

**SPECIAL FEATURE on ERNEST JOHN MOERAN,  
his CELLO CONCERTO,  
and his wife - the cellist PEERS COETMORE**

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**ERNEST JOHN MOERAN**

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.

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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.

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**THE CELLO CONCERTO**

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 great early promise, did not achieve widespread critical and public success until the late 1930s with his Symphony in G minor.

The Cello Concerto is one of the composer EJ Moeran's most important works. Composed in 1945, it presents a rich and varied orchestration and a series of very pleasant themes. Although the heart of this concert consists of the slow movement, an Andante with intensely lyrical features, this work as a whole reflects the extended cantability of the solo instrument.

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AUDIO showing the instant cello and piano score:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6e-TKH1cdII>

Orchestration: Cello soloist + 2 flutes/piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons + 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones + timpani, cymbals, small side drum + harp + strings

Score of Soloist with Piano reduction:

[https://imslp.org/wiki/Cello\\_Concerto\\_\(Moeran,\\_Ernest\\_John\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Cello_Concerto_(Moeran,_Ernest_John))

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## PEERS COETMORE

Peers Coetmore (born Kathleen Peers Coetmore Jones' in October 1905 - July 1976) was an English cellist. She spent her early years in Spilsby in Lincolnshire. She married the composer E.J. Moeran in 1945 and was the dedicatee of his Cello Concerto and his Cello Sonata. She gave the premiere performance of both these works (the Sonata with the pianist Charles Lynch). Her recordings of both works are available on CD on the Lyrita imprint [UK].

Among her students was Doreen Carwithen (film composer).

After Moeran's death in 1950, she married (Maurice) Walter Knott (1922-2003) and lived in Melbourne, Australia, where she taught at the Victorian College of the Arts. She died in July 1976. In her will, she made a bequest of \$20,000 to the College

*"...for the purpose of founding a Scholarship to be known as "The Peers Coetmore Scholarship" to be awarded from time to time to the cello student adjudged to be the worthiest student by the Board of Studies to enable such student to engage in the further study of the cello for a period of one, two or three years and whether within the Commonwealth of Australia or overseas as the said Board of Studies may in its unfettered discretion determine".*

The first recipient of this Scholarship was Jacqueline Johnson.

She also bequeathed to the College her 1723 Goffriller cello and some of Moeran's unpublished musical scores, including his unfinished Second Symphony in E-flat. After her death, Walter Knott arranged for Wesley College, Melbourne to name its orchestra the Coetmore Orchestra in her honour. Walter Knott was particularly associated with the college and bequeathed his own estate to it.

See some more info about her here:

<https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/37923>

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Taken from 'musicweb-international':

*"To understand the context of the works for cello it is necessary to look at Moeran's relationship with the cellist Peers Coetmore - originally Kathleen Coetmore-Jones. The composer first met Peers in 1930 whilst visiting the painter Augustus John. She had been an exceptional pupil at the Royal Academy of Music, winning a number of prizes. Nothing came of this first encounter.*

*Many years later they were to meet once again at a concert in Leominster. This time their friendship blossomed and for Moeran at any rate it developed into love. One of the outcomes of this relationship was a number of cello works dedicated to her.*

*On 26th July 1945 the couple were married. However it was not a particularly 'successful' union. Moeran needed to escape into solitude and Peers had considerable concert commitments which led to long separations. Gradually they drifted apart, with Peers finally working in Australia. All one can say is that they were 'incompatible'. Yet they shared some happy moments, and this is well reflected in the one or two surviving photographs of the couple."*

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Also by Moeran for cello:

Prelude for cello and piano of 1943

Irish Lament for cello and piano of 1944

Sonata, for cello and piano of 1947.

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The only two known photos of the couple!



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*'documenting the cello'* [www.johnstone-music.com](http://www.johnstone-music.com)