked well to influence the public’s mind.²³ Living in these conditions, it is easy to see why so many fled the Nazis. Between 1933 and 1944, over 1500 musicians entered the United States from Europe.²⁴

The exodus of Jews that Germany experienced included Max Reinhardt, a friend of both Kurt Weill and Erich Korngold. Although Kurt and Erich did not know each other well, Max Reinhardt was responsible for both composers emigration to America. Max brought Kurt to New York for Broadway in 1933, and it was at Max’s invitation that Erich left for Los Angeles in 1934, never dreaming he would not return for many years.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold was the second and youngest son of the famous Viennese music critic, Julius Korngold. Named after Schumann, Hans Robert was born on July 25, 1892. Erich, named Wolfgang after Mozart, was born on May 29, 1897. Both boys were born at the family home in Brünn, Moravia, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.²⁵ Although now a part of the Czech Republic, at that time it was the capital of Moravia.

The Korngold family was Jewish, but saw themselves as Austrian first and did not regularly attend synagogue. Erich’s father, Julius, had always loved music, but when he went to the University in Vienna, it was as a law student. Despite his family’s wishes, he

²³ Moller, *Music in Germany*, 44.

²⁴ Gay, Peter “We Miss Our Jews: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany”. In Brinkmann, *Driven into Paradise*, 21.

²⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 27.

still enrolled in music classes. One of his professor's was Anton Bruckner, and two of his classmates were Arnold Rosé and Hugo Wolf. Julius was a fine pianist, but after graduating, he returned home to Brünn and began practicing law. In order to satisfy his yearning for music, he began to write articles on music and concerts for the local paper.²⁶ The articles he wrote attracted the attention of Eduard Hanslick of *Die Neue Freie Presse* in Vienna. Eduard was the music critic of the paper, and asked Julius to join him in Vienna as his assistant. Julius Korngold, his wife and two boys moved to Vienna in 1901. Just three years after Julius joined the paper, Eduard passed away and left Julius as his successor.²⁷ Securing the position as one of Vienna's most influential music critics was a wonderful job for Julius, but a detriment to the promotion of Erich's music.

By the age of three, Erich beat perfect time with a wooden spoon to his father's music. At five, he played by ear on the piano, replicating themes from *Don Giovanni* and other operas he had heard his father play. He began piano lessons at six years old, and it was later found that he had perfect pitch as well as a fantastic music memory. Once he heard or played a piece, the music stayed with him indefinitely. Erich began composing in 1904.²⁸

Erich kept "music notebooks" containing his early compositions. He carried these with him constantly, including on family vacations. Two of the earliest pieces are dated 1905. *Melodie Opus 1* and *Melodie Opus 2* are simple, yet contain an occasional dissonance that figured so prominently in his later music.²⁹ Brendan Carroll described his early music in Erich's biography, "The early music of Erich Wolfgang Korngold is

²⁶ Duchon, *Korngold*, 12, 14.

²⁷ Duchon, *Korngold*, 17.

²⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 29.

²⁹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 31.

strikingly original, mature and innovative. Korngold's astonishing creativity separates him from other gifted children and places him on a par with the greatest musical prodigies of history".³⁰ Erich wrote a cantata in 1906 for solo singers, chorus and piano entitled *Gold*. This piece clearly shows the influence of opera that he heard his father playing on piano.

Julius tried to downplay Erich's talent, correctly thinking that many would only believe the talent was due to Julius' position as a music critic. When Erich was nine, however, his father finally admitted that his son was quite gifted and sent him to study with Robert Fuchs. Fuchs reluctantly accepted him, but within several weeks was amazed at young Erich's gifts. The compositions written in this time period became longer and more complex. His notebooks contained sonatas, waltzes, scherzandos and sonatinas, all with Erich's unique harmonies. At this point, Julius thought Erich might need someone more contemporary to teach him, so he asked Gustav Mahler for a recommendation.³¹ The Mahler's were close friends of the family, and Erich spent time at their house playing with Mahler's daughter, Anna.³² Gustav saw the incredible gifts within Erich, and recommended that Zemlinsky teach him, rather than send him to a conservatory.

Alexander von Zemlinsky's tutelage had a great impact on Erich's compositions. They became more cohesive works with substance and form. Another feature of his music which surfaced at this time was clear character delineation. This helped his development as a major opera composer. The major composition from this time was *Don Quixote: Six Characteristic Pieces*. This was a piano suite based on Cervantes' *Don*

³⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 28.

³¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 32-33.

³² Duchon, *Korngold*, 22.

Quixote.³³ Erich's pianist talent was evident in his compositions as well. He could make the piano sound like an entire orchestra, rather than just a piano. Bruno Walter was another prominent musician that believed Erich was a genius. He was overheard complaining to a friend about Erich's practicing piano. Walter lived in the apartment just below at this time, and said that when Erich practiced, he was compelled to listen on and on, and did not want to take time to stop listening.³⁴

A near tragedy had a profound effect on Erich when he was just eleven. He accidentally wounded a friend with a paper knife, hitting so close to the jugular vein that the friend nearly died. Quite disturbed, he composed the first two movements of the *Piano Sonata No. 1 in D minor*. It was full of jagged, chromatic harmony similar to Alban Berg's piano sonata written that same year. These works also showed the skill for variation which would be a marker in his later music.³⁵

Erich's next major piece was a ballet. *Der Schneemann* was completed in 1909, and was co-authored by his father. Erich used leitmotifs for all the principal characters, and showed truly original harmonic thinking. With the completion of *Der Schneemann*, Julius was beginning to realize how gifted his son was. Julius was hesitant to bring Erich into the public eye, fearful that as such a public music critic, some would not give Erich a warm reception.³⁶

Julius decided to have the *Piano Sonata No. 1*, *Don Quixote: Six Characteristic Pieces*, and *Der Schneemann* printed by a private publisher with the stipulation printed on the top that they not be brought into the public. They were sent privately to other

³³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 36.

³⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 118.

³⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 38.

³⁶ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 40.

musicians and masters of music just to state that they were written by a young boy of only ten to twelve years old. Only forty copies were printed. Some of those who received the work were astounded by it. Engelbert Humperdinck, although he thought they were too modern, commented on the elaboration and inventiveness of the pieces. Richard Strauss wrote in a letter to Julius “This assurance of style, this mastery of form, this characteristic expressiveness in the sonata, this bold harmony, are truly astonishing”.³⁷ Alban Berg was also quite impressed with Erich’s works.

His father, however, being quite traditional, was not totally supportive of the direction his son’s music appeared to be moving. Although Erich had been influenced by the works he was exposed to from his father’s playing, he definitely formed his own unique style.³⁸ A turning point in his musical direction came with the first public performance of his work. Erich was thirteen when the Baroness von Bienerth, wife of the prime minister, requested a performance of *Der Schneemann*. She was giving a soiree in the ministerial palace, and had heard wonderful things about the private publication. Julius was in a position that made it difficult to refuse, so the ballet was performed with four dancers from the Imperial Ballet, a quickly arranged four-hand piano version, and a violin solo. The performance was a success, and from this point onward, Julius’ activities brought about difficulty for Erich’s career. These included scandals, rumors, smear campaigns and derogatory insinuation. Unfortunately at this time, Zemlinsky had to leave Vienna, and Erich’s formal instruction also came to an end.³⁹ The Vienna public

³⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 42-43.

³⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 44.

³⁹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 46-48.

premiere of *Der Schneemann* took place in October 1910 by the Vienna Court Opera, beginning a long line of Korngold productions to be held there.⁴⁰

Although no longer in formal lessons, Erich's fame began to spread. He performed in numerous places, including salons and festivals all over Germany and Austria. The premiere of Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* took place in Munich.⁴¹ While in Munich for the viewing of the premiere, Erich and his father were invited by Mahler to attend rehearsals as well as the opening night. It was at these rehearsals that Erich met many great musicians; Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, Richard Strauss, Bruno Walter, Arnold Rosé, and Otto Klemperer. All of these great men were affected in some fashion by the rise of the Nazi regime. It was also here that Erich met Max Reinhardt, who would eventually be a catalyst for change in Erich's life.⁴²

Just a couple months after the premiere of the symphony, on November 4, 1910, Erich's *Piano Trio in D Major, op. 1*, for piano, violin and cello also debuted in Munich. Received with great success, the opening in New York had similar results. When it finally came to Vienna, it was successfully performed by Bruno Walter, Arnold Rosé, and Friedrich Buxbaum. All three of these men remained Erich's devoted friends and often performed his works.⁴³

As Julius had feared, the success of the *Piano Trio, op. 1* triggered many comments from the envious enemies of Julius Korngold. A letter signed by several prominent musicians was even circulated accusing Julius of using his influence to

⁴⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 56.

⁴¹ Duchon, *Korngold*, 22.

⁴² Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 55.

⁴³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 62-63.

procure performances for his son. The vast majority, however, acknowledged that Erich's talent could stand on its own.⁴⁴

Erich began receiving invitations to perform far outside Vienna. He continued composing, and made his first piano rolls, playing *Sieben Märchenbilder* [Seven Fairy Tale Pictures]. It had not been performed in public yet, but when it was finally released critics compared it to Schumann's *Kinderszenen*.⁴⁵ *Sieben Märchenbilder* was for piano solo and voice, with each piece named for a different story. The seven movements were as follows: *The Enchanted Princess*, *the Princess and the Pea*, *Rübezahl* [cream-stealer], *Die Wichtelmännchen* [The Goblin], *The Fairy King's Ball*, *The Brave Little Tailor*, and *Epilogue*. Hans Müller, a poet and friend of the family, wrote the short verse that is between each movement.⁴⁶

Piano played a large part in the music of Erich Korngold. Only four of his works do not employ the use of the piano. It was used in a number of ways; some of the pieces use it as harmonic support, or as unexpected color. One symphony utilizes it as a percussion instrument, using staccato octaves or emphasis for cadences. Doubling harp glissandos was another common occurrence.⁴⁷ Many people commented over the years, that to hear Erich play piano was like listening to an orchestra, even without the orchestra behind him.

A trait of Erich's music was the practice of using a song as a basis for a chamber movement, which was also prevalent in Mahler's use of lieder in his symphonies. The

⁴⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 65.

⁴⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 69.

⁴⁶ Duchon, *Korngold*, 47.

⁴⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 85.

best example of this in Korngold's music is in his *Piano Quintet in E Major, op. 15*.⁴⁸ Undoubtedly, Mahler had a huge impact on Korngold's music. When Mahler passed away on May 18, 1911, Korngold was extremely saddened. He spoke of Mahler with reverence for the rest of his life.⁴⁹

Not long after Mahler's death, Erich met Max Reinhardt again, this time in Karlsbad. Max invited him to attend rehearsals of Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène*. Erich went, not realizing that in thirty years he would do an adaptation for Max. The rest of his summer vacation was spent traveling to Prague, then Salzburg.⁵⁰ While in Salzburg, Erich played *Piano Sonata No. 2 in E Major* for Artur Schnabel. Artur requested that he be allowed to put it in his repertoire. He premiered this piece at a Berlin concert in October 1911. Promptly established as a new major work, Schnabel became a specialist of Korngold's compositions. The following year they were both invited to perform in Frankfurt by the Society for Esthetic Culture. Schnabel played *Piano Sonata No. 1*, and Erich performed *Piano Sonata No. 2*. The Adolf Rebner Quartet played the *Piano Trio in D Major*.⁵¹

He also began orchestral composition in 1911. Erich's trip to Leipzig for the premiere of his *Schauspiel Ouverture* was a turning point. Arthur Nikisch conducted a world premiere of this piece with the Gewandhaus orchestra. Reviews were remarkable, and the work was a complete success. In an ironic twist, Erich's father had missed the performance. Overhearing someone near him in the audience wish that the performance

⁴⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 92.

⁴⁹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 82.

⁵⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 72.

⁵¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 77.

would fail, Julius left before the end. When he returned to the dressing room afterwards, he was astonished to find Erich in the midst of congratulations.⁵²

Success followed him back to Vienna. Erich spent a lot of his time in salons, and played before some well-known artists. The salon of Jenny Mautner was attended often by Richard Strauss, Max Reinhardt, and conductor Fritz Steinbach. After hearing the *Schauspiel Ouvertüre*, Steinbach requested the rights to perform it in Cologne. This turned into “Korngold Week”, with performances of the overture, as well as his Piano Trio, *Sinfonietta* and *Der Schneemann*.

Adele Strauss, widow of Johann, held a favorite salon of Erich’s. While here, he met Alfred Grünfeld, an Austrian pianist. Grünfeld was the first to commercially record Korngold’s music. The Gramophone Company in Vienna sponsored the recording of *Die Wichtelmännchen* from *Sieben Märchenbilder*.⁵³ Many other salons were part of the Korngold’s lifestyle in Vienna. Dr. Hugo Ganz and Dr. Guido Engelmann both frequently held salons that Erich attended. All those that heard Erich perform or listened to his compositions being played by others were astounded by the fact that such a young boy was responsible for the level of genius he consistently produced.

During these years, Korngold’s religion is not discussed either in the memoir of his father or wife. It is known that he did experience the Anti-Semitic demonstrations in Graz in February of 1911. He was not a religious Jew; Erich did not appear to have had a Bar Mitzvah, the household was not kosher, nor did he attend synagogue. He did, however, feel the racial prejudice most other Jewish artists of the time experienced. In his biographer Carroll’s words, “Interestingly, many of Korngold’s most fervent

⁵² Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 78.

⁵³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 79.

supporters during his early period were also Jews. Bruno Walter, Richard Specht, Zemlinsky, Louise Wolff, Arnold Rosé, Rudolf Kolisch, and of course Mahler. The exception was Richard Strauss". This may have been a contributing factor to the criticism of Erich's works.⁵⁴ Interestingly, despite Dr. Julius Korngold's criticism of Richard Strauss, Richard continued to be a friend of Erich's for another decade.

On November 13, 1913, the *Sinfonietta in B Major* premiered in Vienna. The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra was conducted by Mahler's successor, Felix Weingartner. It was then performed in Berlin on February 9, 1914. Seeing Erich as a protégé, he shared a box at that performance with Richard Strauss. Jean Sibelius, who was present at the concert in Berlin, called Korngold "a young eagle", and knew he had much greater works to come. A year later, Richard Strauss conducted the *Sinfonietta* at the Royal Opera House in Berlin. Korngold's work was quite popular, and being performed all over the western world including Europe, Russia, England and the United States.⁵⁵

By the spring of 1914, Erich had orchestrated the opera *Der Ring des Polykrates*. The rest of the year was devoted to the composition of *Violanta*, with libretto was by Hans Müller. Maria Jeritza sang the lead, and became Korngold's inspiration for his subsequent opera compositions. Korngold uses the Wagnerian leitmotiv in *Violanta*, as well as in his later operas.⁵⁶ This work seemed to come from a more mature Korngold. In the words of Brendan Carroll, "It is the character of his music that suddenly changed. The charm, humor and endearing boyishness pervading his early music is swept aside and

⁵⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 72.

⁵⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 97.

⁵⁶ Duchon, *Korngold*, 66, 67.

replaced by an intense erotic fantasy, which even now packs an enormous punch”.⁵⁷ The maturing of Erich Korngold soon took another avenue. The summer of 1914 brought the beginning of World War I. For now, seventeen-year-old Erich and the rest of Vienna continued on in the same manner of previous years.⁵⁸

Musicians were exempt from military service, but a government assignment was needed in order to obtain the exemption. Hans Gregor, who was Weingartner’s successor as director of the Vienna Court Opera, heard one of the songs from *Violanta* at the salon of Frau Ehrestein. He wanted the rights to perform both operas in Vienna, which would give Erich the employment he needed.⁵⁹ Erich made his debut as a conductor at the Vienna Opera Court on May 26, 1916.⁶⁰ The two operas premiered in Vienna, but as the war dragged on, his exemption was eventually questioned. When Erich attended his medical exam, the doctor present had been the physician for singers at the Vienna Court Opera. Knowing Korngold, he exempted Erich from duty at the front. Instead, Erich was assigned as music director of his regiment, and able to stay in Vienna. His duties included conducting the regimental band, and maintaining the archives and music for the library of the regiment.⁶¹ In addition, he was asked to play piano in the officer’s mess. He composed *Österreichischer Soldatenabscheid* [Austrian Soldier’s Farewell] for voice and piano, as well as other patriotic songs. These all helped raise money for the Austrian War Relief Fund.⁶² He still had plenty of time, however, for other composition.

⁵⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 102,103.

⁵⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 106.

⁵⁹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 108, 109.

⁶⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 124.

⁶¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 114.

⁶² Duchon, *Korngold*, 70, 71.

Georges Rodenbach's 1892 novel, *Bruges La Morte*, played a part in Korngold's next opera. Rodenbach first adapted the novel into a four-act play, *Le Mirage*, but it was never produced. Siegfried Trebitsch translated it into German as *Die Stille Stadt* [The Silent City] in 1902, and produced it in Berlin. Trebitsch republished this version in 1913 with a translation of *La Voile* [Der Schleier].⁶³

A good friend of Erich's, Trebitsch asked him to turn it into an opera libretto. Julius, under another name, and Erich undertook the project together. Although Erich's military service delayed the composition somewhat, in 1919 it emerged as *Die tote Stadt* [The Dead City]. It utilized an extended dream for most of the drama, which allowed more opportunities to create sounds and images.⁶⁴ Korngold's orchestration skill is reminiscent of both Mahler and Strauss. Carroll states that Erich's intention was to "sound like a single, intensely resonant instrument. He wanted to give the timbre and texture of the orchestra sound a cohesion that would recognizably be his sound".⁶⁵ He achieved those qualities in this work.

Erich was at a dinner party in 1917 with a close friend, Rudi Duschnitz. Invited to the same party was one of Rudi's distant relatives, Luise von Sonnenthal. Luzi was the grand-daughter of Adolf Ritter von Sonnenthal, a great actor and matinee idol of the Burgtheater. She had three sisters, all of whom were in the arts. Luzi painted, played piano, acted and sang. Also from a Jewish middle-class family, she loved Mozart and read avidly. Although this meeting was brief, and they did not see each other again for a time, Luzi wrote in her memoirs that she felt a connection to Erich that first time they

⁶³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 121.

⁶⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 122.

⁶⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 123.

met.⁶⁶ Erich met Luzi again at a concert later that year, and aided by his friends, used every opportunity possible to see her. He received a commission to write incidental music to Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* shortly after he began seeing Luzi. The music reflects the fact that he was deeply in love.⁶⁷ A long courtship was to follow, as Erich's parents were so protective of him. They seemed to always be with him, and until that point Erich had only had friendships with girls.⁶⁸ Even while in the military, since he stayed in Vienna, his parents still kept him close.

Toward the end of World War I, Korngold's military demands increased. He was asked to play more often, as music was used to try to strengthen the low morale.⁶⁹ After the war, Austria became known as the German-Austrian Republic. For the first time, it was run by Social Democrats instead of an emperor. Vienna was destitute. According to the chief medical officer of Vienna, over 20,000 children were close to starvation, and more than 130,000 men were unemployed. Inflation increased daily.⁷⁰ Despite the poverty, Korngold's career flourished. He conducted his own works in Vienna, and visited Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, Budapest and Brünn.⁷¹

He composed *Sursum Corda, op. 13* in 1919. The title of this work came from a Roman Catholic mass. The music was difficult to understand the first time it was heard, and the audiences did not like it. People hissed and booed the performances, and Erich had his first flop. The following work that premiered had the exact opposite effect on people. *Much Ado About Nothing* was a great success, and Korngold remained popular.⁷²

⁶⁶ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 120.

⁶⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 125.

⁶⁸ Duchon, *Korngold*, 117.

⁶⁹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 129.

⁷⁰ Duchon, *Korngold*, 87, 88.

⁷¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 131.

⁷² Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 133, 134.

Die tote Stadt was finally orchestrated and completed in 1920.⁷³ Highly praised, this work showed the correlation between Korngold's and Puccini's music, especially when looking at Puccini's later work of *Turandot*. Puccini had known Erich for many years, and was a close friend. The Italian style of Puccini clearly showed in some of Erich's works as well.

This opera was a turning point in Korngold's career. The music in Germany had begun to change with the age of *Neue Sachlichkeit* [New Objectivity]. Although not in the same circles as Schoenberg, Erich continued to write steadily.⁷⁴ At a production in Munich, however, a delegation of the National Socialists Party attended the premier carrying torches and swastikas. They tried to disrupt the concert on racial grounds. When the conductor defended Korngold, the Hitler group fumed against the non-Aryan opera. *Die tote Stadt* had to be removed from the schedule, and eventually all his work was pulled.⁷⁵

Despite all the turmoil, on April 30, 1924, Erich and Luzi were married. Although they had had a long friendship and engagement, his parents were not happy with the decision. They openly expressed their disapproval, and remained cool to Luzi.⁷⁶ The newlyweds traveled extensively while Erich performed in various locations. They spent the summer in Alt Aussee; a quite enjoyable honeymoon until Erich's parents joined them at the end of June. In spite of Luzi's efforts, both parents remained distant and critical. Erich's mother took over running the household, and planned their lives, routines and friends. Instead of fighting the decision, Luzi became Erich's assistant. She

⁷³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 144.

⁷⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 148, 149.

⁷⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 185.

⁷⁶ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 175.

proof-read and corrected his music, and managed minor details for him. The most difficult time was when they all returned to Vienna. A housing shortage made it hard to find their own place, so they had to live with the elder Korngolds for a time. Thankfully, the mayor of Vienna helped them locate a place of their own.⁷⁷

It wasn't long after they married before Luzi became aware Erich suffered from agoraphobia. He could only attend the theatre or a concert if they sat in a corner or box. He couldn't sit at formal dinner parties and eat an entire meal; instead he would excuse himself with a headache until the meal was over. These were difficulties that the newlyweds would learn to work through.⁷⁸

Not long after arriving back in Vienna, Erich found a manuscript copy of *Die Helige*, by Hans Kaltneker. A poet and expressionist, Kaltneker had died at age twenty-four. Korngold was drawn to his writing, but they had never met. Kaltneker had seen *Violanta*, and written *Die Helige* with the desire that it should be set to music by Korngold. The amazing part is that Erich simply stumbled onto the manuscript; he did not find out until later of Kaltneker's intent. With the libretto written by Hans Müller, this manuscript became one of his best works, *Das Wunder der Heliane*.⁷⁹

Julius Korngold still approved of the music his son was writing, but he did not like the new music being composed by many. As a critic, he was harsh on those that supported and wrote more modern music. Comments he made, especially those against Richard Strauss, made it increasingly difficult for Erich to maintain his friendship with Strauss.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 178-180.

⁷⁸ Duchon, *Korngold*, 112, 113.

⁷⁹ Duchon, *Korngold*, 104, 105.

⁸⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 181.

While Strauss was still conductor of the Vienna State Opera, Julius wrote an extremely volatile letter to Ernst Benedikt, editor of the *Neue Freie Presse* regarding the “borrowing” of lead singers of the opera for his performances elsewhere. Erich supported his father in this opinion, and requested that his operas be removed from the schedule. They were not removed, and relations were strained between them. The issue came to a head in the summer of 1924 during performances of *Die Fledermaus*. Julius wrote another inflammatory letter regarding one of the performers. Strauss immediately requested one year’s leave from the Vienna State Opera. When his request was denied, he resigned.⁸¹

The first production after Strauss’ departure was that of *Violanta*. Erich was appointed to conduct, which angered many who were supporters of Strauss. A huge disruption occurred when he arrived to take his place in the orchestra pit. There was much booing and hissing, while a small section of Korngold supporters attempted to cheer for Erich. Although this affair came to an end and Strauss returned to conduct another production, it had a lasting effect on the relationship between Strauss and Erich.⁸²

In early 1925, Korngold was receiving many invitations to perform and conduct abroad. Even though Luzi was expecting their first child, Erich accepted them. Born on March 9, 1925, Ernst Warner Korngold shared his initials with his father. Sadly, Erich had to spend much time away conducting and attending his many obligations.⁸³

Since Erich was doing so much traveling, on occasion his family would go with him. They traveled together to Salzburg, then Nürnberg to promote the release of *Das Wunder der Heliane*. During the time they were in Nürnberg, the National Socialist Party

⁸¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 182.

⁸² Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 183, 184.

⁸³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 186, 187.

also had a convention there. Erich had to go to a meeting, and Luzi stayed in the hotel waiting for him. In her memoirs, she commented on the foreboding she felt when the Nazis stomped past her hotel. This sense stayed with her until the worst played out in the near future.⁸⁴

In May of 1927, Erich finally finished the compositions for *Das Wunder der Heliane*, and the orchestration was completed in August. Unfortunately, his father's activities seriously affected the reception of the new work. His column was most influential in bringing Richard Strauss' time at the Vienna State Opera to an end. Julius was clearly hostile to those composers that followed Schoenberg's lead. The campaign against Křenek and *Jonny spielt auf* [Jonny Strikes Up] was by far the worst of his tirades.⁸⁵

Julius believed that the production of *Jonny spielt auf* was a degeneration of opera as he knew it. He attempted to stop production, and his friend Franz Schalk, director of the Vienna opera supported him at first. The new administration of Austrian State Theaters interceded, and forced the opera into production. Franz turned to friends in the old German Nationalist Party to help fight his cause. Many were already involved in the National Socialist Party, and used anti-Semitic means of bashing the work. According to Carroll, articles in the Nazi papers described it as "a Jewish desecration of the State Opera by a work containing jazz tunes and a pornographic plot".⁸⁶ When *Das Wunder der Heliane* was finally released in Berlin, a battle ensued between those supporting

⁸⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 191.

⁸⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 195.

⁸⁶ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 198.

Křenek, and Korngold's fans. Although it was not greatly accepted in Berlin, elsewhere in Germany *Das Wunder der Heliane* was well received.⁸⁷

The spring of 1928 found Luzi expecting another child. Georg was born on December 17, 1928, and inspired Erich to compose *Baby Serenade*. At the same time, Korngold was working on another operetta adaptation, *Rosen aus Florida* [Rose from Florida]. The music, by Leo Fall, was given to Erich by Fall's widow. The sketches were not complete enough to complete the operetta, so Erich composed the remaining parts as closely to Fall's style as he was capable.⁸⁸

Operettas seemed to engulf Erich's life. He was becoming more known for creating those than he was as a serious composer. In 1929, Max Reinhardt asked Erich to collaborate on *La Vie Parisienne* by Offenbach. Although Erich declined that particular work, he suggested to Reinhardt that they do a re-interpretation of *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss.⁸⁹ This was yet another of Korngold's achievements.

About this time, the German film industry was beginning to convert to sound film production. They focused mostly on screen operettas. Some were newly composed, while others filmed versions of existing scores. Korngold was approached, and asked to write an original score for *Der Congressstanz* [The Congress Dance]. He declined to do that film, and turned down a second in 1931 due to his involvement in Reinhardt's work.⁹⁰

Reinhardt kept returning to Erich to ask for more productions. He requested an adaptation of *La Belle H elene* in December of 1930. Also by Offenbach, it resurfaced as

⁸⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 204.

⁸⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 205.

⁸⁹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 207.

⁹⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 218.

Die schöne Helena. Erich incorporated much of Offenbach's music, and was much more innovative musically than *Die Fledermaus* had been. The June 1931 premiere was held in Berlin, with Korngold conducting. Reinhardt also took the operetta to England, where it premiered in January 1932 as *Helen*.⁹¹ Plans were being made to open presentations in Vienna and Berlin, and run them simultaneously. Erich was asked to attend both, splitting his time between them. These continual demands of Erich's time from Reinhardt were becoming distressing. Korngold wanted to begin composing his own serious work again, and had begun looking for a new opera.⁹²

The next operetta adaptation Erich worked on was *Die geschiedene Frau* [The Divorced Woman], again by Leo Fall. Produced in Berlin in January 1933, the entire musical score was never published. The play run was interrupted by the elections bringing Hitler to power. Korngold sent a postcard to his publisher, Schott, that the production was a disaster. He left quickly on February 17, 1933 for Austria. This was his last time in Germany until 1949.⁹³

Back in Austria, the Korngolds began to look for a summer residence. They found an old castle that resembled a rambling farmhouse. Erich and his family moved into Schloss Höselberg in March 1933. Finally relieved from doing operettas for a time, Erich spent the summer working on a song cycle, *Unvergänglichkeit* [The Eternal] with poetry by Eleanore van der Straten.⁹⁴ After a summer's respite, Reinhardt contacted

⁹¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 212, 213.

⁹² Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 215.

⁹³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 222.

⁹⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 223.

Erich in the fall about doing a production of *Die Fledermaus* in Paris. This time, Luzi traveled with him, where he conducted the renamed *La Chave-souris*.⁹⁵

Success seemed to follow the production, and this time Reinhardt wanted to take it to Italy. In January 1934, the Korngolds went first to San Remo, then Milan. Upon arrival in San Remo, it quickly became apparent that preparations had not been made for the operetta. Luzi took over as a coach for the singers, and was in charge of stage management. The night of the opening, Erich was quite sick, and could not conduct. The production was a flop. The same happened in Milan, and lasted only one night.⁹⁶

The Korngolds left Italy for Schloss Höselsberg, where Erich looked forward to working on his new opera. At the time of these mishaps, Reinhardt decided it was time to leave for America. In May, he left for New York to produce Austrian playwright Franz Werfel's *Der Weg der Verheissung* [Eternal Road]. The musician involved in the production was Kurt Weill. Not long after that, Reinhardt moved to Hollywood, where Warner Brothers had been negotiating to hire him since 1932. He did not return to Germany. Goebbels twisted conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler's words, and implied that Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer, and Reinhardt were not "true German artists", leaving the three as refugees.⁹⁷ Another great composer that felt the same pressures and left Germany was Kurt Weill.

Kurt Weill was from one of the oldest Jewish families in Germany. Beginning in the fourteenth century, a long line of rabbis could be traced to the Weill family.⁹⁸ Albert Weill married Emma Ackermann in 1897. They had four children, of which Curt Julian

⁹⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 224.

⁹⁶ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 225.

⁹⁷ Duchon, *Korngold*, 144, 145.

⁹⁸ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, xiii.

Weill was the third boy. Coming to marriage late for the times, Albert was thirty, and Emma twenty-five years old, they quickly started their family. Nathan was born in 1898 and Hanns Jakob in 1899. Curt, as it was written in the local synagogue, was born on March 2, 1900. A girl, Ruth, was finally born in 1901.⁹⁹

Emma came from an extremely pious and intellectual family. Her brother, Rabbi Aaron Ackerman, was a leading authority on the music of Jewish rites. He also composed numerous songs for the synagogue. This may have been one of her attractions to Albert Weill. Albert was a cantor in the synagogue at Eichstätt, Bavaria. He had been appointed there in his early twenties, and had published a collection of chants for cantor and a *capella* male voice choir. A year after their marriage, he was appointed cantor and schoolteacher to the Jewish community of Dessau.¹⁰⁰

The town of Dessau, located in eastern Germany, did not have a Jewish ghetto as was the custom of the time. The section of town where the Weill's lived had been designated for Jews over the last few centuries. They were first admitted to the town in 1672, and received permission to build a synagogue in 1687. It wasn't until 1848 that Jews received full political, social and educational rights. At the turn of the century, when Albert moved his small family, Dessau had only 500 Jews living there.¹⁰¹

In this small community, the Weills were a close-knit family, with traditional Jewish values. Music played an important role at home, but most of Kurt's early music education was centered on the synagogue and its life. Albert rehearsed at home; he practiced chants and played through hymns in preparation for the week's services.¹⁰² The

⁹⁹ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 3.

¹⁰¹ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 4.

¹⁰² Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 5.

synagogue had the largest impact on his music. The worship services were a ritual of visual symbol, drama and musical. With its fluctuating traditions, some eastern, some traditional Biblical chants, Kurt's ear developed in a rounded manner. Antiphons were polyphonic, and mixed choirs were sometimes used. This all helped to create an instinctual response, ingrained into the smallest child. Kurt received his first piano lessons from his father at the age of six. After three years, his father realized he needed more training, and was sent to a Parisian in town, Madame Margarète Evelyn-Schapiro.¹⁰³ No matter the direction his music took, the Hebrew melodies would forever stay with him as part of his memory. The creation of a European composer who happened to be a Jew had begun.

Even as a child, he lived for the music, and had a feel for the theatrical. Academics did not excite him; he only did enough to move from grade to grade. As he grew older, he found his interest shifting from the religious music of the synagogue to the secular area of the theater.¹⁰⁴ At the age of fifteen, he talked his father into allowing him to take lessons from Albert Bing. A Jewish musician, Bing was the Kapellmeister at the court theater. As the protégé of Bing, Kurt was introduced to life at the ducal palace.¹⁰⁵ Exposed to many new opportunities, after playing a charity concert, Duke Friedrich asked Kurt to teach piano to his niece and two nephews. He was also asked to help out as a rehearsal coach for the court theatre.¹⁰⁶ Weill developed his skills in many ways. Taking

¹⁰³ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 6, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 8.

¹⁰⁵ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 10.

¹⁰⁶ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 2.

lessons from Bing included not just piano, but also orchestration, conducting, score reading, and organ.¹⁰⁷

One of his earliest compositions was a patriotic war song, *Ich weiss wofür* [I Know Why]. Little of his early music is extant. The other few pieces that remain reflect the German-Jewish society that he lived in. He composed a Hebrew wedding song, and a cycle of settings of poems by medieval Hebrew poet, Judah Halevi called *Ofrah's Lieder*. For his sister Ruth's confirmation, he wrote *Gebet* [Prayer], a piece blending Hebrew rite with Christian poetry.¹⁰⁸

World War I loomed over the Weill family. Both Nathan and Hanns were drafted, leaving only Kurt and Ruth at home. Kurt kept busy with music education, and began conducting the school orchestra and male voice choir. The war also created worry in Kurt. With his eighteenth birthday approaching, he feared having to go. As most Germans of the time, he no longer believed in the cause of the war.¹⁰⁹ In August of 1917, he began to take trumpet lessons. His thought that he could play in a military band rather than having to go to the front lines.¹¹⁰ Trying to think of different ways to avoid the draft, the night prior to a military medical exam, he took a large dose of aspirin. The next morning, he awoke sweating, with a pounding pulse and breathing hard, he failed the physical. He was never called to the military and was able to continue in his education. By the time the war ended, he was at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin.¹¹¹ His parents

¹⁰⁷ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 10.

¹⁰⁸ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 11, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 13, 14.

¹¹⁰ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 2.

¹¹¹ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 14.

were hesitant to allow him to do just music, so as a compromise, he agreed to spend a summer term at the University of Berlin in the arts.¹¹²

When Kurt arrived in Berlin, he had difficulty finding a place to stay. At first, he lived with friends and family. Finally, through the help a family member, he was offered a job training and conducting a Jewish choir. This gave him the means to afford the inflationary housing costs that existed there. Starting at the University of Berlin, he went to lectures by Ernst Cassirer, a philosopher, and Max Dessoir. Neither kept Kurt's interest for long. At the Hochschule, he began by studying composition, counterpoint and conducting. His conducting teacher was Rudolf Krassett. To Kurt, it seemed logical to practice conducting; it was the best way to become intensely familiar with the score, and gave an overview of the music. His fascination with it was the knowledge that he could capture the entire gamut of his creative vision by reading the score and conducting the musicians. Kurt was also fortunate to study composition under Engelbert Humperdinck, who was once a student of Richard Wagner's.¹¹³

At the end of the semester, Kurt went back to Dessau, and told his parents he did not want to study philosophy, just music. He returned to the Hochschule, but in the fall of 1917, World War I was dragging on. Political unrest was prevalent, and as Kurt wrote to his brother, Hans, each political party used the Jews as a scapegoat. People were ready to revolt and point at the Jews as a target.¹¹⁴ Despite this, Berlin was a good city to be in culturally. The opera houses were still operating, and the Berlin Philharmonic continued to play regular seasons. In the 1918-1919 season, Richard Strauss came to conduct *Salome*, and somehow Kurt managed to attend.

¹¹² Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 15.

¹¹³ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 17.

¹¹⁴ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 19.

Inspired by the arts surrounding him, Kurt composed several surviving works while in school. The four-movement *String Quartet in B Minor* showed his skill in counterpoint. He dedicated the *Suite in E for full orchestra* in 6 movements to his father, and wrote *Schilflieder* [Songs of the Reeds and Rushes], a song cycle of five songs based on short poems by Lenau. The first of his works based on Rilke's poems was *Die Weise von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke* [The Lay of Love and Death of Cornet Christoph Rilke]. All these different genres of work clearly reflect Kurt's varied interests in music.¹¹⁵ Even from the start, Weill showed a direct connection to the works of Schoenberg. Unfortunately, he could not afford to go to Vienna to study with the esteemed composer. However, the influences of other great composers such as Stravinsky, Alban Berg, Webern, Hindemith and Křenek all showed in his very distinctive and individual style.

In his last semester at the Hochschule, Kurt received a grant from Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Stiftung. A liberal Jewish foundation, they gave annual prizes toward the training of young, talented musicians. Although he did not accept it, the Hochschule had helped him begin. He had received a good historical background of music, and been allowed to practice his techniques in a welcoming environment.¹¹⁶

Weill had sought jobs in Munich, Cologne and Tilsit, but each one fell through, resulting in Kurt's return to Dessau. His former teacher, Bing, gladly hired him as a full-time operatic coach.¹¹⁷ His composition teacher also recommended him for a six-month tenure as second Kapellmeister at the municipal theatre in Lüdenscheid, Westphalia. He accepted it in December of 1919. By 1920, he had been promoted to chief conductor.

¹¹⁵ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 20, 21.

¹¹⁶ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 22.

¹¹⁷ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 23.

Proving his skill as a conductor, in April 1920 he conducted three operas in two days; *Die Fledermaus*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and *Zigeunerbaron*.¹¹⁸

In September of 1920, Kurt moved back to Berlin to study with Ferruccio Busoni. He had been accepted into Busoni's master class at the Prussian Academy of Arts. For the next few years, Kurt was a devoted student, but barely able to exist in post-war Germany. He survived by giving theory lessons and directing synagogue choirs.¹¹⁹ He was also a choral conductor at a synagogue on Munchener Strasse.¹²⁰ Berlin was a haven for artists during the years of the Weimar Republic. It was considered a center of the arts, and the composers living in Berlin included Hindemith, Křenek, and Busoni. Sadly Busoni died in 1924. Great names were conducting at the concert houses; Wilhelm Fřrtwangler at the Berlin Philharmonic, the Kroll Opera had Otto Klemperer, Bruno Walter conducted the new Municipal Opera and Erich Kleiber was at the State Opera. Even theater was well represented by Max Reinhardt at the Deutsches Theater, Kammerspiel.¹²¹

German art prior to World War I had been dominated by Expressionism. After the Revolution of 1918, over one hundred German artists formed "Novembergruppe". In the words of Jarman, this was "a socially conscious, artistic body dedicated to the spirit of the revolution". They wanted to reexamine the tie between the composer and the public, and attempt to bring the two closer together again. Weill had joined this group in

¹¹⁸ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 16.

¹¹⁹ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, xiii.

¹²⁰ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 16.

¹²¹ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 31.

April of 1921, but consisting of too diverse a group, it died out shortly after his association began.¹²²

Kurt gave consideration to writing a dissertation on synagogue music in June of 1921, but it did not materialize. In July, while he was learning composition with Busoni, he also studied counterpoint with Philipp Jarnach. Knowing Kurt's financial position, Jarnach gave Weill the lessons free of charge. The year 1922 began Kurt's most productive times. A ballet-pantomime, *Zaubernacht*, with the scenario by Vladimir Boritsch, premiered at the Theater am Kurfürstendamm in Berlin. On March 23, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra presented *Fantasia, Passacaglia, und Hymnus für Orchester, op. 6*. The Hindemith-Amar Quartet premiered *String Quartet No. 1, op. 8* at the Frankfurt Kammermusikwoche on June 24, 1923. Expressionist playwright Georg Kaiser became a part of Kurt's life in January of 1924. That summer, Georg introduced Kurt to Lotte Lenja at Kaiser's home in Grünheide.¹²³ Lotte changed her last name to Lenya in 1938.

Lotte, born Karoline Wilhelmine Charlotte Blamauer, became Kurt's significant other in a short time. They moved into one of Georg Kaiser's Berlin apartments together in May 1925. They were married in a civil service on January 18, 1926.¹²⁴ The pair seemed mismatched, but that may have been the draw of opposites to each other. Lotte was a Gentile, and very much an extrovert. Her early life had been one of raw experiences, and her family was not close. Kurt, on the other hand, was reserved, but

¹²² Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 32.

¹²³ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 17.

¹²⁴ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 42.

intense, and quite intellectual. Although he had left behind the public observance of his Jewish faith, he still maintained a close relationship with his parents.¹²⁵

Lotte spent much time with him, and the two traveled together frequently. They went to Italy, where Kurt received a publishing contract with Universal Edition. When he returned, Georg Kaiser and Kurt began working together on *Der Protagonist*. Philipp Jarnach, who had been his counterpoint teacher in Berlin, set Kurt up with his first commissions and key performances.¹²⁶ Life began moving at a more rapid pace, with varied jobs and commissions. Kurt began working as the chief Berlin music correspondent for the weekly journal, *Der deutsch Rundfunk* in November 1924.¹²⁷ In January of 1925, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra premiered *Das Stendenbuch*, another Rilke poem. On May 11, The Funkstunde Berlin broadcast an “Evening of the November Group”. Weill did a review for *Der Deutsch Rundfunk* on Bertolt Brecht’s recitation of “Ballade vom Mazeppa”.¹²⁸

Choosing a path as a theater composer, Kurt introduced many film and audio recordings to the stage. He also incorporated popular dance forms into his music, which had a positive effect on the reception of his style.¹²⁹ Weill realized when he wrote music, it contained the tension of scenic action. He was sure of his path in theatre music.¹³⁰ His first major success, *Der Protagonist*, was written with Kaiser. It premiered at the Dresden Staatsoper on March 27, 1926. Kurt and Lotte traveled to Zurich to attend the fourth festival of the Société Internationale de Musique Contemporaine where his violin

¹²⁵ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 74.

¹²⁶ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, xiii.

¹²⁷ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 17.

¹²⁸ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 42.

¹²⁹ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, xiii.

¹³⁰ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 67.

concerto was performed in June of 1926. The year of 1927 brought Weill and Brecht together for the first time and collaboration on *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* began. Such a grand performance required several years of work, and in the meantime Brecht and Weill completed other works. March 2, 1927 brought the premiere of *Der neue Orpheus* and *Royal Palace*, a collaboration with Iwan Goll. It was held at the Berlin Staatsoper Unterdenlinden. A Brecht-Weill production, *Vom Tod im Wald*, op. 23, premiered on November 23 by the Berlin Philharmonic.¹³¹

The success continued into the next year. Weill composed a large amount of incidental music for many plays. On January 2, 1928, he was one of eight nominees to the Prussian Academy of Arts. It was an honor, despite the fact that he was not elected. Georg Kaiser and Weill worked together on *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*, op. 21 [The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken]. This premiered at the Leipzig Neues Theater on February 18, 1928. Amazingly, it ran over 114 performances in its first two seasons.¹³²

Kurt's next collaboration with Brecht was an instant hit. *Der Dreigroschenoper* [The Threepenny Opera] was based on an adaptation of John Gay's 1728 *The Beggar's Opera*.¹³³ The play was brought into late Victorian Soho, capital of the London underworld. Gangster Mackie Messer, otherwise known as "Mack the Knife", is featured in the story.¹³⁴ It premiered on August 31, 1928 at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin. Recordings from The Threepenny Opera were issued in 1929. *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik für Blasorchester* [Small Threepenny Music for Orchestra] was performed at the Staatsoper am Platz der Republik, Kolloper with Otto Klemperer as the

¹³¹ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 42.

¹³² Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 43.

¹³³ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 44.

¹³⁴ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 135.

conductor.¹³⁵ Their next work together was a series of poems by Brecht. *Das Berliner Requiem* premiered on May 22, 1929 at the Südwestdeustcher Rundfunkdienst in Frankfurt.¹³⁶ During this successful time, Kurt had the opportunity to meet Ira and George Gershwin. Weill was invited to an informal gathering of German composers, and the Gershwins explained how the music publishing business worked in America. Little did Kurt know the effect the Gershwins would have on his future in America in just a few short years.¹³⁷

While still working on *Mahagonny*, Weill and Brecht also worked on a production with Paul Hindemith. The original version of *Der Lindberghflug* [The Lindbergh Flight] was performed July 27 at the Kurhaus in Baden-Baden with the Frankfurter Rundfunkorchester. Neither Weill nor Hindemith was happy with the results. On December 5, a second version was performed. This time, the music was entirely by Weill, and the text had also been reset by Kurt. Otto Klemperer conducted it at the Staatsoper am Platz der Republik, Krolloper.¹³⁸

Finally in 1930, the premiere of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* was at hand. It was presented at the Leipzig Neues Theater, but the performance was interrupted by Nazi demonstrations. Police were present for the remaining performances to supervise the crowds. Similar incidents resulted in October when *Mahagonny* was released in Frankfurt. The music for the play was tremendously popular. In April, Universal Edition published *Sieben Stücke nach der Dreigroschenoper* [Seven Pieces

¹³⁵ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 88.

¹³⁶ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 43.

¹³⁷ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 101.

¹³⁸ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 88.

from The Threepenny Opera] for violin and piano. Weill also did a radio program in Berlin featuring the music from the opera.¹³⁹

The Brecht-Weill combination for *Mahagonny* brought forth a modern technical term. Since “singspiel” didn’t fit the description of the music, the product captured a new name, “song”. Critic Herbert Fleischer stated that Weill’s songs were not common songs, but ballads. Ronald Taylor affirms “The Mahagonny Songspiel is the first work in which what the world has come to recognize as the inimitable voice of Kurt Weill is heard from beginning to end”.¹⁴⁰

Kurt Weill’s fame was spreading throughout the world. The American premiere of *Der Lindberghflug* was on April 4, 1931 conducted by Leopold Stokowski, with the Philadelphia Orchestra. The political situation in Germany was deteriorating, however, so while on vacation in France and Spain, Weill decided to open a Swiss bank account. The Weill’s marriage also was suffering, and they separated in March 1932.

On February 18, 1933, *Der Silbersee* premiered simultaneously at the Altes Theater in Leipzig, as well as in Erfurt and Magdeburg. The play was about social problems and economic decline.¹⁴¹ It was an allegory in three acts, and was subtitled *A Winter’s Tale*. The attempt to bring association with Heine’s *Germany: A Winter’s Tale*, which was a satire on mid-nineteenth century political reaction and tyranny, was not missed by the Nazis.¹⁴² On February 19, F.A. Hauptmann, a music critic with the Nazi *Völkischer Beobachter*, wrote that one could not trust an artist who wrote music for

¹³⁹ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 88.

¹⁴⁰ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 107, 108.

¹⁴¹ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 89

¹⁴² Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 187.

works such as this, especially if the artist is a Jew.¹⁴³ The second performance in Magdeburg had Nazi demonstrators attending. Weill was attacked by anti-Semites and asked to resign from a film project he had been involved with.

March 4, 1933 was the last public performance of any work by Kurt Weill in Germany until 1945. On March 21, referred to as the “Day of Potsdam”, the Prussian Reich of Bismarck joined with the Third Reich of National Socialists uniting Hitler and Hindenburg. Weill, having prepared for departure since the Reichstag fire in January, fled from Berlin by car with friends Caspar and Erika Neher. They arrived in Paris on March 23, and stayed with friends for a time.¹⁴⁴ On June 7, 1933, the premiere of *Die Sieben Todsünden* [The Seven Deadly Sins] was presented at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris and the Savoy Theater, London.¹⁴⁵ About that same time, Universal Edition and Weill came to an agreement to end their publishing contract. Weill signed a new agreement with the publisher in Paris, Heugel. Weill was received well in Paris until it was realized that he meant to stay for quite some time. A group of anti-Semites began to work against him.¹⁴⁶ After a performance of three songs from *Der Silbersee*, pro-Hitler, anti-Semitic demonstrators waited outside. Although on first impression Paris had seemed a better place to settle for the duration of the war, these protests helped him realize the hate carried beyond the borders of his homeland. Kurt Weill’s road to fame in Europe had ended.

As is evident in the short biographies of each composer until 1933, the music world of this time and place was not a large one. The names cross each other’s lives in a

¹⁴³ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 66.

¹⁴⁴ Taylor, *Composer in Divided World*, 195.

¹⁴⁵ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, 90.

¹⁴⁶ Farneth, *Life in Pictures*, xiii

regular fashion. None of them really understood what was soon to happen in the Germany and Austria they knew and loved. The musicians in this work were poised on the edge of tremendous changes happening in their lives. America was in their near future whether it was a willing or forced change. The effects on Germany were tremendous. Germany was losing the new music as it evolved with the younger generation. In Hitler's effort to "cleanse" the race, he was succeeding in washing the modernist out of the country.

CHAPTER 2

NAZI GERMANY, WEILL AND KORNGOLD IN AMERICA

Germany in 1933 brought forth landmark events for the Nazi party. The milestones began in January with the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor of Germany. Within a month of his election, the Reichstag building, which was where elected officials of the republic conducted government business, burned to the ground by arson. The fire prompted Hitler to present an emergency decree restricting personal liberties of all citizens, insistent on the protection of Germany and based on the assumption that the “communists” were responsible. On March 23, the Reichstag approved the Enabling Act, which gave Hitler unlimited dictatorial power.¹⁴⁷

Economic and political events from 1918-1933 had a great effect on the German reception of Hitler’s power, but Germany’s historical and cultural tradition also played a major role in the strength of Nazism.¹⁴⁸ The German people’s attitudes of complacency allowed the Nazi party to establish the first German concentration camp at Dachau on March 20, 1933. Although not used for Jewish prisoners at this time, Dachau began housing political opponents. A nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses started on April 1, and the following week found Jews barred from government jobs, as well as

¹⁴⁷ College of Education, *Holocaust Timeline*.

¹⁴⁸ Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History*, 503.

employment in education. By the end of April, the number of Jewish children allowed to attend schools was limited. Public burnings of books by Jewish authors and opponents of Nazism took place in many cities on May 10. Laws passed in July allowed sterilization of those persons considered inferior, such as Gypsies and mentally handicapped persons. Schools began teaching that all non-Aryans were racially inferior.¹⁴⁹ By September of 1935, the enactment of the Nürnberg Laws successfully took away all remaining rights of Jewish citizens.

As the rights of German Jews diminished, Hitler's empire flourished. After withdrawing from the League of Nations in October 1933, Hitler continued to violate conditions of the Versailles Treaty by requiring a military draft in March of 1935. Hitler's military march on Europe began with the annexation of the Saar region of Germany. Several months later, he invaded the Rhineland. By 1938, with approval from an alarming majority of the Austrian people, Hitler gained the Anschluss, or complete union of Austria and Germany. The next conquests of Czechoslovakia and Poland brought other countries into the war against Hitler's quest for land. By the end of the war, he had invaded Denmark, Norway, Belgium, France, North Africa, Yugoslavia, Greece and the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁰ Nazi government had no set limit or goals. As opponents satisfied demands, it simply opened the door for more requisitions. A pathological liar, Hitler used untruth as part of his foreign policy conduct. After a conquest, he denied desiring further claims on Europe, until he moved his army again.¹⁵¹

Likewise, Hitler's doctrine of racism was continually changing, even from the beginning. Historically, the only racially pure Nordics existed on tiny islets between the

¹⁴⁹ College of Education, *Holocaust Timeline*.

¹⁵⁰ College of Education, *Holocaust Timeline*.

¹⁵¹ Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History*, 517.

Elbe and Weser Rivers. As the Nazi party grew, the terms Aryan and Nordic came to represent all Germans, and non-Aryan applied to all Jews. Although Hitler desired a pure Aryan race, as he conquered more countries, the ideology had to expand. For example, he rationalized that Germans had spread east, resulting in the blue-eyed, blond Ukrainians. Hitler used similar excuses with each conquest.¹⁵² The classes of people discriminated against continued to grow throughout Hitler's reign. The arrests of large numbers of homosexuals took place in October and November of 1934. Jehovah's Witnesses could no longer hold civil service jobs after April of 1935. Scores of Gypsies, singled out and transported to a growing number of concentration camps in Germany and Poland, added to the numbers of displaced persons.¹⁵³

Amazingly, the Nazi dictatorship had the support of millions representing the German population. Hitler's use of coercion and propaganda succeeded in controlling the masses. He knew how to appeal to the idealistic impulse of sacrifice, blaming enemies such as Marxists, capitalists and Papist clerics for all the problems existing in Germany. Although others also fit the scapegoat role, the Nazi ideology pointed directly at the Jews as the embodiment of all enemies.¹⁵⁴ Strangely, with the Jews featuring so prominently in the hatred, the Nazis rejected Christianity. The proper religion, according to National Socialistic beliefs, leaned toward German Teuton paganism as portrayed in Richard Wagner's music dramas.¹⁵⁵

The Nazis also believed passionately in Nationalism. Italian fascism, in the form of the Nazi salute, blackshirts (brownshirts) and models for youth organizations, greatly

¹⁵² Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History*, 488.

¹⁵³ College of Education, *Holocaust Timeline*.

¹⁵⁴ Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History*, 492-493.

¹⁵⁵ Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History*, 496.

influenced National Socialism. The Russians contributed the concept of repression and concentration camps, while American advertising brought Hitler the idea of using propaganda to control the people.¹⁵⁶ Many films and ads showed the idealism of the “Thousand-year Reich” that Hitler claimed to bring. The thirteen years of Nazi rule, with its animalistic actions and ability to provoke the masses into unconscionable acts, is beyond most comprehension as to how one could exist within this world. These views also give understanding to the rest of the world the reasons so many fled.

Of the two composers in this study, Kurt Weill was the first to leave Nazi territory. Although Paris, not occupied by Germany until 1940, was not altogether welcoming, the Weills rented a home just outside the city. Determined to make a living, Kurt discussed the idea of a German-speaking theatre, as so many Germans had relocated to Paris.¹⁵⁷ Although this concept did not materialize, Weill collaborated with Viennese dancer and mime, Tilly Losch, composing for a ballet she was in. Kurt invited Berthold Brecht, who was living in Switzerland at the time, to join him in Paris for the project. Although Brecht did not think highly of ballet, he agreed to do a piece that could be both sung and danced. Together they created *Die Sieben Todsünden der Kleinbürger* [The Seven Deadly Sins of the Petit Bourgeois]. Each scene, named after one of the sins, featured a girl named Anna with a split personality.¹⁵⁸ Caspar Neher joined them from Berlin to create the sets, George Balanchine choreographed the dance and Maurice Abravanel conducted the performance. Premiering on June 7, 1933 in Paris, the

¹⁵⁶ Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History*, 486.

¹⁵⁷ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 196.

¹⁵⁸ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 198.

production received the respect due the names involved, but only captured a lukewarm approval rating.¹⁵⁹

Weill, a life-long sufferer of psoriasis, experienced an extreme outbreak due to the stress of this production. Taking a step back from the theatre world, he began work on his first symphony. Commissioned by Princesse de Polignac, it was the first large, non-vocal piece he had composed. First performed in October 1934 by the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, and conducted by fellow refugee Bruno Walter, it was well received, but did not generate rave reviews.¹⁶⁰ Weill finished the symphony feeling like acceptance as a serious composer would not be forthcoming. Turning back to the theater, he worked with Jacques Deval to produce *Marie Galante*. Opening in Paris on December 22, 1934, it was well received despite the short run. Encouraged, Weill felt confident continuing with light musical theatre. His next project was a short satire, *Der Kuhhandel*. Fellow German Robert Vambery wrote the production, and the English version of *A Kingdom for a Cow* opened in London at the Savoy on June 28, 1935. The operetta did not do well, and Kurt ruled out London as his place of refuge.¹⁶¹

During this time, the forces were in motion to bring Kurt Weill to America. A major character involved in this change was Polish born Meyer Weisgal. Also the son of a Jewish cantor, Meyer grew up in Chicago and New York City. A passionate Zionist, he became involved in theatre as a way of fundraising and supporting Zionism in the 1930's. As Hitler gained power, Weisgal watched news closely, and noticed many great artists and intellectuals leaving their homelands. He cabled Max Reinhardt, stating: "To Max

¹⁵⁹ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 200.

¹⁶⁰ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 203.

¹⁶¹ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 207.

Reinhardt, Europe. IF HITLER DOESN'T WANT YOU I'LL TAKE YOU".¹⁶² He continued on, asking Max to come work on a large scale project with him. Weisgal met with Reinhardt in Paris during November of 1933. Reinhardt, liking the sound of the idea, recommended Kurt Weill as composer. Weisgal was hesitant at first, since he believed Weill was some sort of communist. When they finally met in July of 1934 at Reinhardt's Austrian castle, there was an immediate connection. The collaboration of these two, along with Viennese novelist Franz Werfel, became *Der Weg der Verheissung* [The Eternal Road]. Decisions made and contracts signed, Weisgal escorted Weill and Lenya to the SS Majestic, and Kurt Weill entered New York on September 10, 1935.¹⁶³

Conceived to bring interest to Jewish traditions, Werfel felt *Der Weg der Verheissung* [The Eternal Road] should bring the Bible to life. Weill searched for original Jewish chants to incorporate into the synagogue scenes of the play. This also brought Kurt closer to his father again, as they corresponded and searched back into the history of chants.¹⁶⁴ Originally created to be a charity performance and raise money for Zionist causes, the long rehearsal period and large scale production cut into the ability to make any kind of profit. The first showing on January 7, 1937 was a four-act, seven-hour play. Cutting the last two acts for subsequent performances and shortening the play, it continued for 153 performances to full houses but the show still lost \$5,000.¹⁶⁵

Kurt's original intent when he left Paris was not to stay in America, but to return when *The Eternal Road* was complete.¹⁶⁶ Upon arriving in New York City, his opinion changed. Many things they found in the city excited Kurt and Lotte. Elevators, which

¹⁶² Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 209.

¹⁶³ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 212.

¹⁶⁴ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 212.

¹⁶⁵ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 73.

¹⁶⁶ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 217.

were not common in Germany, fascinated them. They attended many movies and theater shows. Kurt learned English quickly, and was fluent within a few short months. Lotte had a difficult time with the new language, and never really had the success that Kurt did in adapting to America.¹⁶⁷

Kurt made Broadway contacts quickly. His name, known from the 1933 English translation of *The Threepenny Opera*, helped him integrate into the New York avant-garde circle. In October 1935, Kurt attended a gathering at the Gershwin's. After telling Ira that he hoped to work with him someday, Ira invited Kurt to a rehearsal of *Porgy and Bess*. Leaving a deep impression on Kurt, it firmed his resolve to work with Ira in the future.¹⁶⁸ Weill believed in the simplification of music. He wanted to be seen as a Gershwin; both a serious and a light composer. In a 1935 interview by a reporter from the New York World-Telegram, Kurt commented that not only has modern music been greatly influenced by American jazz, but also impacted by the music of Debussy, Rimsky-Korsakov and other modern composers.¹⁶⁹ These ideals set Kurt apart from the many immigrants flooding into America. Viewed as an émigré, distinguished people of Old World culture and class rather than a poor foreigner looking for wealth, doors opened for Weill, and this networking allowed him to find work.¹⁷⁰

At a party early in 1936, Kurt met a young director of The Group Theatre. Harold Clurman introduced Kurt to Lee Strasberg and Cheryl Crawford, also members of the radical theater group. The connection led to an introduction to University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill drama professor Paul Green. The resulting efforts became an anti-

¹⁶⁷ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 217.

¹⁶⁸ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 218.

¹⁶⁹ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 221.

¹⁷⁰ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 220.

war musical drama about a soldier named Johnny Johnson. Appearing at the 44th Street Theatre in New York City, *Johnny Johnson* ran for nine weeks, a mere 68 performances. Weill made many important theater connections during this time, however, and these contacts were only possible because of the extensive delays of *The Eternal Road* production.¹⁷¹

The Eternal Road, when it finally opened on January 7, 1937 had a final cast of forty-three principal actors and singers, over sixty dancers, a large chorus and more than one hundred extras.¹⁷² Weill had two shows running simultaneously: *The Eternal Road* was just beginning and *Johnny Johnson* was reaching the end. Kurt, invited out to Hollywood on the premise of doing the film of *Johnny Johnson* with Walter Wanger, decided to try out the film industry. When he arrived in Hollywood, Max Reinhardt and the Gershwins introduced him to the Hollywood scene.¹⁷³ Although he made many connections, the only film project to materialize was *You and Me* by Fritz Lang. Frustrated by the film industry and its lack of continuity, Kurt returned to New York City.

Upon Kurt's return, the Weills decided it was time to become American citizens. Kurt had entered the US on a work visa two years prior, so he traveled to Canada and re-entered on an immigrant visa. The United States was turning many Germans away, so Kurt was fortunate that no one questioned his citizenship. In February 1936, when his first passport expired, he received a new one from the German consulate in New York City without problems. It had been shortly before that time, on September 15, 1935 that

¹⁷¹ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 220.

¹⁷² Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 225.

¹⁷³ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 260.

Hitler had introduced the Nürnberg Laws, depriving all German Jews of citizenship.¹⁷⁴ It helped having a name that people recognized. Although many other well known names, Schoenberg, Milhaud, Eisler and others, look on their forced stay in America as exile, Weill took it as an opportunity and promise of a wonderful future.¹⁷⁵

In August 1937, Paul Green and Kurt began working on *Everyman*, which took shape into *The Common Glory*, a story featuring Samuel Adams and Boston in the Revolutionary War times. Simultaneously, he worked on *Ballad of Davy Crockett* with Charles Alan, Reinhardt's assistant from *The Eternal Road*. By December of that year, Fritz Lang asked him to return to Hollywood to finish *You and Me*. Kurt and Lotte both went to California, but after several months of waiting on production, gave up and flew back to New York. By April 1938, Weill was preparing for his third trip to Hollywood. A short conversation with Maxwell Anderson, an American playwright and screenwriter, began the planning of a musical comedy. Weill liked the thought of folklore, and looked forward to a theater production of *A Knickerbocker History of New York* by Washington Irving.¹⁷⁶ Back in Hollywood, *You and Me* only produced compensation for a score never used. The studio music staff dropped and changed his music and a team of orchestrators and arrangers took over in the credits. Disillusioned yet again by Hollywood, Weill focused on the next theater project and left for New York in May 1938.¹⁷⁷

Joining Anderson at his farmhouse in upstate New York, *Knickerbocker Holiday* came into being, finally allowing Kurt and Lenya to earn a decent living. The first of

¹⁷⁴ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 233.

¹⁷⁵ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 234.

¹⁷⁶ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 264-271.

¹⁷⁷ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 236.

Weill's Broadway scores, it featured the hit, *September Song*. *Knickerbocker Holiday* premiered on October 19, 1938, at the Ethel Barrymore Theater in New York.

Conducted by Maurice Abravanel, it ran for 168 performances.¹⁷⁸ Although the show itself was not as large a hit as the song, after it finished on Broadway, *Knickerbocker Holiday* successfully toured the country.¹⁷⁹

These accomplishments allowed Weill to help his family get out of Europe. By 1938, his older brother, Nathan, his sister and parents had all fled to Palestine. Kurt helped the Milhauds leave Paris, as well as assisting Maurice Abravanel and Felix Joachimson (Jackson) to the United States.¹⁸⁰ Kurt's brother, wife and daughter were the last to leave Germany. November 9-10, 1938 brought the Kristallnacht horrors, and Hanns, Rita and Hanne left just in time to avoid the death camps. Arriving in the United States, they brought with them a dozen of Kurt's earlier compositions, as well as letters written back and forth between family members.¹⁸¹ Although not released to the public until after Rita passed away in 1983, daughter Hanne then gave most of these letters to the Kurt Weill Foundation. By 1940, most of the theatrical and musical world of Berlin had exited, with many coming to America. Familiar German names cropped up on both coasts. Berthold Brecht, now in Los Angeles, tried several times to interest Kurt in some form of collaboration, but no event ever emerged. The two had grown apart in political ideals, and Kurt was wholly dedicated to being an American.¹⁸²

The early part of 1939 found Kurt between projects. He joined a new venture at the New York World's Fair. The Eastern Presidents Conference, created by the twenty-

¹⁷⁸ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 74-75.

¹⁷⁹ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 245.

¹⁸⁰ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 234.

¹⁸¹ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 245.

¹⁸² Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 78.

seven railroad companies with terminals in the eastern US, built one of the largest pavilions at the fair. A historical music pageant called *Railroads on Parade* employed a cast of 200, an orchestra of twenty-six and a chorus of eighteen, along with locomotives from 1829-1939. Elliot Carter, composer, thought the music integrated with American pieces wonderfully, and complimented Weill on the fine work.¹⁸³

Although Kurt met Moss Hart at a Walter Huston party in November 1939, they did not start working together until after Kurt finished the next collaboration with Maxwell Anderson. Created for a regular Sunday radio broadcast, *Pursuit of Happiness*, by Norman Corwin, *The Ballad of Magna Carta* celebrated American liberties. Slated for a February 4, 1940 broadcast, the CBS production was both narrated and sung. Kurt enjoyed writing folklore and Americana. He hoped that a whole series of ballad histories was part of his future.¹⁸⁴

Rather than continue on ballads at this time, however, Moss Hart wrote the text for Weill's next success. Ira Gershwin wrote the lyrics on the first production since his brother George's death in 1937. Described as a musical play on the title page, *Lady in the Dark* opened January 23, 1941 at the Alvin Theater in New York City. The cast included Danny Kaye, and the "patter" song, *Tchaikovsky (And Other Russians)* that helped launch his stardom. Available in both sheet music and on vinyl, the popular songs from the production helped fuel the success.¹⁸⁵ Moss Hart credited Ira Gershwin and Kurt with creating "a new musical and lyrical pattern in the American Theater".¹⁸⁶

Running in New York for two seasons, after 467 performances, *Lady in the Dark* moved

¹⁸³ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 286.

¹⁸⁴ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 289, 292.

¹⁸⁵ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 76.

¹⁸⁶ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 262.

to Los Angeles in the fall of 1943. Shortly thereafter, Paramount paid an unheard of \$283,000 for the film rights. Eventually, repeating Weill's Hollywood experiences, the film and music did not even closely resemble the original. Even the plot changed as other composers came in to finish the film.¹⁸⁷

The financial success from *Lady in the Dark* allowed Weill to buy a car and a house. Enjoying the area near Maxwell Anderson, only an hour from Manhattan, Kurt also located to New City. Finally able to afford bringing the rest of his family to America, he tried to talk his parents into joining him. His father's health was poor, however, and unwilling to relocate from Palestine.¹⁸⁸ Kurt also looked for ways to help friends escape the Nazi persecution, signing affidavits for family and close friends.

As early as 1940, Kurt had a desire to help America in any way possible against the threat of Nazism. Wanting to start an organization to show how many alien Americans were valuable to the US as well as anti-Nazi, he helped lead the formation of The Emergency Rescue Committee. This organization played an advisory role when Franklin D. Roosevelt set up the Presidential Advisory Committee on Political Refugees in July 1940. The committee expedited entry visas to people whose lives were threatened by the Nazis.¹⁸⁹ By the time the United States entered the war on December 7, 1941, Kurt wanted to do more patriotic acts. Most of his songs from this time focus on the American war effort. From January 1942 to May 1943, Weill organized lunch-time shows for the factory and shipyard workers. These shows lasted a half-hour, and became known as *Lunchtime Follies*. They contained a mix of songs, sketches and dance

¹⁸⁷ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 258.

¹⁸⁸ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 267.

¹⁸⁹ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 255-256.

numbers. Working with Moss Hart, Harold Rome, and Kermit Bloomgarten, Weill described this as one of the most exciting times of his theatrical life.¹⁹⁰

As Weill was finishing up the *Lunchtime Follies*, he was in conversation with Cheryl Crawford about the possible next production, a musical based on the story by V. Anstey called *The Tinted Venus*. The book did not seem racy enough to hold an audience, so S. J. Perelman rewrote it, with lyrics by Ogden Nash. The final product, *A Touch of Venus*, starred Mary Martin.¹⁹¹ Establishing Kurt as a well-known Broadway composer, this became Weill's longest running Broadway show. It opened at the Imperial Theater on October 7, 1943, and ran 567 performances with Maurice Abravanel conducting.¹⁹² Many were amazed at the ease with which he wrote music. Kurt, however, was the only Broadway composer of his time to do his own orchestrations, and his hard work was clearly seen at the first rehearsals.¹⁹³ The show won many awards including:

Second Best Musical Play of the Season, (Oklahoma was first); Best Musical Producer – Elia Kazan; Best Male Supporting Actor – Kenny Baker as Rodney Hutch; Best Female Lead – Mary Martin. United Artists bought the film rights for \$310,000 plus a percentage of the grosses, truly a phenomenal success for Kurt.¹⁹⁴

During the play's rewrite, Hitler's Final Solution to the Jewish question became public knowledge. Roosevelt did not act immediately, and only Jewish organizations were helping the Jews; even Christian churches did not act. Greatly affected, Kurt looked for ways to be involved. Ben Hecht gave a dinner party, inviting 30 Jewish writers and

¹⁹⁰ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 77.

¹⁹¹ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 276-277.

¹⁹² Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 78.

¹⁹³ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 331.

¹⁹⁴ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 282.

intellectuals and asked them to help with the effort. Only Moss Hart and Kurt volunteered. Together, they created the pageant *We Will Never Die*, which played two performances on March 9, 1943 at Madison Square Garden. Presented with a full orchestra and chorus, narrators included Ralph Bellamy, Frank Sinatra and Edward G. Robinson. The show ended with fifty rabbis reciting in unison *Mourners Kaddish*, the Hebrew prayer for the departed. Although emotionally moving, Weill felt it accomplished little despite the thousands of New York attendees.¹⁹⁵

In the midst of all the busyness, Kurt Weill became an American citizen. On August 28, 1943, the New York Times reported that 250 persons took the oath of citizenship at the Naturalization Bureau in New York. Three prominent contributors to the arts received American citizenship that day. Otto L. Preminger and Dr. Saul S. Colin joined Kurt for what he claimed was the proudest moment of his life.¹⁹⁶ He commented that even though his German roots went back to 1329 in Freiburg, he never felt as connected to Germany as he did to America from the time he stepped off the boat.¹⁹⁷

As an American this time, Kurt left for Hollywood in November 1943. Working with the film *A Touch of Venus*, he maintained control of his scores, remembering the damage done to both *Knickerbocker Holiday* and *Lady in the Dark*. Despite the precautions, his music still did not feature prominently in the film, with studio artists adding much to it. He did, however, have fun writing for Morrie Ryskind's wartime comedy *Where Do We Go From Here?* with Ira Gershwin, and spent the winter in Hollywood earning \$2,500 a week.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 278.

¹⁹⁶ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 283.

¹⁹⁷ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 320.

¹⁹⁸ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 285-286.

Kurt traveled a number of times back and forth from California to New York in 1944 and 1945. While the film production of *A Touch of Venus* continued in Hollywood, Weill was putting together a new show on Broadway. A two-act operetta based on Edwin J. Meyer's 1924 play *The Firebrand, The Firebrand of Florence* opened at the Alvin Theatre on March 22, 1945. Lotte had a role in this, only her second Broadway show since arriving in America. Running only forty-three performances, the show did not do well and Kurt considered it the greatest flop of his career. Jarman states that Kurt "deliberately abandoned the slicker techniques and glossy style of the Broadway musical to cultivate a simpler, more consciously American Folk Style".¹⁹⁹ This began another shift in the way Kurt composed.

Kurt completed his *Down in the Valley* version for radio in 1945. The music reflects these changes, and uses characteristics of square dance, barn dance, folk song and church music. Originally meant to be the first in a series of folk operas for commercial radio, the shows never materialized. When Indiana University-Bloomington asked Kurt for a show giving students a chance to produce, he thought of *Down in the Valley*. On July 14, 1948, it premiered, and played many times in small scale productions since.²⁰⁰

Awareness of his own Jewishness prompted Kurt to make another change in his music. By 1945-1946, the war had affected him deeply. For the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City, he responded with a setting of the Kiddush. A benediction of bread and wine on the Sabbath, he composed for tenor, mixed choir and organ. The composition was performed in March 1946, and dedicated to his father. Ben Hecht and Kurt joined together in 1946 to create a Jewish

¹⁹⁹ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 79-80.

²⁰⁰ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 80.

pageant. Created to celebrate the birth of Palestine, *A Flag is Born* premiered in New York during September of 1946, and then toured the country. The production brought in more than one million dollars for the American League for a Free Palestine, and the Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews. With the proceeds they bought an ocean liner, naming it *Ben Hecht*, and used it to transport refugees to Palestine until the British captured it. The ship eventually became the flagship of the Israeli Army.²⁰¹ His third Jewish project of this time was an arrangement for full orchestra of *Hatikvah*, the Israeli national anthem. It was performed in New York at a celebration of Chaim Weizmann's seventy-third birthday in 1947.

During these years, Kurt continued working on multiple projects. Weill met German-Jewish playwright Elmer L. Reizenstein (Rice) in 1936 while working on *Johnny Johnson*. Weill, interested in Rice's play *Street Scene* since seeing it in Berlin in 1930, finally received permission from Elmer to do the musical in 1945. A singspiel format, the American opera had dialogue put together by Rice, and lyrics written by poet Langston Hughes.²⁰² Set in an east side tenement of New York City, *Street Scene* carried social messages, returning Kurt to his original roots.²⁰³ It premiered at the Adelphi Theater in New York, and ended after 148 performances in May 1947. Although it made little money, the play won the Tony award in 1947, receiving honors of achievement for services to the theater.²⁰⁴

Tragedy also came to Weill in 1947. The day before Kurt's forty-seventh birthday, his brother Hanns, age 48, died from a blood clot and heart problems. Deeply

²⁰¹ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 294-295.

²⁰² Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 297-298.

²⁰³ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 80.

²⁰⁴ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 301-302.

attached to his brother and stressed by his death, Kurt suffered a severe attack of psoriasis.²⁰⁵ After Kurt sufficiently recovered, he decided fourteen years was long enough to go without seeing his family in Palestine. He left May 6, 1947 on the *SS Mauretania* and retraced the route he took when first emigrating to America. His first stop was London, where he spent two days, then Paris and Switzerland. He entered Palestine on May 20, where he stayed for two weeks. He thoroughly enjoyed his time with the family, although it was here that his brother, Nathan diagnosed Kurt with high blood pressure. Headed back to the United States, Kurt came back through Europe, spending a night in Rome. After a day in Geneva, and two more days in Paris, Kurt spent his last weekend in London. He happily boarded an airline flight back to New York, commenting on how marvelous it felt to only be traveling seven hours instead of two weeks on a ship. Arriving back in New York, he reaffirmed his love for America.²⁰⁶

Kurt went immediately back to work when he arrived home. Cheryl Crawford, finishing up *Brigadoon* with Alan Jay Lerner, suggested to Lerner that he do a project with Kurt.²⁰⁷ From Lerner's book, *A Dish for the Gods*, came Weill's next show. It emerged at the Forty-Sixth Street Theater on October 17, 1948 as *Love Life*. This show had a revue character and form, with song, pantomime and ballet. Running for 258 performances, the ASCAP strike eventually affected the play, and it closed.²⁰⁸

Weill's last completed Broadway work was with Maxwell Anderson. Maxwell had traveled in the Atlantic with Oscar and Dorothy Hammerstein. Dorothy heard about Alan Paton's novel, *Cry, The Beloved Country*, and wanted Anderson to turn it into a

²⁰⁵ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 361.

²⁰⁶ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 362-364.

²⁰⁷ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 312.

²⁰⁸ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 82.

play. Anderson liked the plot and when he returned home and approached Weill with the idea, Kurt agreed.²⁰⁹ Labeled a musical tragedy by Kurt and Maxwell, it dealt with social themes of racism. Due to copyright issues, the play was renamed *Lost in the Stars* and opened at the Music Box Theater in New York on October 30, 1949.²¹⁰ It ran for 280 performances and was sold out at first, but closed early as attendance began to drop rapidly. Costs had escalated, and even though the play was winning high honors, it was not making money. The economy was also struggling with post-war inflation. All these issues contributed to Kurt's stressful lifestyle. Maxwell Anderson became concerned with Kurt's health, particularly his heart, and began to watch Weill closely.²¹¹

Despite the health watch, Kurt was eager to collaborate with Maxwell again. Together they drafted a scenario for *Huckleberry Finn*. The stress from the play and concern for his father's health took too much of a toll on Kurt, and he was forced to bed with another psoriasis attack. Although still working on songs for *Huckleberry Finn*, he was not well enough to attend an awards ceremony at the Waldorf-Astoria in February where *Lost in the Stars* won the Brotherhood Award of The National Conference of Christians and Jews.²¹²

By his fiftieth birthday on March 3, 1950, Kurt was feeling slightly better and celebrated with Lotte and the Andersons. He continued to have psoriasis attacks, however, and his condition fluctuated for two weeks. Waking with strong chest pains on March 16, the doctor was called to Brook House. He recovered slightly, but on Sunday, March 19, Kurt went by ambulance to Flower Hospital in Manhattan. Once there and in

²⁰⁹ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 324.

²¹⁰ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 82.

²¹¹ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 391-392.

²¹² Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 327-328.

an oxygen tent, he seemed to improve, and for a week it looked as though he might recover. Sadly, on Monday, April 3, Kurt suffered a cerebral embolism, and died at 7:00pm.²¹³

The funeral was held at Brook House on Wednesday, April 5, 1950. Kurt was buried at Mount Repose Cemetery, Haverstraw, New York overlooking the Hudson River. Engraved on his gravestone are four staff lines of music from *Lost in the Stars*, with the following lyrics:

This is the life on of men on earth;
Out of darkness we come at birth
Into a lamplit world and then –
Go forward into dark again.²¹⁴

Kurt Weill left a legacy of works for Broadway. He felt at home in New York City, and always looked forward to returning there from Los Angeles. Kurt never really connected with the business of film music. Erich Korngold left Austria for Hollywood to work with Max Reinhardt in 1934. Film became his way of life.

One of Max Reinhardt's projects in 1934 was a film version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Max believed Korngold was the perfect person to compose the incidental music.²¹⁵ Erich, still in Vienna, was discouraged working on *Die Kathrin*. Even changing the setting of the opera to France with fewer political leanings, the play was a difficult production to sell. Erich received a telegram from Max saying production for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* would only take about eight weeks to complete. He

²¹³ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 329.

²¹⁴ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 330.

²¹⁵ Dixon, *Biography*.

succeeded in talking Erich into the task.²¹⁶ Taking the ocean liner *Majestic*, Erich and Luzi left Vienna and their sons behind on October 23, 1934. They arrived in New York on October 30, leaving the next day by train, first to Chicago, then Hollywood.²¹⁷

Erich barely spoke English, and the little he did carried a thick Viennese accent. Despite this, Hollywood and Warner Brothers were glad to have him, as he represented the classic model of a great composer. The Korngolds did not greatly take to it, however, even though Los Angeles of the 1930's had orange-blossom scented air, and lacked the congestion of today. To Erich and Luzi, Hollywood seemed fake, as if trying to act bigger than life.²¹⁸ This simply affirmed to Erich that he did not want to be a film composer. Studios had space, money and talent, but film composers had toilsome conditions. Constantly ordered around by the studio executives, they had harsh deadlines, and few rights with their music.²¹⁹ Korngold was different from the beginning.

On his very first visit to Warner Brothers, he stopped Henry Blanke, the assistant producer of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Being Korngold's first experience in film, Erich asked how long a foot of film lasted in music. No one knew, but after researching the issue, found it lasted two-thirds of a second. Erich's response was uniquely his, "Exactly the first two measures of the Mendelssohn scherzo". Korngold had a deep understanding of the relationship of music and time. Unlike other film composers, he did not write the timing of the music on the cue sheet, nor use the click track (gives a click for the tempo required to fit the music to the film).²²⁰ Erich fully participated in the production of the film. Always understanding the processes involved, he even went so

²¹⁶ Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 145, 148.

²¹⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 234.

²¹⁸ Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 150, 152.

²¹⁹ Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 151.

²²⁰ Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 152.

far as to tell the special photographic effects man, Fred Jackson, how many feet the shot should fit into, in order to match the music.²²¹

Erich also invented a new method of conducting while on the set. He made preliminary recordings, which played over the sound system during filming. He sometimes conducted the actors on set to show them the rhythm needed as they spoke. For more complicated takes, he conducted the orchestra on stage. Even though many studios used music playbacks for filming, Erich insisted on playing direct recordings while on stage. If a piece was not used directly in the film, it was often inserted later as background music.²²²

The goal in scoring *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was to keep Mendelssohn's music intact. Korngold did just this, and although he did not change the compositions, he interjected short compositions of his own to link one passage to the next. Erich did this with such skill and duplication of Mendelssohn's technique, that only close examination revealed it.²²³ With his perfectionism showing, when the shooting of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was complete on February 26, 1935, Erich stayed on until the end of April to ensure the scoring was complete. Many hours were spent in his own projection room at the piano. He ran reels and matched the music to running footage. As Luzi said, "He fitted his music to the running film just as he would accompany a singer on the opera stage".²²⁴

The final production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* cost Warner Brothers over 1.5 million dollars, the most expensive film of that time. It previewed in June 1935, and

²²¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 240.

²²² Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 155.

²²³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 239.

²²⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 242, 243.

then Warner did a simultaneous double premiere on October 9, 1935 in London and New York City.²²⁵ A special short film, *A Dream Comes True* included footage of the shooting of the film. Narrated, it also showed celebrities arriving for the gala preview in Hollywood, and includes the only filmed record of Korngold playing the piano.²²⁶ Erich Korngold's first project in America was a success.

Erich's life outside the studio was busy, as well. The Korngold's went out almost every night. They met famous stars, and reunited with other emigrants. Although Erich and Luzi had not been close friends with the Schoenbergs in Vienna, they became good friends in Hollywood. Their children also spent much time together.²²⁷ Otto Klemperer, now music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, invited Erich to conduct a celebrity concert on February 17, 1935 at the Hollywood Bowl.²²⁸

Once *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was complete, Warner Brothers offered him another year-long contract, and Paramount Pictures asked him to write a musical with Oscar Hammerstein.²²⁹ Both Erich and Luzi were missing Vienna, so despite the social activities and pending contracts, when Erich's commitments were completed on May 1, 1935, the Korngolds left Hollywood. On the May 2 *Majestic* voyage, Erich had with him the unsigned contracts from both Paramount Pictures and Warner Brothers.²³⁰

Arriving back at Schloss Höselberg in Austria on May 11, 1935, Erich picked back up his work on *Die Kathrin*. Telegrams began coming in continually from the United States trying to convince Erich to return to Hollywood. Warner Brothers had

²²⁵ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 157.

²²⁶ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 244.

²²⁷ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 157.

²²⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 242.

²²⁹ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 158.

²³⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 244.

decided that Erich would be the right person to score *Captain Blood*. He was already tempted, as work on *Die Kathrin* was not going well. Their son, Georg, was recovering from a tubercular infection. The physician told the Erich and Luzi that a winter in the California sun would be helpful for Georg to recover. Erich accepted the Warner offer.²³¹

The entire Korngold family, Erich, Luzi, Georg and Ernst, arrived in New York on August 8, 1935. They spent four days there, with Erich in discussions with Oscar Hammerstein, II about a Kiepura film. Oscar wrote the libretto and lyrics for *Give Us This Night* to be produced by Paramount and wanted Erich to compose the score.²³² Despite Korngold's efforts the film was not a success.

Returning to Hollywood, Erich began work simultaneously with Paramount and on the Warner Brothers film, *Captain Blood*. Based on a Sabatini novel, the film starred two unknowns, Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland.²³³ Erich had initially turned down *Captain Blood*, but Jack Warner was persistent, and Erich finally relented with only three weeks left to score the film. Korngold spent November 1935 conducting during the day at Paramount, then composing *Captain Blood* at night over at Warner Brothers. He had a private screening room, and ran parts of the film over and over. The first time through he would improvise, then compose. This method was a Korngold trademark, and he was the only film composer allowed to do so.²³⁴

Korngold had excellent film contracts with Warner Brothers throughout his career. He could do as little as two films, and was allowed to refuse any assignment. Erich was given more time than most to compose the score, with a single credit frame in

²³¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 246, 247.

²³² Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 247.

²³³ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 161.

²³⁴ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 164.

the film's titles. He also could make use of his film music in any way he chose allowing him to compose absolute music with the themes at a later time. Composers such as Max Steiner, also with Warner Brothers, became worn out composing film after film.²³⁵

Launching Errol Flynn's career, *Captain Blood* was Korngold's first original film score.²³⁶ Because Erich ran out of time for the final scoring, however, he added a very short section at the end using Liszt's *Transcendental Studies*. Due to the addition, he insisted that the credits read "Musical Arrangements by Erich Wolfgang Korngold" to reflect this rather than giving himself full musical credit.²³⁷ This score was the most complex ever written for American film up to that time. It seemed that film music had "come of age" with Korngold's arrival. For Erich, music was supposed to sweep the action along, not be just background noise. Wanting audiences to remember the tunes, his scores taught composers to write melodies that people would whistle as they left the theater.²³⁸ Erich's method was to work as if composing an opera. He used Wagner's leitmotiv method, giving each character a particular sound of their own. While developing an atmosphere of tension and edge for the audience, he also challenged the orchestra players with the music.²³⁹

When Korngold first began at Warner Brothers, the studio orchestra seemed more of a dance band. With Erich's scores to perform, they became an excellent, full-scale orchestra.²⁴⁰ Although Erich did not orchestrate his film scores, as time did not allow, he was able to use a Warner orchestrator he trusted implicitly with his music. Born to

²³⁵ Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 168.

²³⁶ Dixon, *Biography*.

²³⁷ Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 164.

²³⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 254.

²³⁹ Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 164.

²⁴⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 259.

German immigrants, American Hugo Friedhofer spoke German fluently, and was asked to work with Erich and Max Steiner. Friedhofer commented that “He [Erich] had, incidentally, the most extraordinary way of making a piano sound like an orchestra that I have ever encountered”.²⁴¹ Warner Brothers recognized that value.

Once *Captain Blood* was complete, Warner asked Erich to write the score for *Anthony Adverse*, starring Frederic March and Olivia de Havilland.²⁴² He agreed, and began composing on February 14, 1936. Based on a novel by Hervey Allen, this score became the longest and most complex score Korngold ever did. *Anthony Adverse* had almost sixty musicians on stage. In this film, Korngold also originated the style that future composers would use in action scenes.²⁴³ Mervyn LeRoy worked in the projection room used by Korngold while he composed. In a conversation about the score, Erich told him that he listened to the pitch or register the actors spoke in, and composed in a key that would not interfere with their voices.²⁴⁴

The deepness of Korngold’s character surfaced again during production of *Anthony Adverse. Green Pastures*, an interpretation of biblical stories seen through the eyes of children, had an all black cast. Also under production at Warner Brothers, they asked Erich to supply a few orchestral passages. While doing this, Erich became acquainted with Hall Johnson, arranger of the Negro spirituals. Hall, who was also a Doctor of Music, spoke fluent German. Erich enjoyed the company of Hall and Rex Ingram, who played the part of God. Questioning why the two never joined him in the executive dining room, the Green Room, Korngold was finally told that all blacks had to

²⁴¹ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 165.

²⁴² Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 166.

²⁴³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 259.

²⁴⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 258.

eat in the studio cafeteria. He left the Green Room, shouting on his way out that he was going to the cafeteria to eat with God! Erich enjoyed working on the film with them, and refused to accept payment or to allow his name on the credits. He did not want to shadow Hall Johnson's work in any way.²⁴⁵

Erich still lived in two worlds, the film of Hollywood and the concerts of Europe.²⁴⁶ With these projects complete, the Korngolds decided to return to Vienna for the summer. At the end of May, 1936, they boarded the *S.S. Paris* and traveled with Serge Koussevitsky and the Stravinskys back to Europe. Erich spent the summer at Schloss Höselberg working on *Die Kathrin*.²⁴⁷ When he returned to Hollywood on October 27, Erich signed another contract with Warner Brothers for two films. *Another Dawn*, starring Errol Flynn, opened in June 1937. Although the movie was not successful, the main title theme eventually became the first subject of his *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35*. The next project, *The Prince and the Pauper*, again starring Errol Flynn, was one of the most popular films of the year.²⁴⁸

The Academy Awards for 1936 were held on March 4, 1937, with *Anthony Adverse* nominated for Best Musical Score. At the time, however, the statuette was given to the head of the music department, not the composer. Korngold was not aware of this, and became angry when Leo Forbstein was presented with the award. Erich, who fortunately had not been able to attend the ceremony, refused to accept the trophy from Leo. This was the last year the Academy awarded to the head rather than the composer. This type of sensitivity was characteristic of Korngold. He had flashes of temperament

²⁴⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 260.

²⁴⁶ Dixon, *Biography*.

²⁴⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 261, 262.

²⁴⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 263,264.

over trivial matters, and tended to take things personally. He was, however, quite forgiving, and the small disruptions soon forgotten.²⁴⁹

The Korngolds left again for Europe in early summer of 1937. Although promised a premiere of his opera *Die Kathrin* for the 1937-38 season at the Vienna State Opera, it was delayed, this time until March 1938.²⁵⁰ Lead tenor Jan Kiepura withdrew from the production due to an existing contract with the New York Metropolitan Opera that spring. Preparations for the premiere continued into the fall. Bruno Walter was still committed to conduct, and the search for a new tenor began. On October 27, a song cycle, *Unvergänglichkeit, op. 27*, [Eternity] was featured on a radio premiere. The following week it played at a public concert. This was the last premiere in Vienna before the war broke out.²⁵¹

Invited to attend a performance of Erich's *Piano Sonata No. 3 in C*, at a Vienna Conservatory Master Class on January 22, 1938, Erich and Luzi agreed to meet at the concert after a meeting Erich attended. Luzi, still at home, received a telegram from Warner Brothers asking him to be in Hollywood in ten days to write the score for *Robin Hood*. After the concert, Luzi showed Erich the telegram, which strongly advised him to leave. Shaken, he immediately called the director of the Staatsoper from the concert hall. *Die Kathrin* was delayed again, and the director told him to go to Hollywood. The director promised to engage Richard Tauber as the lead tenor, and premiere the production in October 1938.²⁵²

²⁴⁹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 265, 266.

²⁵⁰ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 172.

²⁵¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 267.

²⁵² Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 268.

Erich decided to check the availability of large lines leaving in the next five days. Finding the *Normandie*, they booked two cabins and returned home to pack.²⁵³ Still not believing they were in danger, only Erich, Luzi and Georg left Vienna. Ernst stayed behind with Luzi's mother and sister, in order to maintain his schooling.²⁵⁴ They sailed on January 29, 1938. Ironically, Jan Kiepura was also on board, traveling to his Metropolitan Opera job in New York. Danger in the occupied areas of Germany continued to increase. Nazi activity in Vienna was becoming more prevalent.²⁵⁵

On February 12, Erich received the news that Hitler was in Berchestgarten meeting with the Premier Chancellor of Austria. Still believing that the Austrian situation would calm soon, they did not try to get their families out. A month later, Nazis entered Austria, attacking Jews as they marched. Fortunately, Julius had previously obtained a visitor's visa for the United States, and included Ernst on his passport. They caught the last unrestricted train out of Austria into Switzerland on the last possible day. Julius had intended only to deliver Ernst safely, and then return to Vienna. With only overnight bags, the family journeyed to Hollywood.²⁵⁶ The Korngolds later learned that one of the first victims of the gas chambers had been pianist Robert Kohner, whom they had heard perform in January. If not for *Robin Hood*, it could have been them.²⁵⁷

By the time Erich finished the recording and post-production of *Robin Hood*, his family had arrived in Hollywood. Clearly, Hitler's annexation of Austria meant there would be no return to Vienna in the near future. All Korngold's belongings and property were confiscated by the Nazis. Erich's next worries focused on the manuscripts left

²⁵³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 268.

²⁵⁴ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 173.

²⁵⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 269.

²⁵⁶ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 177.

²⁵⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 269.

behind in his large music library in Vienna. He contacted Josef Weinberger Publishing firm, the publisher of his latest opera.²⁵⁸ The firm sent two employees to the already occupied house where drunken Nazis congregated in the upstairs. The entire collection, piled in the basement, sat waiting to be burned. Scores from his childhood days were amongst the numerous compositions.²⁵⁹ The two men managed to save most of the music. Manuscripts, hidden between pages in music exported to the United States, made it to Erich in California months later. Thought to have been destroyed by the Nazis, the entire correspondence library of Erich and Julius was discovered in the 1990s at the Austrian National Library. This collection included many letters from other important composers of that era.²⁶⁰

During this time, mass deportations of Jews to concentration camps began. Calls came in daily from friends, family and even strangers asking for help. Luzi's mother, sister, brother and family all escaped, and Erich signed so many affidavits that eventually the government stopped him from doing so.²⁶¹ Knowing that return to Austria was no longer a possibility, Korngold finally bought a house in Hollywood. Located in Toluca Lake, the house was only a ten minute walk to Warner Brothers. It was also located in an area with a high concentration of émigrés. This group of artists remained mostly ignored by other Americans. The cultural life in Los Angeles was limited, with little access to theater, operatic or concert life. At one particular party, a hostess asked Arnold Schoenberg what he did for a living. When he replied he was a musician, she asked him

²⁵⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 269.

²⁵⁹ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 178.

²⁶⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 274.

²⁶¹ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 178.

to play a tune on the piano!²⁶² Erich and Luzi became quite close to Arnold and his wife, Trude Kolisch. Trude and Luzi had known each other since childhood, and Trude's sister had been one of Erich's first girlfriends. Their children, George and Nuria became best friends as well.²⁶³

Although the Korngolds had a variety of acquaintances, his father only associated with German speaking friends and colleagues, as did many of the other newly arrived. Among his friends were Bruno Walter, and Franz Werfel, who was now married to Gustav's widow Alma Mahler. Julius, deeply unhappy in the United States, despised the film industry, and wanted Erich to compose only absolute music. Although the two lived quite close to each other, Julius wrote letters to Erich. The letters, usually quite abusive and highly critical, exasperated the already inferior relationship.²⁶⁴ Many of the letters contained instructions not to open until Julius' death. His father was, however, a good writer, and did help Erich in matters about libretti and literary works. Erich's choices made without his father's guidance did not seem to be the best. Despite of their differences, Julius had an extremely important influence on his son. Sadly, the two never reconciled their relationship.²⁶⁵

For the first time in his life, Erich did not travel. Royalties from his music in Europe were frozen, his concerts and operas banned in Germany, and his only income was generated by the film business.²⁶⁶ Supporting his entire family on the film income, Erich signed a contract with Warner Brothers. His contract terms were unlike those of any other film composer before him. Erich would not compose more than two scores in a

²⁶² Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 289.

²⁶³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 291.

²⁶⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 274, 275, 277.

²⁶⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 301.

²⁶⁶ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 274.

twelve month period. He reserved the right to choose or reject any project, and the music would remain his property to use as he wished in the future. The contract also did not tie him exclusively to Warner Brothers.

Erich dealt with considerable depression during this time. His beloved opera, *Die Kathrin*, finally premiered in Sweden. Before Bruno Walter left Europe, he managed to schedule the production for October 1939.²⁶⁷ Erich could not attend the Stockholm event, and almost seemed to take a vow of abstinence from composition of serious music while the horrors of Europe continued.²⁶⁸

The next several years offered plenty of opportunity for film composition. Based on a play by Franz Werfel, *Juarez* became his next film score with Warner Brothers. Originally titled *The Phantom Crown*, it started with a length of 150 minutes. Suffering cuts twice while in post production, first to 132 minutes, then 100 minutes, much of the original score disappeared. It premiered simultaneously in New York and Hollywood on April 25, 1939, but did not do well at the theater. While working on *Juarez*, *Robin Hood* became a huge success. At the Academy Awards on February 24, 1939, Jerome Kern presented Erich with the 1938 Best Original Score Oscar. The award gave him the reassurance he needed that his work was valuable.²⁶⁹

Adapted from a stage play by Maxwell Anderson, *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* did quite well.²⁷⁰ It premiered September 27, 1939 at the Beverly Hills Theater. Starring Bette Davis and Errol Flynn, it was nominated for an Academy Award,

²⁶⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 275.

²⁶⁸ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 188.

²⁶⁹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 282, 285.

²⁷⁰ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 189.

but *Stagecoach* and *Wizard of Oz* won instead.²⁷¹ Closely following that production, *The Sea Hawk*, was planned as a follow up for *Captain Blood*. Based on a Sabatini novel, it again starred Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland, and was Erich's last score for a historical epic.²⁷² The film finished shooting on April 18, 1940, and Erich, given just seven weeks to finish the score, completed it on June 18, 1940. The film was Erich's third Academy Award nomination, but it lost to *Pinocchio*.²⁷³

The year 1941 brought forth a quick succession of works. *The Sea Wolf*, loosely based on a Jack London novel, starred Edward G. Robinson.²⁷⁴ Recording was finished by the end of March. Erich then scored *King's Row*, starring Ronald Reagan. The film previewed just one week prior to December 7, 1941. With the involvement of America in the war, the general release was delayed until spring, staging instead an all-star benefit concert on January 24, 1942. The Deutsch-Jüdischer Club in Los Angeles organized the concert for the purpose of raising war contributions.²⁷⁵ The least known of Korngold's film scores, *The Constant Nymph*, began production in 1941. Based on a best-selling novel from the 1920s, it had been performed as a play in both 1928 and 1933. Erich's contribution to the film was a tone poem, *Tomorrow*, which became Opus 33. Finally premiered by Warner Brothers in 1943, it has been rarely shown due to literary copyright restrictions.²⁷⁶

Korngold's only non-film music of the war years appeared in 1941-1942. Asked to compose liturgical music by Jacob Sonderling, the chief rabbi in Los Angeles, Erich

²⁷¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 288.

²⁷² Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 190.

²⁷³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 294.

²⁷⁴ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 192.

²⁷⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 305.

²⁷⁶ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 307.

wrote the only religious music of his life. The resulting works, *A Passover Psalm*, op. 30 and *Prayer*, op. 32 were presented to his parents on their golden wedding anniversary on September 27.²⁷⁷ He conducted the premiere of *A Passover Psalm* with the LA Philharmonic on June 22, 1945, sharing the podium with Bruno Walter. The event gave the proceeds as aid for Russian War Relief.²⁷⁸ Erich was also asked to conduct a remake of *Die Fledermaus*, renamed *Rosalinde* and translated into English. Opening in New York City at the 44th Street Theater on October 28, 1942, Korngold conducted from the piano as he had so often in Europe. Erich insisted that Max Reinhardt produce the show or he would not conduct. Reinhardt, at age sixty-nine, appreciated the chance to work with Erich again. Korngold often stated that his family owed their lives to Max. Erich felt this last successful production would be one way to repay Max for bringing him to America and offering a lifeline with work in film. Although the show ran 520 performances, after four weeks Erich returned to Los Angeles.²⁷⁹

Erich's return to Hollywood in the fall of 1942 began the decline of film quality offered to him. Although he completed the score for *Devotion*, starring Olivia de Havilland, Warner Brothers postponed the release until April 1946. Studios began to focus on war films, and decided to push those ahead of romantic films. During the scoring of *Devotion*, Erich decided not to attend Max Reinhardt's 70th birthday celebration on September 9 in New York. It was a huge event, and Erich did pay for Max's wife, Helene Thimig, to fly from Los Angeles to New York for the gala. Regretfully, Reinhardt passed away on October 30, 1943, suffering from complications to a dog bite. With memorial services in New York and Los Angeles, Erich took charge of

²⁷⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 301.

²⁷⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 320.

²⁷⁹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 308.

the west coast event, held on December 14.²⁸⁰ At the memorial concert, Erich played an arrangement from Mahler's Second Symphony, along with some of his own works.²⁸¹ He was also named executor of Max's estate. Remaining loyal to Reinhardt even after his demise, Erich continued to look after Helene. Erich had partially financed the home the Reinhardts lived in, on the condition of repayment when the house sold. Helene did not tell him when she sold, and ignored the provision entirely.²⁸²

Affecting Korngold deeply, Reinhardt's passing was the first of two contributing to Erich's return to serious composition.²⁸³ Erich began enjoying film composition less, but continued to create scores. In 1944, still devastated over Reinhardt's death, Warner offered him a remake of the film *Outward Bound*, a story about life after death. Released as *Between Two Worlds*, the film itself did not do well. To Erich, however, the experience was gratifying spiritually and artistically.²⁸⁴ Despite Reinhardt being gone, Erich returned to New York to do a remake of *Die Schöne Helene* as they had planned. Opening at the Alvin Theater on April 24, 1944 as *Helen Goes to Troy*, Korngold conducted the show for three of the fourteen weeks it ran. He returned to Los Angeles to begin work on a Warner Brothers remake of an RKO movie, *Of Human Bondage*.²⁸⁵

While still composing the film score, Erich began composing absolute music again. At Christmastime, 1944, Erich presented Luzi with a finished sketch of *String Quartet No. 3 in D major, op. 34*.²⁸⁶ Following his father's advice, Erich used an excerpt

²⁸⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 311.

²⁸¹ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 196.

²⁸² Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 312.

²⁸³ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 196.

²⁸⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 313.

²⁸⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 314.

²⁸⁶ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 319.

from *The Sea Wolf* in the third movement of the quartet.²⁸⁷ Bronislaw Hubermann, a friend of the family since Erich's teen years, continued a long-running joke asking for his violin concerto. Between July and October 1945, Erich finally finished the composition for him.²⁸⁸ As a frequent guest of the Korngold's, Bronislaw was surprised when one evening Erich sat at the piano and played the opening for him. Themes were based on *Another Dawn*, *Anthony Adverse*, and *Juarez*. The final movement was an excerpt from *The Prince and the Pauper*. Dedicated to Alma Mahler Werfel, the *Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35* reflected his admiration of childhood mentors.²⁸⁹ When it finally premiered on February 15, 1947, however, instead of Bronislaw, Jascha Heifetz performed it. Hubermann had put it off numerous times, and passed away in 1947.²⁹⁰

Julius Korngold died in September 1945, after a lengthy illness. Erich felt tremendous guilt for not reaching his father's expectations. In addition to the occasional film score, he began to compose more serious music. In 1946, Korngold used part of the 1946 score from *Deception*, a remake of the film *Jealousy*, for his *Cello Concerto in C major, op. 37*.²⁹¹ Deciding not to renew his contract with Warner Brothers in October 1946, he explained to them "Fifty is very old for a child prodigy. I feel I have to make a decision now, if I don't want to be a Hollywood composer for the rest of my life".²⁹² In February 1947, Erich began working on a light, musical comedy, one of his father's last suggestions. When it was finally performed for Vienna Radio in March 1951, Erich conducted *Die Stumme Serenade, op. 36* [The Silent Serenade] from the piano. After a

²⁸⁷ Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 200.

²⁸⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 320.

²⁸⁹ Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 203.

²⁹⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 320.

²⁹¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 324, 326.

²⁹² Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 200.

stage premiere in Dortmund on December 20, 1954, it was never played again. While working on *Die Stumme Serenade*, Erich also scored a remake of the British film *The Fool of the Family*. Starring Errol Flynn, *Escape Me Never* was released on November 22, 1947, but did not do well.²⁹³ Although assignments continued to come in, Erich did not accept them and decided to return to Vienna in the fall of 1947.

In February of that year, Erich went to Chicago for a concert of his violin concerto. When he returned, the doctor told him that he had heart problems, as Erich suffered from angiospasm. Despite the diagnosis, Korngold continued with his busy schedule. In May 1947, he celebrated his 50th birthday during a production of *Rosalinde* with the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera. Conducting the performance on May 19, Erich collapsed in the dressing room at the end of the first act. Feeling pain and heart spasms throughout, he finished conducting the performance, then completed two weeks of sold-out shows. Rather than rest after the production, Erich traveled to Canada. Enjoying the scenery, this trip was the inspiration for his symphony. Just a few weeks after returning from vacation, however, Erich had a serious heart attack and spent two weeks in the hospital. Doctors ordered bedrest for the next month, and his plans for Europe put on hold.²⁹⁴

Not one to sit still for long, Erich made use of his quiet life. While in the hospital, he composed in his head the entire sketch for *Symphonic Serenade in B-flat major, op. 39*. Dedicated to his wife, the piece was not based on any film scenes. He spent the next year working on the orchestration for strings.²⁹⁵ Erich turned down two scores, and Max

²⁹³ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 322, 323.

²⁹⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 331, 332.

²⁹⁵ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 207.

Steiner composed *The Adventures of Don Juan* in Korngoldian form.²⁹⁶ Erich worked at home and enjoyed listening to Luzi played Chopin for him. As a hobby, she began to write a biography of Chopin. When Erich learned that she was writing about another composer, much to the amusement of his family, he became quite jealous. It wasn't long before he realized how foolish that was, and supported her work. On their silver wedding anniversary in April 1949, Erich presented her with a manuscript. *Frederic Chopin, Opus posthumous*. Inscribed with "From the Beyond", Erich succeeded in capturing the essence of Chopin in entirely Korngold style.²⁹⁷ His symphony, completed on October 13, 1948, was inscribed with the dedication "For Luzi, my beloved wife, my best friend". At first *Symphonic Serenade, op. 39* was to be performed in Paris, but the concert postponed several times, and did not happen until 1950.²⁹⁸

Erich finally recovered enough to take his long awaited trip back to Vienna. Luzi, George and Erich left Hollywood for Europe in late May 1949. Stopping briefly in New York, they traveled the reverse path taken eleven years before, from Paris to Vienna. Arriving in Austria, they discovered Schloss Höselsberg converted into a home for refugees, and in terrible condition.²⁹⁹ Vienna was badly damaged, and the only the burned out shell remained of the Opera House. Most of their friends and family had either emigrated or been murdered in the Holocaust.³⁰⁰ The Vienna of old no longer existed.

When they arrived on June 22, the Korngolds had to fight to regain possession of their house on Sternwartestrasse. People did not believe they would stay in Vienna, and

²⁹⁶ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 333.

²⁹⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 334.

²⁹⁸ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 337.

²⁹⁹ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 208.

³⁰⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 339.

kept asking when they were returning to America. Erich did, however, convince Wilhelm Furtwängler of the Vienna Philharmonic to perform his *Symphonic Serenade* on January 15, 1950.³⁰¹ Korngold also met with Viennese state theaters, hoping to stage *Die Kathrin* and *Die Tote Stadt*. When they agreed, Erich felt hopeful about being back in Vienna, and began writing *Symphony in F# minor*, his favorite key. Using some film music themes from *Elizabeth and Essex*, and *Anthony Adverse*, he dedicated the symphony to President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a tribute to the United States for saving the lives of him and his family.³⁰² Erich had quietly become a naturalized US citizen sometime during 1943.³⁰³

Deciding to take a holiday to travel and visit places of their youth, the Korngolds went to Innsbruck, Salzburg and Garmisch. Erich hoped to visit Richard Strauss in Garmisch, but when told Strauss was too ill for visitors, they continued to Italy and Southern France, intending to come back when Strauss recovered. While staying a week with Lily Duschnitz, Erich heard news of Strauss' death. Lilly vividly remembered the event. Erich sat down at the piano and played *Elektra* in its entirety, without music, without stopping. A look of sadness remained on his face through the entire piece.³⁰⁴

Unable to visit Garmisch right away, the Korngolds returned to Vienna. Erich attended a performance of his cello concerto, and many of his operettas seemed to be reviving. Another postponement of *Die Kathrin* allowed the Korngolds to travel again, this time to Stuttgart and Munich. They stopped in Garmisch to pay respects to the Strauss family. Speaking over coffee, Franz Strauss asked if Erich would like an original

³⁰¹ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 208.

³⁰² Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 210.

³⁰³ Dixon, *Biography*.

³⁰⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 340.

manuscript to remember his father by. Shown a large bundle to pick from, Erich looked at a four-page manuscript. Although dated March 1949, as Strauss had signed it just prior to his death, Erich believed it was Strauss' first sketch of *Der Rosenkavalier*, a famous waltz dated about 1908. Erich treasured the manuscript.³⁰⁵

In October 1950, *Die Kathrin* finally premiered in Vienna. It was not a successful production, and the cancellation of *Die Tote Stadt* due to issues with the leading tenor role, left the Korngolds feeling homesick for the United States. Delays due to a technical worker strike had kept the Korngolds in Vienna much longer than intended, and they simply did not feel they belonged in Vienna anymore.³⁰⁶ Without other projects pending in Europe, Erich decided to sell their home in Vienna as well as Schloss Höselberg, and return to America. He performed a concert of his works on March 14, 1951, then on April 16, sailed the *S.S. De Grasse* back to New York.³⁰⁷

He returned to California with Luzi, George, and George's new Viennese wife, Monika. Arriving in Hollywood, Ernst and Helen presented Erich with a grandson, Gary.³⁰⁸ Although Erich loved being a grandfather, he tried to keep busy in order keep depression away. He remodeled his house, and decided to finish the symphony he had started in Austria. By September 1952, Erich had completed it. In the third and fourth movements, themes from his film scores over the years are prevalent.³⁰⁹

January 1953 brought Korngold's first major works to albums. RCA Victor and the Los Angeles Philharmonic recorded Heifetz playing the *Violin Concerto in D major*. Erich's operetta *The Great Waltz*, although shortened, opened on June 8, 1953 with the

³⁰⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 341-343.

³⁰⁶ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 212.

³⁰⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 346.

³⁰⁸ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 213.

³⁰⁹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 346.

Los Angeles Civic Light Opera Company. Erich, with his doctor's permission, conducted *The Radetzky March* at the San Francisco performances. It would be the last time he conducted theater. Erich also composed his last song in 1953. Published as *Sonett für Wien, op. 41*, [Sonnet for Vienna] it was a poem in praise of the Vienna of his childhood. Erich was also commissioned to write two works for American school orchestras, *Theme and Variations for Orchestra, op. 42* and *Straussiana for Orchestra*, an arrangement of three little known Strauss pieces. He completed these in August. Although film offers still came for him, he refused all but one.³¹⁰

His final film offer was a biography of Richard Wagner. Filming in Germany, Erich was to arrange and edit, not compose. Erich agreed to do the project, stating that he wanted to protect Wagner's music. Too ill to conduct, Alois Melichar took the podium, but Korngold coached Alan Badel who played Wagner in the film. Erich even had the opportunity to make an appearance in *Magic Fire*, the only one over all the years.³¹¹ Erich's son George went along on this trip as a music editor for the film. The finished product was 150 minutes and a good representation of Wagner. As happened with so many of his later films, the studio cut it first to two hours, then again to 93 minutes. Finally released in July 1955, the film was not shown often.³¹² Shot in Munich, Erich welcomed the opportunity to be in Europe for the premiere of his symphony by Viennese Radio. The performance was not successful and the symphony was not performed again in his lifetime.³¹³

³¹⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 349.

³¹¹ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 215.

³¹² Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 355.

³¹³ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 215.

As Erich prepared to return home to America in April, Professor Hartmann asked him to delay a few weeks. *Die Tote Stadt* premiered at the Prinzregententheater in Munich, running for seven sold out performances. Korngold thoroughly enjoyed the production. On May 18, 1955, Erich left Europe for the last time.³¹⁴ Upon arriving in Hollywood, family news awaited him. Luzi's sister and mother had died, but Ernst and Helen had a new daughter, whom they named Kathrin. George also had a second son, Leslie.³¹⁵

Once home, Korngold seemed to age. When the American premiere of *Symphonic Serenade* broadcast from Pittsburgh, Erich did not try to go. He listened to the broadcast from his home. He did his last Strauss revision on *Rosalinde*, which was televised by NBC. It opened in Los Angeles on April 30, 1956, and although he was not allowed to conduct, he did take an active role in production. Working long hours, his health deteriorated, and he often complained of dizzy spells.³¹⁶

After *Rosalinde* finished, he lacked energy, and seemed disheartened by the lack of interest in his work in Vienna. On October 17, 1956, he noticed he could not remember certain words or expressions in English. Something also seemed to be wrong with his voice. Within a couple days, his speech impediment was quite noticeable, and he could not read the paper. A neurologist, diagnosing a slight stroke, recommended a short hospital stay. By October 22, his condition worsened. Incoherent and unable to write, paralysis set in. Diagnosed with a major stroke, Erich was unable to speak or move the right side of his body. Although doctors told Luzi recovery was possible, Erich went home with a defeated attitude. Strangely, even though he couldn't read a

³¹⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 356.

³¹⁵ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 216.

³¹⁶ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 359.

newspaper, he was still able to read a score. Unable to remember friend's names, he easily produced the names of composers.³¹⁷

Luzi took care of him at home. By Christmas, he could walk, and write his name with the left hand. Depressed, he listened to music, but refused to compose, and could no longer play the piano as before.³¹⁸ When his sixtieth birthday arrived on May 29, 1957, radio stations broadcast tributes to him, playing his work. Letters, cards and telegrams came from all over the world, and celebratory articles appeared in papers. These all were greatly appreciated by Erich, who thought the world had forgotten him.³¹⁹

On November 29, 1957, Erich lost consciousness while reading the morning paper. Seven hours later,³²⁰ at North Hollywood Hospital, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and was pronounced dead. His funeral was held on December 2 at Hollywood Cemetery Chapel.³²¹ His simple gravestone is a four-measure facsimile in his own handwriting of *Glück das mir verblieb* [Fortunately, this was left to me] from *Die Tote Stadt*. Underneath the music, is simply

Erich Wolfgang Korngold
1897-1957
Luzi Korngold
1900-1962

His memorial tribute was held in Los Angeles, but his death was mourned around the world. The Vienna Opera House flew a black flag at half mast in memoriam. Luzi died in 1962 of heart failure. In her will, she begged her sons to keep their father alive through his works, but until the mid 1970s he was largely unknown. At that time, George

³¹⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 360, 361.

³¹⁸ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 218.

³¹⁹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 364.

³²⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 364.

³²¹ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 218.

began to release his works, and tried to bring them to the public attention with new recordings.³²²

Clearly the world events from 1900-1950 impacted these two composers lives, as well as the lives of their families. Kurt Weill and Erich Korngold touched many lives with the music they created. However, not only lives were changed. The music they composed changed the world around them as well. The incredible gifts Weill and Korngold possessed amazed those around them. The ability to hear the music inside their heads and combine that with the means of transporting it to paper, allowing the rest of the world to experience the beauty is almost too much for the mind to grasp. Times change and music changes, allowing mere men to change the world.

³²² Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 365, 366.

CHAPTER 3

WEILL AND KORNGOLD – THEIR MUSIC

Two composers born in German-speaking areas. Both were Jewish, and both survived the Holocaust. Both were well-known in their homeland, and both embraced by their new country. Both had an incredible impact on American music, simply by being here and doing what they loved most – composing. Kurt Weill composed scores for theatrical productions. Erich Korngold composed scores for theatrical films and serious “classical” music. Kurt lived in New York City, with occasional trips to the west coast. Erich lived in Hollywood, and sometimes visited New York. Amazingly, even though the music world was small, not one of the biographies used in this study mentioned that the two knew each other socially or professionally. They knew many of the same people, and Max Reinhardt was responsible for bringing both of them to America within a year of each other. Despite the silence between the two, together they created new legacies within their own strengths.

The majority of refugees to America during World War II felt that America took them in and changed them forever. Scholars especially felt the hospitality of American colleagues and the openness of American society.³²³ Many musicians looked upon their time in America as exile. Ernst Krenek said “Exile is an external condition; it is simply

³²³ Gay, Peter “We Miss Our Jews: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany”. In Brinkmann, *Driven into Paradise*, 26.

the condition of composing away from home”. Some composers worked in the European fashion, while others composed in American ways. Some combined the two, and it is difficult to gauge what the result might have been if they had composed in Europe. Still others reminded themselves that even in Europe, music had not always been good. Most agreed that they could not live on composition alone, and accepted positions in academia or film.³²⁴

Kurt Weill had always tuned into the times around him. His German works were intellectual, and he observed the political and social ills of his day. His main concerns were social, humanistic and musical. He followed the musical and social direction, and observed the new cultural environment. Part of the break between Berthold Brecht and Kurt related to the political activities Brecht wanted to involve himself in. Those leanings interfered with Weill’s consideration of musical importance.³²⁵ Influenced by American music even in Germany, works like *Drei groschenoper* contributed to the jazz of Berlin.³²⁶ The practice of fusing jazz motifs to European music had begun with Puccini and Ravel, but the political aspect was added by Weill, Milhaud, Hindemith and Krenek, to name a few.³²⁷

An example of musical “symbiosis”, Kurt had a way of morphing his music to fit the times he lived in, first in France and then in America. One had the feeling that nothing he ever heard would be wasted, but instead filed away for future reference. In America, he wove German music into his compositions, but they were still authentically

³²⁴ Goehr, Lydia, “Music and Musicians in Exile”, In Brinkmann, *Driven into Paradise* 73, 74

³²⁵ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 132, 133

³²⁶ Sachs, *Aspects of Musical Politics*, 90

³²⁷ Goehr, Lydia, “Music and Musicians in Exile”, In Brinkmann, *Driven into Paradise*, 85

American.³²⁸ Although Weill composed in a popular vein, he was both resistant and adaptive to the music he created from Germany to America.³²⁹ Boris Schwarz said that music is an international language that can be understood anywhere, but composers are affected by national differences in musical tastes and customs.³³⁰ Kurt had the ability to set the national tastes.

Weill's German artistic identity composed chamber music, symphonies, and operas. Many Europeans felt Kurt sold out when he began composing American Broadway shows. As an American, he did adopt the musical clichés of the Broadway musical,³³¹ but with his ability to adapt, it came to him naturally. His musical genres also changed from Germany to America, but he was a member of the younger generation of composers. Most of them were working toward the ideal of artful, functional music. Numerous elements of European works appear in American compositions.³³² Germany maintained an experimental atmosphere between wars, allowing new forms of music in established opera houses and theatres. In America, the opera houses that existed catered to the rich and elite, leaving few opportunities to exhibit new music.³³³

When Kurt came to the United States, he fully embraced everything American. He never spoke German again except to help America with war propaganda broadcasts. Even his dying words were in English. He wanted nothing to do with other refugees, including Paul Hindemith, with whom he had been friends in Germany. In his mind and in reality, the Germany he came from no longer existed. He refused to look back, and

³²⁸ Gay, Peter "We Miss Our Jews: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany". In Brinkmann, *Driven into Paradise*, 29

³²⁹ Goehr, Lydia, "Music and Musicians in Exile", In Brinkmann, *Driven into Paradise*, 78

³³⁰ Goehr, Lydia, "Music and Musicians in Exile", In Brinkmann, *Driven into Paradise*, 76

³³¹ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 132

³³² Danuser, Hermann, "Composers in Exile: The Question of Musical Identity", In Brinkmann, *Driven into Paradise*, 160

³³³ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 134

focused on the future of America. He did not live as an exile, but joined America. Determined to create American music for American people, he rejected everything German, even his previous music.³³⁴ When called a German composer in a *Life Magazine* review, he sent a letter informing them that he was not German. The Nazis did not consider him one, and he left that country in 1933. He then listed his theatrical works composed since arriving in the US. He pointed out that all but one had American backgrounds.³³⁵

Kurt commented in several interviews over the years that he believed in writing music for the time in which he existed. Convinced that a musical, dramatic form would emerge in America, he wanted to be part of that legacy. He knew it would not be opera, but believed it would come from Broadway. Quoted in a February 1940 New York Sun interview, he stated: “I have never acknowledged the difference between serious music and light music. There is only good music and bad music”. He understood that if a society no longer existed, the works that it created did not have meaning. Therefore, there should be no difference in creating serious or light art; both were essential to society.³³⁶ In another interview, Kurt told a reporter in Hollywood that America was the best audience to write for. They caught on quickly to the message, whether tender or funny. Most young Americans knew instruments and responded to them, unlike Europeans. Whether it was Benny Goodman, Harry James, or Gene Krupa, people knew which band was playing as soon as they heard it.³³⁷

³³⁴ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 139-141

³³⁵ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 311

³³⁶ Taylor, *Composer in a Divided World*, 253, 255

³³⁷ Sanders, *Days Grow Short*, 342

Kurt's work showed three types of output in America. The first, from 1935-1940, included *The Eternal Road*, *Johnny Johnstone*, and *Knickerbocker Holiday*. The second group reflected the Broadway show style and included *Lady in the Dark*, *One Touch of Venus* and *Firebrand of Florence*. The last group included *Down in the Valley*, *Street Scene*, *Love Life* and *Lost in the Stars*. His first and third set of shows remain true to Weill's conscience, and have some manner of social or moral subject, and all are set in America.³³⁸ Interestingly, the concept of *Down in the Valley* resembled the aims of the *Gebrauchsmusik* in Germany during the 1920s, by creating a simpler form of theater allowing the general public access. Weill tried to base his language on melodic and rhythmic inflections of American folk song and the popular music of the streets. Weill, in a New York City opera programme booklet from *Street Scene*, said "A composer must know for whom he is composing".³³⁹ The last five years of his life, Kurt seemed to have focused on the American literary classics, hoping to create an American opera tradition from the foundations of American tales.³⁴⁰ His output in the few years following his exit from Germany left an indelible impression on the American theater. Sadly, his early demise cut short his dreams. *Huckleberry Finn* nor any other American classic will ever see Kurt's pen or be put to stage in the recognizable Weill style.

Erich Korngold, child prodigy of Austria, was also accused of selling out after emigration. Prior to leaving Austria, he made his living composing and doing operetta arrangements for musical stages. Never involved in politics, he enjoyed earning his money this way. It also brought Max Reinhardt to him.³⁴¹ Max brought the world of

³³⁸ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 133, 134

³³⁹ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 135

³⁴⁰ Jarman, *Illustrated Biography*, 136

³⁴¹ Gilliam, Bryon "A Viennese Composer". In Brinkmann, *Driven into Paradise*, 226

film to Erich, and gave him a way to earn a living far from his home. Unlike Kurt Weill, Erich did not joyfully embrace the American way. Not fond of the Hollywood lifestyle, he never really fit in any particular place in society.³⁴² He had a thick Viennese accent to the end, and always longed for pre-Hitler Vienna. His many returns to Europe reflect the desire to go back to a world that no longer existed.

Erich, somewhat through the pressure of his father, always yearned to be a serious composer, but realized the value of a steady income. Korngold helped transform film music into an accepted form. His attitude that music was music regardless of the purpose showed in his compositions. Previously, in silent film, the need for resident orchestras to accompany gave hundreds of musicians jobs. When sound first came to the movies, music only played a background role. The addition of sound put them out of work.³⁴³ Technical problems recording spoken dialogue made it impossible to record a musical score simultaneously. Most early films did not use music except in the opening titles.³⁴⁴ In 1932 Max Steiner, another Viennese immigrant, became the first to use the newly perfected multiple tracking.³⁴⁵ Alfred Newman and Max both managed to find a compositional technique that worked, but when Erich joined the Hollywood scene, the scores improved dramatically.³⁴⁶ Korngold's approach to film scoring was unique. He worked out his own mathematical method of scoring a scene, and changed the use of film music in the industry.³⁴⁷

³⁴² Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 186

³⁴³ Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 180

³⁴⁴ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 237

³⁴⁵ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 238

³⁴⁶ Duchen, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 181

³⁴⁷ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 239

Erich, the first composer to write film music in long lines reflecting the ebb and flow of film action, was excited by the medium. Korngold refused to feel like part of the film “factory”. He insisted on being included in the creation of the film and changed the way directors looked at the music. Amazingly, Hollywood gave Erich more freedom than allowed any other composer. While the studio forced Max Steiner to create “wall to wall” music, Erich selected which passages he composed for. His instincts, based on experience in Viennese theater, proved accurate. Erich, responsible for creating the archetype “film music”, showed studios how music could be woven into the structure of the film. The music became relevant to the movie itself. His use of large blocks of music combined with interwoven leitmotifs brought emotional responses by the audiences.³⁴⁸

According to Brendan Carroll, Erich intended that his scores would stand alone.

“Treating each film as an ‘opera without singing’ (each character has his or her own leitmotif) he created intensely romantic, richly melodic and contrapuntally intricate scores, the best of which are a cinematic paradigm for the tone poems of Richard Strauss and Franz Liszt”.³⁴⁹ People began to go to films just to hear the scores.

John W. Morgan, in a documentary of Korngold, says “He was a dramatist. When operas became less popular, he switched to film”. Erich would work out a thematic idea ahead of time. He would go to the studio and watch the film as he improvised. Then he would go home, and work on it again. Hugh Wolf, amazed that Erich’s brain seemed to be able to pull out interchangeable parts of music whenever needed, said “Music flowed out of him fully formed”.³⁵⁰ Listening to other scores of the time, it is clear Korngold had tremendous influence. Alfred Newman and Max Steiner

³⁴⁸ Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 181-183

³⁴⁹ Carroll, *Grove Music Online-Erich Korngold*

³⁵⁰ Thumm, *Adventures of a Wunderkind*

worked closest with him, but the influence is still felt in the music of John Williams and James Horner. His legacy of film scores with incredible symphonic complexity continues today.³⁵¹ In the post-war world, serious tonal, romantic works went out of style. It appeared in film through Korngold, and remained there for over four decades.³⁵²

The public heard little of either Korngold or Weill until the 1980s. Since that time, trends and composers suppressed by Hitler have been brought out for reexamination. The release of many new recordings and the internet have opened doors for new exploration of their music. Performances of both are becoming more common, and Korngold's name is now seen on recital programs with Mahler, Berg, Strauss and Wolf. Interest in the cinema has also helped revive interest in Erich's music. It is amazing to look at the lives of these two composers and follow the path that led them to America. The changes they helped create truly reflect the spirit of our nation. The United States, embracing the movement of people into the nation, allows the greatness of talent to shine far beyond its borders.

³⁵¹ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, 297

³⁵² Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*, 183

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allenby, David. "Review: Don't Mention the War?" *The Musical Times* Vol 137. No 1845. Nov (1996): 29-32. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1004308>>.
- Berghahn, Volker R. *Modern Germany: Society, Economy, and Politics in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
- Brinkmann, Reinhold, and Christoph Wolff., ed. *Driven Into Paradise : The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States*. University of California Press, 1999.
- Carroll, Brendan G. *The Last Prodigy: a Biography of Erich Wolfgang Korngold*. Portland, Or.: Amadeus, 1997.
- College of Education. USF. "Holocaust Timeline." *Florida Center for Instructional Technology*. Web. 09 Oct. 2010.
<<http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/timeline/textline.htm>>.
- Dixon, Troy. "Biography". *Erich Wolfgang Korngold Society*. Feb. 2006.
<www.korngold-society.org/bio>.
- Duchen, Jessica. *Erich Wolfgang Korngold*. London: Phaidon, 1996.
- Farneth, David, Elmar Juchem, and Dave Stein. *Kurt Weill: a Life in Pictures and Documents*. Woodstock: Overlook, 2000.
- Goldsmith, Martin. *The Inextinguishable Symphony: a True Story of Music and Love in Nazi Germany*. New York: Wiley, 2000.
- Hirsch, Lily E. *A Jewish Orchestra in Nazi Germany: Musical Politics and the Berlin Jewish Culture League*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2010.

- Hirsch, Foster. *Kurt Weill on Stage: from Berlin to Broadway*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.
- Jarman, Douglas. *Kurt Weill, an Illustrated Biography*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982.
- Kater, Michael H. *Composers of the Nazi Era: Eight Portraits*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Kater, Michael H. *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich*. New York: Oxford UP, 1997.
- Moller, Lynn E. "Music in Germany During the Third Reich: The Use of Music for Propaganda." *Music Educators Journal* 67, no. 3 (Nov. 1980): 40-44.
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3400616>>.
- Pinson, Koppel S. *Modern Germany, Its History and Civilization*. New York: Macmillan, 1954.
- Rees, Laurence. *Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State*. BBC, 2005. Netflix.
- Sachs, Joel. "Some Aspects of Musical Politics in Pre-Nazi Germany." *Perspectives of New Music*. 9. no. 1 (Autumn-Winter 1970): 74-95.
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/832195>>.
- Sanders, Ronald. *The Days Grow Short: the Life and Music of Kurt Weill*. Los Angeles: Silman-James, 1991.
- Stern, Fritz. ed. "Appendix B." *The Path to Dictatorship: 1918 - 1933; 10 Essays*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966. 203-05.
- Taylor, Ronald. *Kurt Weill: Composer in a Divided World*. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1992.

Thumm, Karl Erhard and Peter P. Pachl. *Erich Wolfgang Korngold: The Adventures of a Wunderkind*. Perf. Brendan G. Carroll. ArtHaus Musik, 2003. DVD.

Zabel, Gary. "Escaping the Dark Time." *The Musical Times*. 133, no. 1798 (Dec 1992): 621-23. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1002510>>.