City. After receiving his master’s degree at the University of Chicago in 1938, Kohs attended the Juilliard Graduate School (on a fellowship) and Harvard University; his teachers included Olga Samaroff Stokowski, Bernard Wagenaar, Hugo Leichtentritt, Willi Apel, Roy Harris, Walter Piston, Igor Stravinsky, and Carl Brucken.

On September 26, 1941, Kohs was inducted into the United States Army, remaining in uniform for about four years. Several of his compositions have been inspired by army experiences. The Automatic Pistol, for a cappella male chorus, uses a text derived from an army manual, and consists of directions for disassembling the weapon. Life with Uncle Sam, originally written for band, but later re-scored for orchestra, is a humorous suite of pieces descriptive of army life; the six movements are entitled: “Reveille,” “Goldbrick,” “First Sergeant and Little Joe,” “Tactical March,” “Mail Call,” and “The First Morning of a Furlough.”

One of Kohs’s most important works to date is the Concerto for Orchestra, which was heard on one of the orchestral programs of the ISCM festival in Berkeley in 1942; it was the only work in the festival by a native American in uniform. The work was performed again by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra in February 1943.

In 1946-47, Kohs was awarded the Ditson Fellowship at Columbia University. Kohs has written articles for various musical magazines, on several occasions has served as assistant conductor of major orchestras, and has taught courses at the University of Wisconsin and the Kansas City Conservatory of Music. In the fall of 1946 he joined the faculty of Wesleyan University as assistant professor of music.

Kohs’s chief avocational interest in music is playing the kettledrums; a favorite story of his is an account of how he broke a kettledrum head at a concert while still a student in Chicago. A considerable amount of his time is devoted to an extensive file of musical information—drawn from books, articles, and program notes—which is carefully indexed for hasty reference. His favorite sport is tennis, but he confesses that he plays it “abominably.”

Principal Works: Chamber Music—String Quartet, 1940; Night Watch, for flute, horn, and timpans, 1943; Sonatina for Bassoon and Piano, 1944; Eight Burlescas, for various instruments, 1945; Sonatina for Violin and Piano, 1948. Choral Music—The Automatic Pistol, for a cappella male voices, 1943; Twenty-fifth Psalm, for mixed chorus and orchestra, 1947. Orchestral Music—Concerto for Orchestra, 1941; Life with Uncle Sam, 1942; Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, 1945; Passacaglia for Organ and Strings, 1946; Legend for oboe and strings, 1946; Concerto for ‘Cello and Orchestra, 1947. Piano Music—Sonatina, 1939; Ten Little Pieces, 1941; Piano Variations, 1946; Etude in Memory of Bartók, 1947; Variations on ‘Homme Arné, 1947; Variations on a Nursery Tune, 1947; Toccata, for harpsichord or piano, 1948. Songs—Three Little Flowers, 1946.

About: Reis, C. Composers in America (rev. ed.).

Erich Wolfgang Korngold 1897-

ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD, who was born in Brünn, on May 29, 1897, was the son of one of Vienna’s most notable music critics, Dr. Julius Korngold. Inevitably, he was directed towards the study of music at a tender age, and forthwith proved himself to be a prodigy reminiscent of another fabulous Wolfgang — Mozart. Rudolph Ganz once explained that the “early flowering of this boy’s creative genius can be traced indirectly to a case of measles, upon recovery from which young Erich seemed endowed with new gifts.” In any case, at the age of three he was composing pieces for the piano which were amazing for their unity of structure and integration of musical thought. At eleven he composed a musical pantomime, Der Schneemann, presented successfully at the Court Opera in Vienna. Two years after this he composed the Piano Sonata in E Major, a work amazingly audacious in its harmonic language, original in its concept, richly inventive in its ideas. One English critic wrote: “To pretend that Korngold is as learned as Reger or Strauss is unnecessary, but in matter of
sheer invention he is already their equal. His precocity is marvelous.” After Rudolph Ganz introduced this work to New York, in 1912-13, Richard Aldrich commented: “It shows nothing of the naturalism, simplicity and directness of boyhood. . . . There are ideas in it of value; and the elaborated and complicated development of themes discordantly crossed and crabbed as they seem to ears not twisted to the future, denotes a remarkable capacity.”

The celebrated conductor, Felix Weingartner, reported at least one evidence of young Korngold’s amazing talent. Korngold had composed a song cycle which Weingartner was to introduce with the Vienna Philharmonic. At the rehearsal it was discovered that a new accompanying orchestral score would be necessary. Without further ado, Korngold called for paper and pencil and sat down to write an entirely new orchestral accompaniment, while orchestra and conductor waited. He handed his manuscript to Weingartner, and rehearsals began anew. Korngold listened, showed his dissatisfaction with what he heard, and demanded the return of his manuscript. He rewrote the entire score a third time—this time requiring only twenty minutes for the job—a version which now proved to be definitive.

“Erich Korngold,” wrote Weingartner, when the young composer had reached his sixteenth birthday, “is an individuality. In vain I searched his compositions, even his earliest, for blunders. Nowhere do I find a point disclosing an inexperienced hand. . . . It gave me the impression that Nature had the caprice to sum up everything the art of music had produced in the last decades, in order to give the sum total to a child in his cradle, who now plays with it.”

Vienna, however, is a city of cabals and jealousies; Korngold’s road, therefore, was not altogether a triumphant one. There soon developed a bitter controversy, known as the “Korngold affair,” which split Vienna for many months. It was hinted by some that Erich Korngold’s phenomenal success was entirely the result of his father’s prestige—that Erich Korngold was performed, praised, and encouraged by artists, managers, and critics because they wished to curry favor with the father; that Erich’s compositions were in all likelihood the work of others; that in short not Erich’s talent, but Father Korngold’s far-reaching influence, was paying a way of triumph for the boy. Many artists testified to the fact that they had been mercilessly criticized by Father Korngold because they had refused to play the boy’s music. As a matter of fact, one of the jokes of the period, ran as follows:

A: What will you play at your next concert?
B: Young Korngold’s Sonata.
A: Is it grateful?
B: No, but his father will be.

Despite the cloud of suspicion that hung over young Korngold’s head for more than a year, he continued his composition, undisturbed by rumors and accusations, and further proved his phenomenal talent. In 1916 he composed his opera Violanta, a work obviously influenced by Richard Strauss, yet betraying a consummate command of orchestral and vocal writing. Four years after this he produced what is perhaps his most famous work, the opera The Dead City. No one less than Richard Strauss himself said of this work: “This assurance of style, this mastery of form, this individuality of expression, these harmonies, are really astounding.”

Performances of The Dead City throughout Europe emphasized the fact that Korngold had now outgrown his status as a prodigy and had become a mature composer. The Dead City was heard at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1921—an occasion which served to introduce Maria Jeritza to American audiences. At that time Oscar Thompson wrote: “The music is compounded with dexterity and grasp of material uncanny in one of his years.”

It cannot be said that Korngold has lived up to the promises of his boyhood prodigy days and to those of his mature opera The Dead City. His other works—a Piano Concerto, an orchestral tone poem, Sursum Corda!, another opera, The Miracle of Helaine—though obviously the works of a craftsman, failed to disclose spiritual growth or the full fruition of a musical individuality.

In the past decade Korngold has established himself in Hollywood as one of its most successful composers of music for the screen. His first assignment was the adaptation of Mendelssohn’s music for the Max
Reinhart production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Since then, he has written the music for more than a score of successful films, including two which were singled out by the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences as the best original film scores of their respective years (Robin Hood and Anthony Adverse). Frequently, Korngold has interpolated serious musical sequences into his motion picture scores. In *Give Us This Night* there was a one-act opera; in *Deception*, a concerto for 'cello and orchestra; in *Escape Me Never*, a ballet.

Korngold believes that a Hollywood contract may have been the instrument to save his life. He was in Vienna, completing the orchestration of his folk opera *Kathrin*, and awaiting its premiere, when a cable arrived from Warner Brothers demanding his immediate presence in Hollywood. There was no alternative for him but to postpone the premiere of his opera and leave at once for America. "Six weeks later—no more Austria. If I had stayed, there might have been no more Korngold. It was a miracle."

Korngold has long felt that he found his niche in Hollywood. He has never looked upon his assignments there as musical slumming. To an interviewer he confided: "I feel very happy as an artist there. Nobody tells me what to do. I only compose one or two pictures a year. My main ambition is to write music to fit the picture that will still be music without the picture. Writing for the films is like writing an opera, only it goes a little bit faster."

In October 1946, however, Korngold confessed that he had had enough of motion picture music—for a while at any rate. He was eager to return to the writing of serious concert music. "I feel," he said, that my fiftieth year is a turning point. I look back to my life and see three periods. First, I was a prodigy, then a successful opera composer in Europe until Hitler, and then a movie composer. 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 the rest of my life." The decision was not a permanent one: after a vacation of about a year, Korngold was back in Hollywood.

Korngold, who is an American citizen, is short, squat, chunky, with short cropped hair (now touched with gray) brushed backwards. He goes in for loose clothing and bow ties. His wife is the daughter of a celebrated Austrian actor, Adolf von Sonnenthal. The Korngolds have two sons.


**Boris Koutzen 1901**

**Boris Koutzen** was born in Uman, Southern Russia, on April 1, 1901, the son of the founder and director of a Uman music school. From early childhood, Koutzen’s favorite pastime was to play the piano by ear and improvise melodies; by the time he was six, he had already composed several pieces, one of which his father orchestrated and had performed at a municipal park band concert.

In 1910 the Koutzen family moved to Cherisson, where the father became head of the violin department of the Music School of the Imperial Music Society. In Cherisson Boris studied the violin with his father, performing the Mendelssohn *Concerto* successfully when he was only eleven.

A change of residence to the capital city of Moscow, in 1918, intensified Boris’ musical activities. Entering a competition for violinists for a post then open in the State Opera, Koutzen won, and received his first major musical assignment. He was also engaged for the Koussevitzky orchestra.

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