

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. I am Kathrin Korngold Hubbard, the granddaughter of Erich Wolfgang Korngold and, the great-granddaughter of Dr. Julius Korngold. On behalf of my cousins, Gary and Leslie, who are here with us tonight, and my mother, Mrs. Ernst Korngold, who sends congratulations and best wishes, it is my distinct honor and privilege to express our sincere gratitude to Michael Haas, and indeed, to everyone involved, who has made this extraordinary Exhibition possible.

I am often asked whether I remember my grandfather. Regrettably, I was only three years old when he passed away, but for the last year of his life, my family lived immediately next door to his home, just a short distance from the Warner Bros. Studios. My memories of that time are shadowy at best, but my life has been punctuated and enriched by accounts of Korngold's early life as a child prodigy, his musical career both in Vienna and Hollywood, his generous and benevolent spirit, his legendary quick-witted Viennese humor, the memorabilia that filled my childhood home (some of which you will view within the walls of this museum tonight), and of course, the music. Always the music.

It came as no surprise to my parents when I requested violin instruction at the age of 7. By the time I graduated from university, I had performed my first piece of Korngold repertoire – the charming Much Ado About Nothing Suite. When Goetz Freidrich brought the Deutsche Oper Berlin production of “Die tote Stadt” to Los Angeles in 1985, my husband and I had the pleasure of playing in the opera orchestra. Just a decade ago, during Korngold's centenary, I performed and recorded his Symphony in F# with the Oregon Symphony under the baton of Maestro James DePreist. And though I have yet to perform it, I am named for his fifth and final opera, “Die Kathrin”.

I am fortunate to have had a career as a professional musician and the experience has certainly shaped the path my life has taken. But I am, by no means, a music historian, nor an expert on the life of Erich Korngold. This charge I leave to such esteemed scholars as my dear friend, Brendan Carroll, author of the preeminent Korngold biography, The Last Prodigy, which I am delighted to say, is now being translated into German.

Over the past 10 years, since my father's death, I have seen my family role evolve to that of an ambassador – a caretaker of my grandfather's legacy, if you will -- and now, my greatest pleasure derives from

corresponding with scholars and artists who are keen to research and perform the Korngold repertoire. In doing so, I am fulfilling the promise that I made in 1987 to my Uncle George, shortly before his death – to do all that I could to help Korngold’s star continue to rise. Additionally, I am adhering to my Grandmother Luzi’s plea to her sons, made 25 years earlier in her last will and testament -- that is, “to keep alive my husband through his works, and not grow weak in the struggle”.

And a struggle it was, for many years. I do not believe my grandmother could ever have dreamed that, fifty years following his death, cultural centers of the world such as Los Angeles, Washington DC, Bern, London and Vienna would be commemorating the passing of her beloved husband in such an estimable and reverential manner.

The genesis of the Korngold Renaissance dates back to 1972, owing to an RCA recording of the Warner Bros. film score classic, “The Sea Hawk”, produced by my uncle, George Korngold, and the esteemed conductor, Charles Gerhardt. The span of Korngold’s Hollywood career was relatively short – a mere twelve years -- and yet its significance remains indisputable. In 1938, after having traveled between Vienna and Hollywood for several years, and having established himself as an Academy Award-winning composer, Korngold was forced to make a critical decision that would have a long-lasting effect on his life, as well as that of his family. He was invited to compose the score for a film called “The Adventures of Robin Hood”, agreed, and then, having viewed a screening, had a change of heart feeling that it was, as he put it -- “no picture for him”. On February 12th, Helene Thimig, wife of the famed director and impresario, Max Reinhardt, called the Korngolds who were now in California, warning them that it was “all over” in Vienna. To quote my grandmother, “Under the crucifying influence of the news we had just heard on the telephone, Erich began to reflect on the matter.”

And so, the die was cast. My grandfather acquiesced and went on to earn his second Oscar for “The Adventures of Robin Hood”, the film to which we all owe our very existence. It is no coincidence that my first-born -- a son -- is called Robin.

And now, I must take this opportunity to remark on, arguably the most significant person in my grandfather’s life. Long before the drama in 1938 was to play out in America, the music world was consumed with the story of

the wunderkind and his father. The relationship between Julius and Erich Korngold has been analyzed and debated throughout the last century and has, understandably, been likened to that of Leopold and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. There is no question that it was a complex and tormented one, but my father, who held great fondness and respect for his grandfather often pointed out that despite the severe critiques of the critic, “Without Julius, there would not have been an Erich”. And I must tell you, that the long shadow of the father cast itself not only over the son, but onto the granddaughter.

In 1978, during an audition for the Tanglewood Music Festival, the acclaimed violinist, Louis Krasner, inquired whether I was -- “related to the composer”. When I replied in the affirmative he smiled wryly and remarked, “I knew your grandfather.... I knew your great-grandfather.... He was the most feared man in Europe!” I am happy to report that, despite this dire pronouncement, a letter of acceptance arrived.

Fifty years ago, Erich Wolfgang Korngold died in Hollywood, brokenhearted – believing himself a forgotten man. I would like to close this evening, by articulating how deeply gratified our family is to know that Erich Wolfgang Korngold, the man and his music, have been welcomed once again to Vienna, the city he knew and loved so well. Indeed, the child prodigy has, at last, come home again.