

**MARCO POLO**

8.223385



# **Erich Wolfgang KORNGOLD**

**Sonata for Violin and  
Piano in D Major, Op. 6  
Piano Quintet in E Major,  
Op. 15**

**Ilona Prunyi, Piano  
András Kiss, Violin  
Danubius Quartet**

## Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897 - 1957)

### Violin Sonata in D Major, Op. 6

### Piano Quintet in E Major, Op. 15

Erich Wolfgang Korngold was the second son of the distinguished Viennese music critic Julius Korngold. As a child he showed remarkable precocity, and embarked on the study of composition at the age of six. His father was on good terms with Mahler and in 1906 the boy played by heart for him his new cantata, *Gold*, while Mahler followed the score, exclaiming “a genius”, as the music continued. He advised Julius Korngold to avoid the Conservatory and allow his son to study with Zemlinsky, Alma Mahler’s former teacher and brother-in-law of Schoenberg, while Robert Fuchs was persuaded to give him lessons in counterpoint. The connection with Mahler continued and the Korngolds visited him in succeeding summers when he was at Toblach. In the summer of 1909 the boy played to Mahler a new Scherzo he had written and a Passacaglia on a theme of Zemlinsky. Mahler advised him to add a first movement to these pieces and make of them a sonata, the result of which was Korngold’s Piano Sonata No.1 in D minor. By this time the boy’s reputation had aroused wider interest from, among others, Engelbert Humperdinck and Richard Strauss, Nikisch and even Weingartner. In 1910 Julius Korngold allowed the private publication by Universal Edition of three of his son’s compositions, *Der Schneemann* (“The Snowman”), *Charakterstücke zu Don Quixote* (“Character Pieces based on Don Quixote”) and the Piano Sonata in D minor, for the exclusive use of musicians. The pantomime *Der Schneemann* was performed at the palace of the Baroness Nieneth at a charity gala in 1910, in the original version for two pianos. Six months later it was staged at the Court Opera orchestrated by Zemlinsky and conducted by Franz Schalk, a performance sanctioned by Weingartner, who had replaced Mahler at the Court Opera and whose relationship with Julius Korngold was one of considerable hostility. In Munich, where, with his father, he had attended the first performance of Mahler’s Eighth Symphony, Korngold played his Second Piano Sonata in the presence of Paul Dukas and Camille Saint-Saëns, arousing their amazement and admiration. His Trio, Opus 1, written without the knowledge of his teacher, who had by some been wrongly credited with a large share in the composition of *Der Schneemann*, was performed at this time in Vienna by

Arnold Rosé, Mahler's brother-in-law, with Friedrich Buxbaum and Bruno Walter and in 1911 his Schauspiel-ouverture and Sinfonietta were played by the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and later by the Vienna Philharmonic. His one-act operas *Der Ring des Polykrates* and *Violanta* won immediate success in Munich in 1916, under the direction of Bruno Walter, and he later conducted them himself at the Vienna Court Opera. In 1920, the year of his operatic triumph with *Die tote Stadt*, staged in Hamburg and in Cologne, he made his debut in Vienna as an orchestral conductor, embarking on a career as conductor, pianist and composer that earned him official recognition in Vienna.

In 1934 Korngold moved to Hollywood, where he continued an earlier association with Max Reinhardt, with whom he had collaborated on a Berlin staging of *Die Fledermaus* in 1928. In America he continued an earlier project, a film version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The annexation of Austria prevented his return home and he remained in Hollywood, composing film-scores for some fifteen films for Warner Brothers. For two of his film-scores, *Anthony Adverse* (1936) and *Robin Hood* (1938), he was awarded Oscars. In the 1940s he conducted the New York Opera Company in performances of operettas by Johann Strauss and Offenbach and in 1943 became a naturalised American. After the war he was able to give greater attention to compositions of another kind with a violin concerto, introduced to the concert public by Heifetz, a cello concerto and his Symphony in F-sharp major. He died in Hollywood in 1957.

There is no doubt that Korngold's association with Hollywood did little to further his reputation as a serious composer for the concert-hall or opera-house, in spite of the obvious quality of the music he wrote for Warner Brothers. His style, late romantic, in spite of the association of his name with that of Schoenberg in a popular poll in Vienna in 1926, where the two were described as the greatest composers then living there, again did little to endear him to critics eager for some fashionable novelty of musical idiom. He summed up his own career as first that of a prodigy, then an opera composer in Europe, followed by a period as a movie composer. At the time of writing, 1946, he determined to end his work as a Hollywood composer, although he had always striven to write music for the cinema that could stand alone, independent of the film for which it was composed.

Korngold wrote his D major Violin Sonata, Opus 6, in 1913, when he was sixteen. It is an attractive work, with a lyrical first movement of considerable originality and occasional astringency, within a generally romantic texture. The second movement, an impetuous Scherzo, has a gently contrasted Trio, and this is followed by an expressive and rhapsodic slow movement and a graceful Finale that includes episodes of a more robust character. The Piano Quintet in E major, Opus 15, was published by Schott in 1924. It opens with a romantically expressive first movement that still contains the necessarily cerebral element that counterpoint can add. This leads to a deeply felt slow movement of singular beauty, avoiding any suggestion of commonplace sentimentality and containing material of contrasting mood and texture, moving where Mahler had pointed. The last of the three movements opens dramatically and proceeds to an exciting conclusion.

### **Ilona Prunyi**

Ilona Prunyi was born in Debrecen in 1941 and studied at the Liszt Academy in Budapest, distinguishing herself in the Liszt-Bartók Competition while still a student. Her career as a concert performer was interrupted by a period of ill health, and for personal reasons she spent ten years as a teacher at the Academy before making her debut in 1974. Since then she has appeared frequently in solo and chamber music recitals and as a soloist with the principal Hungarian orchestras.

### **András Kiss**

András Kiss was born in Budapest in 1943 and started violin lessons at the age of six. He studied at the Bartók Conservatory, and from 1960 at the Liszt Academy, where his teacher was Tibor Ney. A postgraduate scholarship enabled him to undertake further study under M. Vayman at the Leningrad Conservatory. A prize-winner in the Leipzig International Bach Competition in 1968, András Kiss was appointed in the same year to the staff of the Liszt Academy, where he continues to teach. As a performer he appears regularly in Hungary and has toured extensively in East and West Europe, the United States and Canada.

### **Danubius Quartet**

The Danubius Quartet has won considerable acclaim since its establishment in 1983. With the violinists Judit Tóth and Adél Miklós, violist Cecilia Bodolai and cellist Ilona Wibli, and the artistic direction of the distinguished violinist Vilmos Tátrai, the quartet won awards at Trapani, Evian and Graz in the earlier years of its foundation, and has recorded, among other works, the String Quartet No. 1 of Remenyi for Hungaroton, the complete String Quartets of Villa-Lobos for Marco Polo and for Naxos the Mozart and Brahms Clarinet Quintets. The Danubius Quartet has given recitals in Austria, Germany, Yugoslavia, Italy, France and Switzerland and appeared at a number of international festivals.

**Erich Wolfgang  
KORNGOLD  
(1897 - 1957)**

**Ilona Prunyi, Piano  
András Kiss, Violin  
Danubius Quartet \***

- |   |   |              |
|---|---|--------------|
| <b>1</b>                                  | <b>Ben moderato, ma con passione</b>  | <b>8:42</b>  |
| <b>2</b>                                  | <b>Scherzo: Allegro molto (con fuoco) - Trio - Moderato cantabile -<br/>Allegro molto (con fuoco)</b> | <b>10:32</b> |
| <b>3</b>                                  | <b>Adagio: Mit tiefer Empfindung</b>  | <b>7:12</b>  |
| <b>4</b>                                  | <b>Finale: Allegretto quasi andante (con grazia)</b>  | <b>8:30</b>  |
| <b>Piano Quintet in E Major, Op. 15 *</b> |   |              |
| <b>5</b>                                  | <b>Mässiges Zeitmass, mit schwingvoll blühendem Ausdruck</b>  | <b>11:01</b> |
| <b>6</b>                                  | <b>Adagio: Mit grösster Ruhe, stets äusserst - ausdrucksvoll</b>                                      | <b>10:19</b> |
| <b>7</b>                                  | <b>Finale: Gemessen, beinahe pathetisch</b>   | <b>7:47</b>  |

**Recorded at the Italian Cultural Institute in Budapest  
from 10th to 11th February (Tracks 1-4)  
and 19th to 22nd March, 1991 (Tracks 5-7).**

**Publisher: Schott & Sons, Mainz**

**Producer: Ibolya Tóth**

**Engineer: János Harváth**

**Music Notes: Keith Anderson**

**Cover Painting: The Flower Garden by Frederick Hassam**

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STEREO

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MARGO POLO

Erich Wolfgang  
**KORNGOLD**  
 (1897 - 1957)

Ilona Prunyi, Piano  
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 Danubius Quartet \*

KORNGOLD: Piano Quintet • Violin Sonata

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**Sonatas for Violin and Piano in D Major, Op. 6**

- |   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | Ben moderato, ma con passione   | 8:42  |
| 2 | Scherzo: Allegro molto (con fuoco) - Trio - Moderato cantabile -<br>Allegro molto (con fuoco) | 10:32 |
| 3 | Adagio: Mit tiefer Empfindung   | 7:12  |
| 4 | Finale: Allegretto quasi andante (con grazia)   | 8:30  |

**Piano Quintet in E Major, Op. 15 \***

- |   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 5 | Mässiges Zeitmass, mit schwungvoll blühendem Ausdruck     | 11:01 |
| 6 | Adagio: Mit grösster Ruhe, stets äusserst - ausdrucksvoll | 10:19 |
| 7 | Finale: Gemessen, beinahe pathetisch                      | 7:47  |

**Playing Time: 63'26"**

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KORNGOLD: Piano Quintet • Violin Sonata

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