

The NAXOS logo is a blue square with the word "NAXOS" in white, serif, all-caps font. Above the text are three horizontal lines, and below it are three vertical lines, creating a grid-like structure.

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The background image is a photograph of a pond or lake. In the foreground, there are tall, golden-brown reeds. The water is calm and reflects the sky and the trees on the opposite bank. The trees are green and leafy. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

**MOERAN**  
Cello Concerto  
Serenade • Lonely Waters  
Whythorne's Shadow

Guy Johnston, Cello  
Ulster Orchestra • JoAnn Falletta

## Ernest John Moeran (1894–1950) Cello Concerto • Serenade • Lonely Waters • Whythorne's Shadow

Of Anglo-Irish descent, Ernest John Moeran was brought up in Norfolk and the scenery and folk-music of Ireland and Norfolk were a lasting influence on him. Studies at the Royal College of Music were interrupted by the 1914-1918 War, in which he served on the Western Front, sustaining serious head injuries that affected him physically and mentally for the rest of his life. After the war he resumed a passion for collecting folk-songs and began to study privately with the composer John Ireland. Also at this time, he developed a close friendship with Philip Heseltine, who wrote music under the name of Peter Warlock. Both men were strongly attracted to Delius's compositions, which, together with those of Bax and Sibelius, had a significant impact on Moeran's own output.

As a composer Moeran was a late developer. He tackled most of traditional musical forms with the notable exceptions of opera and cantata but, despite the early promise of such works as the central *Elegy* from his three piano pieces entitled *Fancies* (1922), he did not achieve widespread critical and public success until the late 1930s with his *Symphony in G minor* (Naxos 555837). In the wake of this achievement, he produced a series of major pieces, including the *Violin Concerto*, the *Cello Concerto*, the *Sinfonietta* and the *Cello Sonata*. In 1945 he married the Irish cellist Piers Coetmore. Their union was unsuccessful, exacerbated by his constant drinking and her enforced absences due to extensive touring. Moeran's final years, spent in Ireland, were dogged by ill-health. On a stormy night in December 1950, a witness saw him fall from the pier at Kenmare, and, on his recovery from the water, he was found to be dead, apparently from a cerebral haemorrhage following a heart attack.

Moeran's individuality as a composer grew throughout his creative life and in the *Cello Concerto* of 1945 his eclectic influences are successfully subsumed within an authentic personal voice. Piers Coetmore gave the work's first performance with the Orchestra of Radio Eire conducted by Michael Bowles at the Capitol Theatre, Dublin, on 25th November 1945.

In the first movement (*Moderato*), the cello sings an almost continuous, spontaneous-sounding melody. After

a brief introductory orchestral gesture, the soloist enters with a hushed and extensive theme, driven by an insistent rhythmic figure. As in several other Moeran works, including the *Symphony in G minor* and the *Violin Concerto*, the opening phrase is central to the succeeding material. The long-delayed second idea, more compact and relaxed, is lightly scored for cello, with delicate woodwind decoration. Framed by baleful fanfares, the often stormy development section refreshes and energises the movement, offering new variations on its principal theme. In the closing section, Moeran revisits the secondary idea first, whilst the movement's main melody makes a delayed return in a final, pared down version.

The second movement is an imposing, meditative *Adagio*. A brief, anguished orchestral introduction precedes the nostalgic and profoundly felt main melody, a song without words for cello accompanied by hymn-like muted strings. At the end of the movement, a short solo cadenza avoids virtuosity for its own sake, playing more of a structural role, as Moeran deftly transforms the main theme of the *Adagio* into what will be the principal idea of the ensuing *Rondo*.

A bracing *Allegretto deciso alla marcia* begins the finale, a protean movement that incorporates various contrasting, lyrical passages within its tightly controlled structure, including, towards the end, a deeply expressive section where the main theme is transfigured into a passionate love-song. The work concludes briskly with a fast jig. All of the finale's elements are alive with the spirit of Irish folk-music.

Thanks to the transparency and restraint of his orchestration, Moeran's concerto is a rare example in the genre where the soloist can be clearly heard throughout. It may be regarded as one of the most successful of twentieth-century cello concertos, undeserving of its relative neglect in the concert hall.

*Serenade in G* was completed in 1948 and first performed on 2nd September of that year by the London Symphony Orchestra under Basil Cameron at a Promenade Concert in the Royal Albert Hall. On that occasion eight movements were played. When the piece was being

considered for publication, however, it was thought to be too long. The *Intermezzo* and *Forlana* were therefore excised and the *Serenade* was subsequently played in a six-movement form until a new edition of the score, published in 1996, restored the two movements to the places Moeran intended for them. The inclusion of the *Intermezzo* and *Forlana* movements significantly alters the character of the suite, deepening and intensifying what would otherwise have been an example of purely light music.

The cod-Elizabethan dance music of the *Prologue* is redolent of Peter Warlock's *Capriol Suite* of 1925, a set of dances in the renaissance style. Moeran's lyrical gifts are evident in the beautiful *Air*, scored for muted strings with an underlying fervour which is made explicit when the principal theme is given out on the cellos, this time unmuted. Unsuspected dark emotional regions are opened up by the central episode of the following *Intermezzo*. With its fleet-footed, stepwise movement, the *Galop* is remi-niscent of the song *Maltworms*, on which Moeran and Warlock collaborated. Scored for strings, woodwind and horn and launched by the oboe's haunting folk-like theme, the *Minuet* is written in the composer's most nostalgic vein. The spirit of Warlock's *Capriol Suite* is revisited in the *Rigadoon* which has the manner of a vigorous folk-dance. The atmospheric *Forlana* adds weight and depth to this agreeable collection of vignettes and builds to a powerful emotional climax. In the brief *Epilogue*, a tiny fanfare heralds the return of music from the *Prologue*.

Although some of the *Serenade's* movements have a convoluted history – the *Minuet* and *Rigadoon* originally belonged to a 1932 four-movement orchestral suite entitled *Farrago* which the composer subsequently withdrew – the piece works convincingly as a suite. Written primarily to entertain, it is typically well-crafted.

Though published together in 1935 as *Two Pieces for small orchestra*, *Lonely Waters* and *Whythorne's Shadow*

are very different in character and instrumentation. In their own respective ways, these two short pieces are entirely representative, fine examples of Moeran's art.

Probably completed in 1931, *Lonely Waters* had its première on 22nd January 1932 at The Queen's Hall, conducted by Anthony Bernard. Dedicated to Vaughan Williams, this is one of the first of Moeran's works to speak with his distinctive musical voice. It takes the form of a mini-orchestral rhapsody that weaves three measured and nostalgic variations around a folk-song from East Norfolk. The score's modest forces are supplemented by a suspended cymbal that supplies one precisely timed and very effective crash at the work's emotional peak. In the score's final page, a folk-singer, positioned at the back of the orchestra, describes in melancholy tones, the lonely waters of the work's title:

*So I'll go down to some lonely waters,  
Go down where no one they shall me find,  
Where the pretty little small birds do change their voices,  
And every moment blow blustering wild.*

Moeran wrote an alternative, purely orchestral, ending (not used in this recording) in which the singer's eloquent melody is voiced by a keening cor anglais.

*Whythorne's Shadow* derives from the madrigal *As thy shadow itself applyth* by the Elizabethan composer Thomas Whythorne. Philip Heseltine, who rediscovered Whythorne's music, published the madrigal in 1927 and three years later, just after Heseltine's death, Moeran used the tune as the basis for this orchestral fantasy, probably intended as a tribute to his friend. Even more sparingly scored than *Lonely Waters*, *Whythorne's Shadow* requires strings and one each of flute, oboe, clarinet and horn. The theme begins in the style of Whythorne's own time but gradually assumes Moeran's more intricate musical language.

Paul Conway

### JoAnn Falletta

JoAnn Falletta serves as Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic and Virginia Symphony in the United States and Principal Conductor of the Ulster Orchestra in Northern Ireland. She has guest conducted over a hundred orchestras in North America, and many of the most prominent orchestras in Europe, Asia, South America and Africa and is the Principal Guest Conductor of the Brevard Music Center of North Carolina. Recipient of the Seaver/National Endowment for the Arts Conductors Award, winner of the Stokowski Competition, and the Toscanini, Ditson and Bruno Walter conducting awards, Falletta has also received eleven ASCAP awards and serves on the U.S. National Council on the Arts. A champion of American music, she has presented nearly five hundred works by American composers including over one hundred world premières. Her Naxos recordings include the double GRAMMY® Award winning disc of works by John Corigliano and GRAMMY® nominated discs of works of Tyberg, Dohnányi, Fuchs, Schubert, Respighi, Gershwin, Hailstork and Holst. For more information: [www.joannfalletta.com](http://www.joannfalletta.com)

### Ulster Orchestra

The Ulster Orchestra is one of Northern Ireland's cultural cornerstones and since its foundation in 1966 has become one of the major symphony orchestras in the United Kingdom and Ireland. JoAnn Falletta was appointed Principal Conductor in May 2011, the orchestra's twelfth but first female and first American to be appointed to the post. The Hungarian-born violinist, Tamás Kocsis, leads the Orchestra. Northern Ireland's only professional symphony orchestra performs in front of over 100,000 people across Northern Ireland each year averaging eighty to ninety performances, including its more than forty main season concerts, lunch-time concerts, BBC invitation concerts and concerts at many regional and national venues such as the National Concert Hall in Dublin and Royal Albert Hall in London. The Ulster Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the significant support it receives from its principal funder the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the BBC, Belfast City Council and many of Northern Ireland's leading businesses. [www.ulsterorchestra.com](http://www.ulsterorchestra.com)

### Guy Johnston

The cellist Guy Johnston's career rapidly developed after he won the BBC Young Musician competition in 2000, going on to open the Proms and win a Classical Brit. He has performed with many leading international orchestras including the London Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, Philharmonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie Orchester and St Petersburg Symphony. Performances have included Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations* with the Northern Sinfonia, the *Elgar Concerto* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and works by Tavener and MacMillan with the Britten Sinfonia. He is also Artistic Director of the Hatfield House Chamber Music Festival and a Professor of Cello at the Royal Academy of Music. Guy Johnston's debut recital recording, with pianist Kathryn Stott received much critical acclaim, followed by a recording of David Matthews' *Dark Pastoral* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. He plays a 1714 David Tecchler cello, purchased for him with the help of the Stradivari Trust and the Royal Society of Musicians.

### Rebekah Coffey

Praised by *Opera Magazine* for her coloratura in the rôle of Oscar (*Un ballo in maschera*), the Northern Irish soprano Rebekah Coffey performs with many leading British and Irish orchestras, including the Hallé, Ulster Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra and RTE Symphony. Her BBC Proms début was in 2009 in Proms in the Park and she performs regularly on BBC Radio 2, 3 and 4. She has undertaken operatic rôles with Opera North, Castleward, English Touring Opera, NI Opera, Opera Theatre Company, Lyric Opera and at the Buxton and Belfast Festivals. She also performs with contemporary music ensembles including The Irvine and Crash (Canberra International Music Festival).



Guy Johnston (Photo: Jack Liebeck)



JoAnn Falletta (Photo: Mark Dellas)



Left: Rebekah Coffey

Above: JoAnn Falletta conducting the Ulster Orchestra at Ulster Hall, Belfast

(Photo: Harrison Photography / Marie Therese Hurson)

The *Cello Concerto* is one of Anglo-Irish composer E.J. Moeran's most important works. Composed in 1945, its deft scoring and memorable melodic material mark it as a work of his maturity. At its heart is the raptly lyrical and profoundly felt slow movement but the whole concerto reflects the singing qualities of the solo instrument. The much-admired *Serenade* is heard in the 1996 edition of the original 1948 version with eight movements. *Lonely Waters* is a brief but evocative orchestral rhapsody, and *Whythorne's Shadow* a touching fantasy based on an Elizabethan madrigal.



**Ernest John  
MOERAN**  
(1894–1950)

<b>Cello Concerto (1945)</b>	<b>28:44</b>	<b>7 Galop</b>	<b>2:25</b>
<b>1 Moderato</b>	<b>11:15</b>	<b>8 Minuet</b>	<b>3:18</b>
<b>2 Adagio</b>	<b>7:06</b>	<b>9 Rigadoon</b>	<b>2:00</b>
<b>3 Allegretto deciso alla marcia</b>	<b>10:21</b>	<b>10 Forlana</b>	<b>4:33</b>
<b>Serenade in G (original version, 1948)</b>	<b>23:18</b>	<b>11 Epilogue</b>	<b>1:14</b>
<b>4 Prologue</b>	<b>3:37</b>	<b>12 Lonely Waters (c.1931)</b>	<b>8:01</b>
<b>5 Air</b>	<b>2:44</b>	<b>13 Whythorne's Shadow (1931)</b>	<b>5:01</b>
<b>6 Intermezzo</b>	<b>3:00</b>		



**Guy Johnston, Cello**<sup>1-3</sup>  
**Rebekah Coffey, Soprano**<sup>12</sup>  
**Ulster Orchestra • JoAnn Falletta**



Recorded at Ulster Hall, Belfast, UK, 5 February 2012 (tracks 4–13), 6 February 2012 (1–3)

Producer: Tim Handley • Engineer: John Benson

Booklet notes: Paul Conway • Publishers: Chester/Novello

Cover photo: A misty dawn in Norfolk (© Katieb761 / Dreamstime.com)