AN EXPLORATION OF THE COMPOSITIONAL
IDIOM OF E.J. MOERAN WITH SPECIFIC FOCUS
ON HIS CELLO CONCERTO

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Master of Music (Performance)

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An exploration of the compositional idiom of E. J. Moeran with specific focus on his cello concerto
AN EXPLORATION OF THE COMPOSITIONAL
IDIOM OF E.J. MOERAN WITH SPECIFIC FOCUS
ON HIS CELLO CONCERTO

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of requirements for the degree of
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Declaration

I, Christopher Pidcock, hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that it contains no material previously published or written by another person except for the co-authored publication submitted and where acknowledged in the text. This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of a higher degree.

Signed: ___________________________ Date: 25.9.10
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I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Alan Maddox, who has been the backbone and inspiration of this project. He was totally dedicated and willing to assist in whatever way I required.

Special thanks should go to Ms Georgina Binns, curator for the E. J. Moeran collection at The University of Melbourne Library, for her easy going cooperation, understanding and assistance in my research.

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Abstract

Ernest John Moeran (1894-1950) was an English composer whose music enjoyed considerable popularity during his lifetime, however only ten years after his death his name was verging on oblivion. Moeran was composing at a time in England where artists and musicians had a great deal of pressure on them to be original and different, and his music was soon considered old fashioned and out of touch with the post-1950 musical environment in Britain.

His music is at times derivative of other styles, however, a close study of his music actually shows he is more original than he has been given credit for. His music is of a high quality and deserves to be better known. Through exploring his compositional technique and how it developed by the time of the *Concerto in B minor for Violoncello and Orchestra* (1945), it has become clear that he is in fact a highly original composer who had a complicated and intricate composition process. The heart of this paper lies in the fifth chapter where several possible influences are investigated within the cello concerto.

The middle chapters explore previously used approaches to understanding his music, in particular his emotional expression and his concept of nature, and considers how the cello concerto can be understood in terms of these approaches. A more sophisticated understanding of his referencing practice, combined with the insights provided by the established approaches to his music, allows for a re-evaluation of this important composer’s music.
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Introduction

Aims

The aim of this paper is to elucidate Ernest John Moeran’s compositional process through examination and analysis of his *Concerto in B minor for Violoncello and Orchestra* (1945). Specific analysis of the cello concerto will contribute to the literature on Moeran’s orchestral music, most of which is more general in nature. Further aims of this study are to discover where Moeran’s influences come from; to what extent his music is original; and, finally, to determine why musicians neglect to perform Moeran’s music more often.

The study is divided into four sections. The first is a brief discussion of Moeran’s background and an account of his general composition style. The second is a discussion on the level of originality found in Moeran’s music, whether his music tries to convey meaning, the role of nature in his music, and how the public perceived him as a composer. The third section is a discussion of Moeran’s cello concerto, including a critical survey of over sixty musical examples that attempts to show its musical indebtedness. Finally, the paper will conclude by drawing together the various approaches Moeran uses in his compositional process to cast new light on this underrated composer.
Significance of the Study

There are several reasons for researching Ernest John Moeran’s cello concerto. Firstly, the concerto is regarded by many as a very fine composition and merits thorough analysis. It is skilfully crafted and deserves to be known better by cellists. In the words of Lionel Hill (1986):

It is a complete mystery why this splendid concerto has not been gratefully seized upon by today's cellists, whose repertoire is not extensive anyway. The work is in conventional sonata form and is one continuous paean for the cello, which is allowed to sing through the expert orchestration from start to finish, and is the final expression of all that Moeran had strived to say throughout his life.¹

A second reason to study the concerto is to discover whether Moeran consciously modelled his cello concerto on other established cello concertos and, if so, what his reasons were for doing this. The English cellist, Paul Watkins, articulated his first reaction to the cello concerto as follows:

I was amazingly struck by how similar it looked to great cello concertos of the past, particularly the Elgar, and in the last movement of it, the structure reminded me a lot of the Dvořák - the various figurations and things in there, just visually, on the page. In fact, when I started to work on it and play it through, it really turned into its own piece,

and it is in fact a very original work indeed - not in any way the rip off that I thought it might turn out to be before getting to know it in depth.²

Thirdly, Moeran’s referential compositional style invites comment on the perceived level of originality in his music in comparison with his contemporaries. Moeran did not regard himself as a highly original composer, yet his music has qualities that defy categorisation.³ Moeran was particularly fond of the music of Frederick Delius and Ralph Vaughan Williams, indeed Christopher Palmer states that:

Most of Moeran’s music can be related to a compromise, generally happy and successful, between the rival harmonic claims of Vaughan Williams and Delius, facilitated by their melodic grounding in modality and pentatonic phraseology.⁴

With regard to whether Moeran succeeded to create his own style, Christopher Palmer is strong in his opinion:

My own view is that he did not. In fact I wish to suggest without impertinence, and I speak as an admirer of Moeran- that his distinction lies not so much in any recognisable or striking individuality of idiom as in a recognisable and striking ability so to order this assembly of often disparate currents and cross-currents of musical thought to produce thereof a musical substance fine-textured, subtle-mannered and eloquent. Proportions are balanced with an infallible sureness; there is no grinding of gears, no sudden

breaking out of one style and equally abrupt acceleration into another; the music flows with a smoothness and inevitability, it *sings* ever radiantly, and before long we find ourselves accepting this skilful and painless concatenation of acquired stylistic elements as something original and personal.\(^5\)

Moeran did not always strive for originality in the way that many British composers did between 1914 and 1950, however we can still measure his significance in other ways. In appraising Moeran, some critics have perhaps tried too hard to make him out as a highly original composer when really he composed in a mixture of several established styles already familiar to the public. In the words of Mike Smith, "too anxious a concern for Moeran’s individuality robs him of his significance as a member of a group."\(^6\) Other writers on Moeran, however, have said he may be categorised with composers such as Delius, Ireland and Warlock, for contributing significantly to twentieth-century English music that dealt with the interplay between diatonicism and chromaticism. This paper is the first in-depth study of the cello concerto that explores his level of originality, and it demonstrates Moeran’s capacity for creative synthesis.

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\(^5\) Palmer, 20.

\(^6\) Mike Smith, "Reviewed Work(s): The Music of E. J. Moeran by Geoffrey Self.".
Literature Review

There is relatively little written on Moeran, considering the positive impact he had on British music over the mid-twentieth century, and even less about the cello concerto in particular. The literature relevant to this study can therefore be divided into the following main groups: Moeran’s own publications, books and articles about Moeran’s life and work, a collection of the personal letters of Moeran, websites dedicated to Moeran, sources dealing with English music of the period and with particular genres (such as art-song, concertos, and symphonic works), and essays and articles that discuss Moeran’s music.

Moeran also wrote a number of articles for publications such as the *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society* and *Countrygoer.* In an issue of *Countrygoer* from 1946, Moeran wrote about his first experience of hearing folk music in a classical music setting. In the spring of 1913, Moeran stumbled across one of the Balfour Gardiner concerts where he was exposed to Vaughan Williams’ *Norfolk Rhapsody.* This was Moeran’s first exposure to hearing Norfolk folk-song in an orchestral setting. It had a huge impact on Moeran, and his response is telling; “It seemed to... express the very spirit of the English countryside as I knew it then.”

One of the earliest published articles on Moeran comes from the composer Peter Warlock (also referred to as Philip Heseltine) in the *Musical Bulletin* (1924). He praised

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8 ----------, "Folk Songs and Some Traditional Singers in East Anglia," *Countrygoer* Autumn no. No. 7 (1946).
Moeran as one of England’s most promising composers who, by the age of thirty, had surpassed Elgar and Delius at the same age through his output of songs, chamber music and orchestral pieces.  


Wild tells us that Moeran’s cello concerto is his most mature display of the folk pastiche style, as the absorption of the essence of folk music now pervades the music. Wild finds the work is full of resourcefulness in the themes; the theme at the solo cello’s entry in the second movement is closely related to the main theme of the third movement, and nearly all the themes in the third movement are based on its principal theme. It thus appears that Moeran is using the ‘germ cell’ technique, also used in his *Symphony in G minor* (1937). Wild’s study also uncovers that Moeran proceeded to mix the influences of folk song with Elizabethan part-song not only in his choral music but also in the concertos and orchestral music as well.

McNeill offers the most comprehensive theoretic exploration into the musical language of Moeran’s catalogue, which has made the exploration of Moeran’s influences all the more analytically approachable. The collection of letters and anecdotes presented in the

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appendix also provides an easy access point to understanding Moeran’s busy and complex musical life, and how the cello concerto came to its fruition. These letters also provide the most valuable insight into the composer’s character and reveal Moeran’s rapidly deteriorating mental state towards the end of his life.

Another important collection of stories and letters come from Lionel Hill in his book *Lonely Waters* (1985). Hill became a close friend to Moeran in the 1940s, and he provides us with several insightful stories about his experience with the cello concerto and the composer.  

In his book “Moeran, the Man and his Music” Geoffrey Self argues that Moeran’s cello concerto was written with two cello concertos in mind – Elgar’s *Concerto in E minor for Violoncello and Orchestra* and Dvořák’s *Concerto No. 2 in B minor for Violoncello and Orchestra*. Self finds several striking similarities between these pieces in the form, structure, themes, style, orchestration and use of the solo cello part. Geoffrey Self demonstrates that Moeran used a ‘parent cell technique’ to create unity throughout the work, and argues that the ‘germ cell’ of the first and third movements came from the Dvořák cello concerto itself. Self gives some examples of these influences in his book, however several more examples for comparison will be given in Chapter 5 of this study. Self notes “the problem of the plethora of composers to whom Moeran responds”.

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11 The *Cello Concerto in B minor* by Dvořák was preceded by the *Cello Concerto no 1 in A minor*, which is much less known and rarely ever played today because of its awkward cello writing, excessive length and complicated structure, and simply because its successor is one of the finest cello concertos ever written.


13 Ibid., 11.
Moeran’s idiom includes influences from the English Pastoral School, the Celtic Renaissance, neo-classic, post-romantic, Elizabethan, and Tudor styles and, at times, is reminiscent of jazz harmonies.  

An important theme in Moeran’s music is his relationship with nature. Fabian Gregor Huss provides a unique insight into this aspect of Moeran’s aesthetic in his article *The Construction of Nature in the Music of E. J. Moeran* (2009). The author argues that Moeran’s creative impulse came from his relationship with nature, and explains how nature directly affected his music. For Moeran, nature was not found merely in picturesque landscapes, but also in rural humanity and the folk songs from these areas. Huss also argues that Moeran’s music did not try to depict nature through orchestral colour but through the use of actual style, for instance Moeran’s use of time and space creates ideas such as musical landscapes; “used largely as a symbol – a stationary musical idea removed from the temporal progress of the music.” Huss speaks of the “British Romantic” movement that was especially strong in the post-Great War decades when Britain was searching for a new artistic identity, and her greatest composers took to collecting British folk tunes and setting them in a classical orchestral environment. Huss makes the point that only a small handful of composers who wrote in this style actually spent time living in the countryside (such as Moeran and Vaughan Williams) and their music has an honesty in it that avoids any overly idealised depiction of English

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16 Ibid., 4.
country life that several other composers took to.\textsuperscript{17} At the same time, however, Huss argues that Moeran’s personal outlook on his music was related to the mainstream notion of his contemporaries that “may be understood to some degree as a reflection and expression of a shared societal point of view, suggesting once again a Romantic ‘back to nature’ movement.” \textsuperscript{18}

The most comprehensive and accessible source on E.J Moeran can be found on the internet at Andrew Rose’s \textit{World Wide Moeran Database} (2000). This webpage offers a wide range of excerpts from articles and books on Moeran along with several rare articles, a list of recordings of his music, performance information and conversations about his music. Several Moeran scholars have contributed their work to this website.

A substantial article by J.A Westrup in \textit{British Music of Our Time} (1946) provides insight into Moeran’s contribution to British music and some of the idiomatic tendencies in his music.\textsuperscript{19} Westrup mentions that Moeran developed his mostly self-taught style of composition through studying other composers; an idea that is discussed at length in Chapter 1 of this study.\textsuperscript{20} Westrup is quick to mention that although his music is indebted to influence, it is “far from being a slavish imitation”.\textsuperscript{21} Westrup also tells us that Moeran’s best compositions were written in his folk style idiom, such as the \textit{Seven Poems of James Joyce} (1929), the \textit{Six Poems of Seamus O’Sullivan} (1944) cycles, his \textit{Sinfonietta}, the \textit{String Trio} (1931), and his \textit{Concerto in B minor for Violoncello and

\textsuperscript{17} Huss, \textit{Tempo} 63 248. \\
\textsuperscript{18} Huss, \textit{Tempo} 63 248. 5. \\
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. \\
Orchestra (1945), which was considered to be amongst the finest of its kind in England at the time.\textsuperscript{22}

There are several books dedicated to 20\textsuperscript{th} century English music that mention Moeran’s contribution to the British Pastoral School and the Celtic Renaissance. The Pastoral School is directly linked to the use of and/or imitation of English folk song with its attendant modality in certain works of Vaughan Williams, Butterworth, Holst, Howells, Finzi and Moeran. The English Musical Renaissance 1860-1940 Construction and Deconstruction (1993) by Stradling and Hughes tells us that interest in the Celtic Renaissance happened in English music long before the First World War, pioneered by the poetry of Yeats and Synge. Composers such as Arnold Bax who concerned himself with Ireland and Joseph Holbrooke with Wales found inspiration in these alternative sources.\textsuperscript{23} Stradling and Hughes also write: “The Pastoral school was reactively strengthened in the post-war era by Irish independence and the break-up of the Union.”\textsuperscript{24}

As these political tensions loosened, English composers decided to include the music from their surroundings, such as Ireland and Scotland. The desire to use these folk songs also came from composers like Vaughan Williams, who wanted to free themselves from both Wagnerian chromaticism and the Brahmsian style espoused by Stanford’s concert music and in his teaching. Even Elgar, whose symphonies were praised throughout Germany by Romantic composers such as Strauss and Mahler, was

\textsuperscript{22} J. A. Westrup, “E. J Moeran,” in British Music of Our Time.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 75.
perhaps considered by Vaughan Williams to be too monumentally European sounding and not enough English sounding.

Stradling and Hughes identify Moeran as one of several valuable composers from the Pastoral School who were causalities during the Great War. The so-called ‘Lost Generation’ included composers like Butterworth, Farrar, W.D Browne and the Australian composer Frederick Septimus Kelly.25 Before Ivor Gurney and Moeran were sent to war they studied under Sir Charles Stanford, at the Royal Academy of Music. The authors also mention the strong influence of the poet A.E. Housman on composers such as Moeran. Housman’s lyrics became the essence of the English Pastoral School, and his A Shropshire Lad (1896) was set to music by nearly every composer of the Pastoral School.26

In Howes’s book The English Music Renaissance (1966) Moeran is esteemed as one of the most important folk song collectors of East Anglia. Howes writes:

Moeran is probably the most considerable of (England’s) nationalist composers after Vaughan Williams, and folk-song is all-pervasive in his output from the string trio to the Sinfonietta and the cello concerto.27

Howes also mentions that curiously there was never a nationalist school formed, because “nationalism as a political force was in decline in the twentieth century.”28

28 Ibid.
There was, however, a technical development towards neo-modality in music, Howes says:

(It) has emancipated English music not only from Germany but also from the nineteenth century and the over-ripe romanticism which persisted in some parts of Europe up to the Second World War.  

Howes tells us Vaughan Williams led this movement in works such as the *Norfolk Rhapsody* (1906), *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* (1910), *The Lark Ascending* (1914) and the *Pastoral Symphony* (1916-23), and Moeran followed as one of its closest adherents. Howes also comments that when Moeran’s songs sound like Delius (or Warlock) his music takes on a Neo-Delius sound – never a copy – but Moeran built on this style to create his own musical language.  

Moeran’s main contributions were to art song, chamber music and orchestral music. Within all of these genres he frequently changed his style, making him a difficult composer to understand and to write about. In the book *Parry to Finzi: Twenty English Song-Composers* (2002), author Trevor Hold mentions that “Moeran was a composer with a magpie mind; he does not, like a squirrel, bury his influences out of sight, but happily displays them for all to see.”  

Hold goes on to argue that in Moeran’s orchestral works it is nearly impossible for the listener to miss the impact of Vaughan Williams and Sibelius, just as in his songs the influence of Delius, Ireland and Warlock...

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31 Trevor Hold, From Parry to Finzi- Twenty English Song-Composers (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 394.
are reflected in the harmonies, choice of text, and song writing techniques. Stephen Banfield’s article *Moeran, Warlock and Song* underlines the similarities between Moeran and Warlock. They both struggled with bouts of depression, but Banfield also suggests that Moeran’s greater self-knowledge gives his music a superior depth, ultimately due to his greater understanding of happiness. Banfield further explains:

He showed this by a system of musical symbolism, intensely personal yet at the same time intensely objective, for it is the *form* that his musical symbols inhabit that gives us the meaning of his art.

Banfield also suggests Moeran’s expressive gifts were of a similar scale to Tchaikovsky, who used form as meaning with tremendous success.

Hold highlights the superior quality of his finest songs, such as the Joyce and O’Sullivan settings, saying “Moeran created a special element that set him apart from other English song writers and that alone earn him an important niche on the history of 20th century English song.” According to Hold, Moeran’s ‘special element’ was his ability to create his own unique character or mood in his songs, and this is also the case with his orchestral music. The theme of moods in his music will be further explored in Chapter Three.

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32 Hold, *From Parry to Finzi*.
34 Ibid.
35 Hold, *From Parry to Finzi*, 394.
Moeran's violin and cello concertos receive notable mention in Thomas Mann's chapter *Some English Concertos* in the book *The Concerto* (1949). Mann describes Moeran's philosophy for his concertos:

Like Bax, Moeran finds in the concerto a stimulating medium for lyricism rather than an outlet for heroic fireworks. But while Bax puts melodic and harmonic flow before the demands of form, the two are closely interwoven and mutually inspiring in Moeran's concertos.  

Mann goes on to describe Moeran's attention to the delicate placing of thematic material in the cadenzas in his violin concerto that gives it an imaginative quality that too few writers of cadenzas have ventured into. Mann also describes the cello concerto's second movement as "a short but deeply moving adagio that can compare to the finest slow movements penned by British composers."  

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37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., 404.
Chapter 1 Influences on Moeran’s Compositional Style

Ernest John Moeran (1894-1950) was composing in a time when British music, between 1914-1950, was being redefined. During this time, British music had more stylistic changes and developments than the two centuries prior to it combined and, by 1950, a clear strain of composers had created a distinctive British style of music. There are several reasons for this musical rebirth: Britain’s development in communication and technological advances in recording and broadcasting stimulated the demand for new music, while the BBC set guidelines for composers, music critics, and musicologists influenced the direction of new music dramatically.\textsuperscript{39} Britain was forced to re-evaluate its musical heritage after the First World War and there was a renewed impetus to advance the cause of ‘British’ music. With this came a renewed interest in folk music and folklore, the revitalisation of early English music, Romantic Nationalism, and the avant-garde. Many British composers began to steer away from German Romanticism (exemplified by Brahms and Wagner), looking to the influence of French and Russian Neo-Classicism, Impressionism, jazz, and the influence of Hindemith, Sibelius and other Nordic composers. In 1945, the year in which Moeran wrote his romantic cello concerto, Benjamin Britten’s revolutionary opera \textit{Peter Grimes} was also premiered. Moeran’s music, by contrast, remained mostly rooted in the nineteenth century English style, yet it was also influenced by several tendencies of the newer style.

Moeran was the son of an Irish clergyman and spent his childhood moving around the various parishes that his father had been appointed to in Norfolk. Moeran’s childhood

was not intensely musically driven.\textsuperscript{40} He studied violin and piano as a child, however he did not hear the sound of a symphony orchestra until he was 14.\textsuperscript{41} He was educated in Uppingham and began composing when he was 17. His first interests were in writing chamber music and composing for the voice.\textsuperscript{42}

Upon leaving Uppingham in 1913, his first composition teacher was Sir Charles Villiers Stanford at the Royal College of Music in London; however this was short lived as he enlisted in the army as a despatch rider in 1914.\textsuperscript{43} He fought in the Battle of Bullecourt in France in April-May 1917. Amongst these dreadful conditions, Moeran received a severe head injury and was sent home. With shrapnel embedded too close to the brain for removal he underwent primitive head surgery, which involved the fitting of a metal plate into the skull.\textsuperscript{44} The shrapnel impacted on his health most of his life, and often affected his concentration levels.\textsuperscript{45} When he was discharged from the service he was given a disability pension and briefly began teaching at Uppingham. By 1920 he returned to his musical studies at the Royal College of Music, now studying under the celebrated composer John Ireland.\textsuperscript{46}

Although Moeran regarded himself as a mostly self-taught composer, the impact of John Ireland, was also notable. Moeran attributed the refinement of his compositional technique to Ireland, and credited Ireland with giving him the confidence to forge his

\textsuperscript{40} Andrew Andrew Rose, "The World Wide Moeran Database," www.moeran.net (accessed December 1, 2009).
\textsuperscript{42} J. A. Westrup, "E. J Moeran," in British Music of Our Time.
\textsuperscript{43} Andrew Rose, "The Worldwide Moeran Database."
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{45} Rhoderick McNeill, "A Critical Study."
\textsuperscript{46} Andrew Rose, "The Worldwide Moeran Database."
own style. Moeran’s music has clear similarities to Ireland’s use of harmony, and they were both admirers of Delius’s harmonic language. Ireland made common practice of giving titles to his shorter orchestral works as he was often instructed to do so by his publishers, and Moeran may have also followed Ireland in this trend by giving titles to works such as *Lonely Waters* or *Overture for a Masque*. Overall, however, the music of these two composers remained quite different. In fact, Hubert Foss comments about Ireland that “His pupils included Moeran, Benjamin Britten and Alan Bush, and it is high tribute to Ireland to reflect how little each of their differing styles bears the fingerprint of his idiom”.

Murray Schafer’s book *British Composers in Interview* (1963) provides insights into Moeran’s early training through interviews with Ireland. Schafer asked John Ireland about his experiences teaching students such as Benjamin Britten and Moeran. Ireland revealed that generally his students would not put up with hard work, and he never tried to force his own ideas onto his students, preferring that they tried to find their own style. He also thought Britain had not come up with a composer of the stature of Elgar since that time.

In an article written in 1931, Moeran gave an insight into Ireland’s teaching methods and his impact upon him. He tells us that Ireland’s remarkable quality was to teach in a way that did not hinder the development of the student’s own particular style and to

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49 Schafer, *British Composers in Interview*.
push them for continuity in their work. Ireland’s teaching promoted self-criticism and mastery of theory and he did not consider himself a teacher but a motivator. Moeran confessed to being a lazy person when not convinced about something and Ireland pushed him to master his theory and counterpoint, allowing Moeran to compose more instinctively. Ireland helped Moeran realise that no matter how inspired a composition may be, it must be logical in its structure for people to perform it and keep it from sitting on the shelf. Geoffrey Self relates how his style was affected by European trends:

From Sir Charles Stanford, John Ireland inherited a thorough knowledge of the music of Beethoven, Brahms and other German classical composers. As a young man he was also influenced by Debussy and Ravel as well as by the earlier works of Stravinsky and Bartók. From these influences, he developed his own brand of "English Impressionism", related more closely to French and Russian models than to the folk-song style then prevailing in English music.

When Moeran returned from the war the music scene in England had begun to change dramatically. The folk-song idiom had become very popular in England and Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) had become its leading advocate after he wrote his *Norfolk Rhapsody* (1906, revised in 1914). This new idiom was to have a strong influence on Moeran’s music. Vaughan Williams, like Moeran, went through several style changes in his career, no doubt partly due to the influence of his three teachers, Sir Charles Stanford, Max Bruch and Maurice Ravel. Stanford’s teaching was heavily

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50 The full article is reproduced in Appendix A.
influenced by Brahms's music, while Bruch would have given Vaughan Williams a greater pallet of fantasy and colour in his compositions. It seems Ravel had the most interesting relationship with Vaughan Williams, whom he admired greatly. Under the influence of Ravel, he worked mainly on orchestral style and form, as well as texture and harmony.\textsuperscript{53}

Arnold Bax, Percy Granger and Gustav Holst had already begun experimenting with the use of English and Celtic folk melody in their music before the Great War, and composers such as Philip Heseltine followed this trend after the war. The incorporation of British folk music stemmed from the rejection of the Germanic influences of the past, and created a new "British Romantic" style.\textsuperscript{54} Edwin Evans explained the scenario of English music at the time eloquently:

\begin{quotation}
Then the war, re-directing the intercourse of nations, created a new idea of the "modern." For although it was deadly to artistic life, it made extensive use of art as a source of political propaganda. In the new sense, Germany appeared absolutely sterile, while France, Russia, and England were acclaimed as modern.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quotation}

In the spring of 1913, during his student days, Moeran stumbled across one of the Balfour Gardiner concerts at the Queen's Hall where he was exposed to Vaughan

\begin{itemize}
\item Frank Howes, \textit{The English Musical Renaissance}.
\item Fabian G. Huss, "The Construction of Nature in the Music of E. J. Moeran."
\end{itemize}
Williams’ *Norfolk Rhapsody*. This was Moeran’s first exposure to hearing Norfolk folk-song in an orchestral setting. It had a huge impact on Moeran, and his response is telling; “it seemed to...express the very spirit of the English countryside as I knew it then.”

Moeran’s passion for collecting folk tunes grew out of this encounter with Vaughan Williams’ music. Over the following years he collected around one hundred and fifty folk tunes, starting in his hometown in East Anglia and later extending to all around Norfolk, and some of these were published in the *Folk-Song Society’s Journal* (1922). Moeran added to the journal later in 1931-32 with songs from Suffolk and, later, Irish songs in the late 1940s. Moeran transcribed the songs from such iconic figures as Harry Cox, whose large repertory of songs came from a family of musicians over several generations. On one occasion Moeran said Mr Cox could remember a song with a dozen verses after hearing it on three or four separate occasions. Moeran discovered the best singers amongst the Norfolk townspeople, who kept up the old tradition of folk singing in the local pubs. When he attended these sessions he would record or notate the tunes first hand.

In his obituary of Moeran, Arnold Bax described Moeran as a very successful song collector and attributed his success to his companionable and likeable personality among the townsfolk. Folk-singers would be very protective of their music and would only sing for those they thought of as their own, and Moeran, or ‘Jacko’ as he was

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56 Ernest J. Moeran, "Folk Songs and Some Traditional Singers in East Anglia."
58 Ernest J. Moeran, "Folk Songs and Some Traditional Singers in East Anglia."
59 Ibid.
affectionately known, was on the best of terms with these communities. The singers tended to have an exceptional memory, but their voices were coarse which meant they would lose their voices relatively quickly, so the song collector had to be careful to keep them from over-singing before it became impossible to notate their songs.

A new interest amongst British composers also lay in the rediscovery of Tudor and Elizabethan music mixed with folk song, creating a ‘Pastoral School’. The collections of Tudor music from E.H. Fellowes and R.R Terry began a revival of interest in sixteenth and seventeenth century music, which proved to be the catalyst for Vaughan Williams’ revision of The English Hymnal. The revitalisation of Tudor music became an important part of Vaughan Williams’ idiom, culminating in one of his most influential works in the ‘Neo-Modal’ style, the Mass in G minor (1922). Moeran also took inspiration from the Tudor and Elizabethan polyphonic style particularly in his part-songs. His Songs of Springtime and Phyllis and Corydon use Elizabethan part-song as models, however the harmonies he uses are not restricted to the limits of Elizabethan harmonies, thus creating his own neo-Elizabethan style bearing the influence of the ancient masters of polyphony. The harmonic structure used in these songs can also be later traced in the orchestral works, as Geoffrey Self mentions:

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61 Ibid.
62 Ernest J. Moeran, "Folk Songs and Some Traditional Singers in East Anglia."
64 Stephen Wild, "E.J Moeran: An Assessment" (University of Western Australia 1966).
65 Frank Howes, The English Musical Renaissance, 68.
Moeran nourished himself on the various vocal traditions of England and was able to transform his natural vocal idiom into instrumental terms to the great profit of his orchestral and chamber music.\(^{66}\)

Elements of Neo-Classicism from Western European composers also made a mark on British composers in the 1940s in reaction against the hypersensitivity and egocentricity of late romanticism.\(^{67}\) English composers who wrote in the Neo-Classical style included Walter Leigh (his opera *Jolly Roger*) and Arnold Cooke, who both studied under Paul Hindemith. Nadia Boulanger and Lennox Berkeley also increased the awareness of Neo-Classicalism and Impressionism through their teaching at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Stravinsky was one of the first composers to use the Neo-Classical style and his music, which became popular in England in the 1940s, may have influenced Moeran in his Neo-Classical style. Moeran’s most notable Neo-Classical moments are in his *Sonata for Two Violins (1930)* and in the *Sinfonietta* (1944). The *Sinfonietta*, however, seems to exhibit a variety of styles throughout. The opening movement is Neo-Classical (Moeran also scored the work for a ‘classically’ sized orchestra), the second movement is romantic and pastoral, and the folk-like *Allegro Risoluto* third movement returns to a Neo-Classical mood at the end.

As Moeran’s style matured he consciously changed the source of his influences. From the beginning, the impact of Delius on Moeran seemed to be stronger than that of any other English composer.\(^{68}\) Moeran’s earlier preference for the “mush of Delius-like

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\(^{68}\) Frank Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance.*
chords” that was so characteristic of his music until the 1920s momentarily disappeared in the more linear structured *Sonata for Two Violins* (1930) and the *String Trio* (1931), which blend the folk pastiche and Neo-Classical styles together. However, the influence of Delius can again be traced in the later works like the *Nocturne* (1934) and Cello and Violin Concertos and even in a section of the slow movement of the *Sinfonietta*.

Moeran has often been compared to his friend, the composer Peter Warlock, who also undoubtedly influenced Moeran’s compositional technique. Warlock was a prolific songwriter but was never comfortable writing in the larger forms on which Moeran concentrated in later life. Warlock’s interests in the occult, witchcraft, and Elizabethan music gave his music a unique quality. His best-known works are *The Curlew* and *Capriol Suite*, which are also two of the darkest and most melancholy compositions he wrote. Warlock’s atmospheric writing may have influenced Moeran’s darker moods, found in his cello concerto and many of his songs.

Warlock was a pseudonym of Philip Heseltine that he used for publishing, and he is now better known by this name. He tragically took his life in 1930, probably due to heavy drinking and long periods of untreated depression, and this cast a pall over Moeran’s life for many years. Warlock’s main influences came from Bernard Van Dieren and, again, Fredrick Delius. He only caught the English strain unconsciously and was more immediately involved in chromaticism and sixteenth century music, which

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70 Geoffrey Self, *The Music of E. J Moeran*.
would have influenced Moeran’s own part-song writing.71 Hold goes so far to say that several of Moeran’s songs have the trace of Warlock to the point that it hindered his creativity and did not always meet the demands of the text.72 Warlock also wrote for some important music magazines in England as co-editor and writer, often writing about new music and giving his own controversial opinions. These articles would have influenced Moeran and also assisted his knowledge of new music, especially that of composers from outside England.

From 1925 to 1928 Moeran and Warlock shared a cottage together in the small town of Eynsford, only an hour from London. The house became a meeting place for artists and musicians and they often hosted parties that led to heavy bouts of drinking.73 Over these three years Moeran composed very little, spending the time in re-evaluation of his own work and in observation of Warlock’s music, whose compositional and intellectual abilities he was in awe of. Following Warlock’s death, it took Moeran several years to regain his confidence in composing, and the heavy drinking remained a source of comfort for him.74 The metal plate in Moeran’s head may also have made him more susceptible to the effects of alcohol, and made him more vulnerable to habitual drinking.75 His friend Arnold Bax, who met with Moeran regularly in County Kerry, recalled meeting Moeran for the first time as he was being demobilized from the army

72 Trevor Hold, From Parry to Finzi: Twenty English Song-Composers.
74 Andrew Rose, “The Worldwide Moeran Database.”
after his head wound. He posed the idea that the after-effects of the injury may have contributed to the certain instability in his character later on.\textsuperscript{76}

After Warlock’s sudden passing in 1930, Moeran developed an interest in his father’s Irish roots and visited Kenmare, County Kerry, for several months at a time from 1934 onwards.\textsuperscript{77} It was there that many of his greatest compositions were written. The rest of the time he lived in his parents’ homes in Norfolk, Suffolk and Herefordshire.\textsuperscript{78} Moeran was not the only composer who found the Kerry region to be a place of relaxation and imagination. Moeran’s good friend Arnold Bax was already making trips to Kerry to compose, and both composers would stay together at the Lanscowne Arms Hotel in Kenmare during the springtime throughout the 1930s. The meetings with Bax may have become Moeran’s incentive for his visits and, as he was working on the Symphony in G minor at the time, it is unsurprising that there are moments in it that clearly show the influence of Bax.\textsuperscript{79}

It was noted above that Moeran was greatly impacted by Delius’s music at an early age, and this influence continued to some extent throughout his life. Delius became such a strong influence on a handful of British composers, and his colourful and evocative harmonies, often pentatonic with added seconds and sixths of the scale, were influential on many composers.\textsuperscript{80} As Christopher Palmer says:

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\textsuperscript{76} Lewis Foreman, \textit{Bax a Composer and His Times} (London: Scolar press, 1985), 181.  
\textsuperscript{77} Lewis Foreman, \textit{Bax a Composer and His Times} (London: Scolar Press, 1983).  
\textsuperscript{78} Ernest J. McNeill, "A Critical Study."  
\textsuperscript{79} Foreman, \textit{Bax a Composer and His Times}.  
\textsuperscript{80} Christopher Palmer, \textit{Delius}.
The temptation to linger lovingly over the sensuous beauty of these sounds and to weave a kaleidoscope of textures out of pentatonic patterns was frequently succumbed to, not so much by Delius and Vaughan Williams as by their acolytes – E.J. Moeran, John Ireland and Hebert Howells. In Delius’ music, the use of this figuration rarely descends to the level of purposeless doodling.81

Palmer tells us that Moeran’s harmonic language was a rivalry between the claims of Vaughan Williams and Delius, while using their melodic grounding in modality and pentatonic phraseology.82 For instance, it appears Delius and Vaughan Williams were both very much in Moeran’s mind when he wrote *Lonely Waters*. In the front of the score, Moeran requested that “the singer need not be a professional one, in fact anyone with a clear and natural manner of singing may perform the verse. And in any case, the singer must be in an unobtrusive position, sitting at the back of the orchestra or out of sight altogether.”83 According to Palmer,

we are immediately reminded of the solo voice in *Appalachia*, its mystery and remoteness, Delius’s concern to safeguard its anonymity and naturalness. *Lonely Waters* is a work in which Delius and the Vaughan Williams of *A Pastoral Symphony* meet and are one.84

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) was another of Moeran’s musical influences. Though Moeran never met Sibelius in person, the Finnish composer had had a cult following in

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81 Palmer, 20.
82 Palmer.
84 Christopher Palmer, *Delius*, 167.
Britain since he first visited in England in 1905, and Moeran was influenced by Sibelius’ mixture of post-romantic and nationalistic tendencies in a similar way that Vaughan Williams was in his symphonies. Sibelius also used folklore and the occasional folk tune in his music, giving it wide public appeal. Sibelius visited England four times between 1905 and 1912, and he became very popular in there not only through the premiere performances and recordings available in England, but through publications such as Cecil Gray’s "A survey of contemporary music" (1924) and the musically authoritative magazine Sackbut (1920) (co-edited by Moeran’s friend Peter Warlock). Constant Lambert’s popular and influential book Music Ho (1934) claimed that Sibelius represented ‘the future of music’, and several studies on Sibelius began to hail him as one of the leading minds of the twentieth century. In his personal letters, Moeran articulates his devotion to Sibelius’ ability to create colours and moods in his music that were so real that he felt he was in Finland. Arnold Bax’s Symphony No. 5 (1932) was dedicated to Sibelius, and was also praised by Sibelius himself when he heard it. The mood of the slow movement of Sibelius’ Symphony No.5 (1915) is somewhat recreated in Bax’s work (for instance, in the opening five-note figure and the second subject of the first movement). Vaughan Williams, too, dedicated his Symphony No.5 (1943) “without permission and with the sincerest flattery to Jean Sibelius, whose great example is worthy of imitation”. It has been commented that William Walton was also greatly influenced by Sibelius as his Symphony No.1 (1935) and Symphony

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82 Constant Lambert, Music Ho! A Study of Music in Decline (New York: Charles Scribener's Sons, 1934).
83 Ernest J. Moeran, Letter, June 14th 1941.
No.2 (1960) were also related to Sibelius’ Symphony No.2 (1902).\textsuperscript{90} Patrick Hadley’s \textit{The Hills} (1944) also owes much to Sibelius.\textsuperscript{91} Moeran’s two companions Peter Warlock and Bernard van Dieren also studied the works of Sibelius closely, further proving the importance he had during the English musical renaissance.

In this light, the question of Sibelius’ influence on Moeran is an intriguing one. In a conversation between Arnold Bax and Moeran, Bax commented that a section in Moeran’s Symphony in G minor (1937) is constructed similarly to the musically depicted storm from Sibelius’ orchestral tone poem \textit{Tapiola} (1926). When Moeran heard this, he rebuked Bax for his claim, denying that the two works were related.\textsuperscript{92} It appears that in this situation Moeran wanted to defend his originality. Perhaps he was in a competitive spirit with Bax on this occasion, for in other circumstances he was happy for his influences to be visible. Interestingly, there are occasional moments in Bax’s Symphony No.6 (1935) that actually quote \textit{Tapiola} (1926), which makes his comment all the more intriguing.

Other noted influences on the Symphony in G minor come from several commentators. Geoffrey Self makes the comment that Moeran was probably well aware that there are very few symphonies written in G minor, and the most well known of these is Mozart’s Symphony No. 40. Perhaps the gloomy and passionate effect of this key played a role in his decision to use it in his symphony. Colin Scott-Sutherland also finds ‘very definite points of contact’ between the Moeran symphony and Stenhammar’s G minor

\textsuperscript{91} Rhoderick McNeill, "A Critical Study."
\textsuperscript{92} Geoffrey Self, \textit{The Music of E. J. Moeran}.
Symphony (1915). Stenhammar was a Swedish composer who also venerated Sibelius. Scott-Sutherland has identified several similarities between the woodwind figurations and accompaniment patterns of Stenhammar's symphony and those of the Moeran, making it hard to believe that the resemblance is just a coincidence.\textsuperscript{93} It Moeran knew the Stenhammar work, the Sibelian vein would have stuck out at him, and probably further convinced him that Sibelius was the most important symphonic composer in Europe at that time.

Throughout Moeran's life, his music never ceased to be affected by those around him. Whether his borrowing was genuinely unintentional is doubtful, however he may have consciously hoped other musicians would not be disturbed by the obvious indebtedness because of his skillful creative synthesis. Moeran mentioned in his letters that he was very fond of Ravel's music, and the final movement of Moeran's string quartet (1921) reminds the listener of the first, second, and final movements from Ravel's string quartet (1903).\textsuperscript{94} The influences may be observed through the use of pizzicato, tremolos, constant metric changes and clarity of textures that Ravel's quartet is distinctive for. Moeran was not shy about such musical parallels. On the contrary, in his debut recital at Wigmore Hall in 1923, he programmed his quartet and Ravel's string quartet next to each other.\textsuperscript{95} This suggests that Moeran was proud of his musical indebtedness to Ravel, and that he wanted to show the public that the modernistic tendencies of Ravel could be adapted by an English composer.

\textsuperscript{93} Colin Scott-Sutherland, "The Symphonies of Arnold Bax."
\textsuperscript{94} Rhoderick McNeill, "A Critical Study."
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
The fact that Moeran’s music is at times indebted to other composers may not have been something he thought necessary to mention because absorbing a variety of influences was an essential part of finding his own musical language. Frank Howes explains this notion eloquently:

Moeran makes no attempt to disguise his indebtedness but the diverse ingredients of his style are in the end so thoroughly absorbed that the indebted man becomes the original man, and the substance of his music as it appears in the symphony and the concertos sounds the English note because it is compounded of these English traits.\(^6\)

Palmer, too, praises Moeran’s ability to assemble the influences in his music, saying that “before long we find ourselves accepting this skilful and painless concatenation of acquired stylistic elements as something original and personal”,\(^7\) however, he is not convinced that this makes Moeran an original composer, saying “surely, however, a composer’s ‘language’ should be more than the sum of its component parts, however faultlessly these parts are integrated and aligned.”\(^8\)

Perhaps Moeran’s most substantial influence, however, came not from another composer or teacher, but from his connection to the natural surroundings of England and Ireland (see Chapter Five). When Moeran began to visit Ireland in 1934, after his three-year break in Eynsford, he described his surroundings as the source and direction

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\(^7\) Palmer, *Delius*.  
\(^8\) Ibid., 165.
of his compositions, eventually admitting that it was impossible to compose in the busy and restless environment of London.\textsuperscript{99}

It is clear, then, that Moeran constantly enriched his compositional technique with the influences of his teachers and colleagues, as well as his personal experiences of living in the country, fighting at war, and folk song collecting. It is also clear that Moeran constantly changed his outlook on the influences on his music, embracing them and then ridding himself of them at different stages of his career. Chapter Five of this study will survey the cello concerto in depth in order to show the process of his creative synthesis in using seminal works and creating his unique compositional language.

\textsuperscript{99} McNeill, "A Critical Study."
Chapter 2 Influences on the Cello Concerto

E. J Moeran’s *Concerto in B minor for Violoncello and Orchestra* (1945) is one of the finest English concertos of its time and for that reason alone, if for no other, is worthy of analysis. It is regarded by critics such as John France as being in the class of the Dvořák and Elgar cello concertos, although for some listeners it may require several hearings to warm to it. Frank Howes also considers that the concerto is in some respects the equal of Elgar’s concerto:

> The impassioned first movement is succeeded by a true slow movement of lyrical intensity and harmonic richness that permits its comparison with the equivalent movement in Elgar’s cello concerto. In the finale Irish rhythms of the reel or the patter song are again in evidence.

The work is dedicated to the Irish-Welsh cellist Peers Coetmore, whom Moeran married in 1945. Through their relationship came four works for cello: the *Irish Lament* (1944), *Prelude for Cello and Piano* (1943), the *Concerto in B minor for Violoncello and Orchestra* (1945) and the *Sonata for cello and piano* (1947), which he considered to be his masterpiece. Moeran had promised Peers Coetmore a concerto for several years; it developed as a ‘love-letter’ to his wife and, indeed, it reflects her personality and

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playing style. No one else was allowed to perform the concerto while he was alive, as it was an intensely private expression of love to his wife.

It is clear from reading the letters of Moeran that he was a great admirer of the Elgar *Cello concerto in E minor, Op. 85* (1919) and Dvořák’s *Cello concerto in B minor* (1895), and that they were both seminal for Moeran’s cello concerto. Moeran was far from trying to replicate these works but rather, here again, he is composing in his usual way, using influences recognisable to the listener and creating his own English/Irish equivalent. It is therefore logical to suggest his music has a deeper meaning through its use of reference. To understand how Moeran did this the remainder of this chapter is devoted to the analysis of passages in the concerto that “sound like Moeran”; the parts that are reminiscent of other composers’ works; and finally the differences between these passages.

The similarities between the Moeran cello concerto and those by Elgar and Dvořák range in size and significance, however structurally Moeran’s piece shares many features with the other two works. The opening of the Moeran does not have, for instance, the long orchestral ritornellos found in the Dvořák, nor does it have the noble solo cello chords as at the beginning of the Elgar. In fact, it is closer to the mood of the Schumann concerto with its three bar orchestral introduction. From his letters it is clear that Moeran knew the cello concerto repertoire well, therefore possible influences may have also come from Saint Saens, Lalo, Victor Herbert, Barber and Bax. Geoffrey Self

103 A list of Peers Coetmore’s performances of the concerto can be found in Appendix E.
104 Moeran, “Folk Songs and Some Traditional Singers in East Anglia.”
considers the references to Elgar and Dvořák “illustrate that method of working noted all along” and that the Dvořák was the “admired model... taken as a starting point, and a response is made to it.” For instance, Moeran’s first movement is in 9/8 like the Elgar’s first subject, while the crux of the first theme in the Moeran is strongly reminiscent of the opening theme of the Dvořák.\(^{105}\) Geoffrey Self also believes that, in the first movement, Moeran followed Dvořák by putting the recapitulation of the second subject before the first subject, and this will be explored in Chapter 3.

Moeran began sketching the cello sonata and cello concerto together when he moved back to Kington, Herefordshire, in 1943. Therefore, it is not surprising that there are similarities in these two works. The first movement of the concerto begins with the majestic gloom of a ‘processional motif’, also found in the first movement of the sonata.\(^ {106}\) Both melodies are similar in their lack of rhythmical and melodic variation. Geoffrey Self suggests at the end of his book that in moments like this there may be an association of idea and composers, especially when Moeran changes from his folksong (the ‘desired state’) to his more dissonant, withdrawn and melancholic writing (‘greyness’).\(^ {107}\) The opening of the cello concerto also brings to mind the long unaccompanied melody played by the violas at the start of Elgar’s cello concerto, which is also melancholy and subdued.

The Dvořák and Moeran concertos are most structurally similar in the third movement. They have an altered rondo scheme that uses a slower middle section, and one of the


\(^{106}\) Ibid.

\(^{107}\) Ibid.
themes from a previous movement returns at the end of the work. Interestingly, Dvořák also uses pastiche folk melody in the third movement and covers the seams between each theme with masterful precision. Dvořák uses a modified structure for each movement. The final movement of Elgar’s cello concerto is also a modified rondo finale. The final movement of the Moeran is close to both the Dvořák and Elgar in the character achieved in their last movements; the opening has a similar light-hearted folk charm to the Dvořák, and later in the movement Moeran is closer to the noble and melancholic tinge that develops in the Elgar.

The strong use of dissonance in certain sections of the concerto, such as the bi-tonal orchestral introduction to the second movement, is a product of Moeran’s harmonic experimentations from his student days of writing art song between 1922 to 1923. It also calls to mind harmonies found in the Elegy from the Three Piano Pieces and in the Violin Sonata. The clashing opening is very strong; it comes as a surprise from Moeran and it gives the Adagio an extra emotional depth that has few parallels in the music of any other British composers of that time. In a way, the gloom from the first movement has carried over to the opening of the slow movement, implying that this is a strong theme in the concerto, which is surprising as he professed it to be a love letter to his wife.

The second movement is also related to the slow movement of Elgar’s concerto. They both share a reflective mood that is tinged with nervous interruptions. The solo cello

108 Self.
line is brooding, while the orchestra provides a narrative and seems very much in the style of the Elgar. Several musical examples of this movement will be given in Chapter 5. At the same time, the slow movement is also reminiscent of Dvořák’s slow movement in its use of a folk song for its second subject, and both middle movements seem to express the personal significance of the concerto. Dvořák was in love with the young Josephina Cermakova, who was also his pupil, and he dedicated his song cycle Cypress Trees (1866) to her in an attempt to woo her. However their destinies lay elsewhere and instead Dvořák married her sister, Anna Cermakova, in 1873 even though he was at the time still very close to Josephina. Thirty years later, as he was writing the concerto, Josephina became very ill and died. When Dvořák heard the news he was deeply disturbed, and as a loving gesture towards her he used her favourite song, the folk-like ‘Lasst mich allein!’ (Leave me alone!), as the second subject for the slow movement and it is the most passionate part of the movement.\textsuperscript{111} For Moeran’s second theme it appears he has followed an analogous procedure by using pastiche Irish melody and loosely basing the theme on the folk song “Johnny Ashtore”\textsuperscript{112}, which he used as the theme for Irish Lament, also written for his wife Peers Coetmore. Both composers have used a pastiche style with changes to the original melody. The vocal qualities of both of these melodies translate well onto the cello and they stand out as the most expressive sections within each concerto.

In fact, Moeran based nearly all the themes in the concerto on pastiche Irish folk song. Although they are not direct quotations of Irish tunes, they are loosely made up of the

\textsuperscript{111} Jan Smaczny, \textit{Dvořák Cello Concerto} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
\textsuperscript{112} Ernest John Moeran. Letter to Peers Coetmore from Cheltenham on June 14th 1949.
rhythmic and melodic elements of Irish folk melody.\textsuperscript{113} The principal theme of the third movement of the concerto neatly adumbrates the second half of the popular folk tune \textit{Star of the County Down}. This folk tune was well known to Moeran, even though the tune had slight variants throughout England and Ireland, and he had already used the tune in \textit{The White Mountain} (1926), one of his earlier piano works. Vaughan Williams also harmonised the tune in The English Hymnal of 1906 (‘I heard the voice of Jesus say’) and set it for strings in his \textit{Fives Variants on Dives and Lazarus} (1939), written only six years before Moeran’s cello concerto.

Interestingly, Geoffrey Self notes that Moeran’s theme is also closely related to Dvořák’s corresponding theme in his cello concerto.\textsuperscript{114} The musical examples of these themes will be given in Chapter 3 of this study. Moeran only quoted a folk song in its entirety in his orchestral work, \textit{Lonely Waters}, leaving the folk song to the end of the work so its simplicity may be observed. Moeran usually avoided directly quoting folk melody in his symphonic music, probably because of its obvious developmental problems. A folk song is complete in itself and cannot easily be developed like a motif, which needs elaboration to reach its character and expression. Therefore, a composer can only pretend to develop a folk song through the use of repetition, transposition, changes of instrumentation and sequence.\textsuperscript{115}

The fact that there should be such striking correspondences between Moeran’s concerto and the other major cello concertos of the period comes as no surprise since it is clear

\textsuperscript{113} Wild, "E J Moeran: An Assessment."
\textsuperscript{114} Self, \textit{The Music of E. J Moeran.}
\textsuperscript{115} Arnold Schoenberg, "Folkloristic Symphonies," \textit{Musical America} 67, no. 7 (1947).
from Moeran’s personal letters that he was familiar with the cello concerto literature (see Appendix C for a list of personal scores). In a letter to his friend Lionel Hill he mentioned that he had acquired recordings and scores of the Schumann cello concerto (with the Russian cellist Piatagorsky) and the Dvořák cello concerto (with cellists Pablo Casals and another with Anthony Pini). Moeran also told Hill in a letter that he thought the cellist in the first recording of the Elgar cello concerto (with Beatrice Harrison as soloist) was not his favourite interpretation. Other important works that Moeran certainly would have known and admired were Walton’s Viola Concerto (1929) and his Violin Concerto (1939), the Sibelius Violin Concerto (1903) and the Barber Cello concerto (1945), and possibly his Violin Concerto (1939). In the next chapter it will become clear that Moeran’s intimate knowledge of these concertos became his reference point for his own concerto, however there are also several references to other works on a smaller scale.

Moeran dedicated the cello sonata and the concerto to his wife Peers Coetmore, and he intended to write both pieces with her beside him for guidance in the cello part. This collaborative effort never happened, however, as Peers was away on tour with the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) as a featured artist during the Second World War.

In the Violin Concerto, Piano Rhapsody, and Cello concerto, Moeran placed more importance on lyricism than on virtuosity in the solo part. This idea may have come

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117 Ibid.
118 Self, The Music of E. J Moeran.
119 Rose, "The World Wide Moeran Database."
from the highly lyrical solo parts in Bax’s concerti. The English composers who wrote cello concertos avoided the excessive fireworks display of virtuosity for which the Dvořák cello concerto or Prokofiev’s *Symphony Concertante* (1952) for cello and orchestra are better known. Moeran seems to have kept in mind Peers’ “chamber music style of playing” and her gracefulness towards the instrument when he wrote the solo part. The most technically challenging moments are found in the outer movements, while the second movement is in its typical art song style, while the turbulent orchestral tutti is balanced out the lyrical cello part. In the Violin Concerto, however, Moeran shows a preference for lyricism over virtuosity in the outer movements, whereas the second movement (Rondo Vivace) is a chance for the soloist to show their ability to run around the instrument with complex rhythms and double stops. The *Piano Rhapsody* was one of Moeran’s most popular pieces while he was still living, and the work calls for a great level of virtuosity and imagination from the pianist. It is in a single movement form and it shares with the cello concerto its unique balance of lyricism and turbulence, yet the nostalgia and pastoral scenery are deeply set in the folk tradition. Geoffrey Self labelled the piece as a ‘large-scale waltz’ and, as it was written for a wartime audience, it is striking for its considerable showiness and accessibility for the audience to enjoy. Again, it is similar to the atmosphere of the third movement of the Cello concerto, which is based on an Irish jig rhythm; the atmosphere is mostly carefree and light-hearted.

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121 Rose, "The Worldwide Moeran Database."
122 Ibid.
Moeran's delicate orchestration allows the soloist to be clearly heard throughout the work without having to force the sound out of the instrument. Moeran called the cello "the devil of all instruments" due to its limited projection in its tenor and bass range, however he managed to overcome this by using a light orchestration when the solo cello enters its weaker register. Moeran orchestrated the concerto for a similar sized orchestra to the Elgar and Dvořák cello concertos, including a piccolo, harp and tambourine. Dvořák uses the triangle in the final movement giving the movement a Slavic flavour, and the Elgar requires three timpani while the Dvořák and Moeran only require one timpano. Despite its large orchestra, Moeran's concerto might even be deemed more masterfully balanced for the cello and orchestra than both the Elgar and Dvořák. The Dvořák concerto has several moments where the cellist is at risk of being drowned-out by the brass and string sections, particularly in the coda of the finale. The Moeran is most similar to the Elgar in terms of balance, and both are indeed masterfully crafted. The sautille stroke required for the second movement of the Elgar poses some challenges for audibility and clarity of the soloist over the orchestra, while Moeran steered clear of such an articulation for the cello in his concerto.

If some of the most obvious influences on Moeran's work are from other recent cello concertos, some of his inspiration seems to have come from music more distant in both time and genre. In his book *Lonely Waters* (1985), Lionel Hill recalls when Moeran invited him to his house and played his cello concerto for him on the piano. As he reached the chorale near the opening of the slow movement, Moeran looked up to his

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friend and smiled “inspired by Beethoven”.\textsuperscript{125} Afterwards Hill explained that, years later, while sitting at the piano playing through a transcription of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony for four hands, as he reached the opening of the slow movement it suddenly reminded him of the corresponding movement of Moeran’s cello concerto.\textsuperscript{126} The musical example of this will be given in Chapter 5, to explain it more fully.

While many of the instances discussed above are fairly obvious and have been commented on before, more detailed analysis is necessary if we are to really understand how Moeran worked and how he appropriated material and made it his own. The following chapters will investigate this process by looking at the way Moeran used form as emotion, his musical response to nature, as well as a survey of the influences on the concerto.

\textsuperscript{125} Hill, \textit{Lonely Waters : The Diary of a Freindship with E. J. Moeran}, 90.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
Chapter 3 Moeran’s Moods

Like so many composers, Moeran’s composition style became more personal as he matured with experience. As Moeran’s later music becomes more personal, themes can be identified which run throughout his music.\(^{127}\) Geoffrey Self describes these themes as the ‘moods’ of Moeran; symbolised in the fluctuations of character in his music.\(^ {128}\) For instance, the principal mood of the first movement of the Cello concerto is not grand or happy; instead it is foreboding, gloomy and uninviting; creating what Self calls a ‘grey’ mood.\(^ {129}\) Sound imagery was not a foreign idea to Moeran, and these ‘grey’ colours in sound were achieved through a variety of musical techniques such as static ostinatos, rhythms, dissonance, modality, gestural rhythmic motifs (such as the processional), ‘muddy’ orchestration, and static harmonies.

Self concludes his book by suggesting that several emotional meanings may be read into Moeran’s music through his use of reference:

> It seems Moeran works through symbol... If so, Moeran’s symbols are of distortion, contrast of major and minor, significant melodic shapes, association of idea and, indeed, association of other composers. In this language, a pastiche folksong becomes a symbol of nature- the ‘desired state’. Disturbance is symbolised by mixed triads, false relation, or alternation of major and minor. ‘Greyness’ or melancholy may be symbolised by the


\(^{128}\) Self, *The Music of E. J Moeran*.

\(^{129}\) Ibid.
withdrawing or freezing of lyricism— a sudden memory, perhaps, of the way in which beauty can be tainted or corrupted (by war?).\textsuperscript{130}

It is a speculative task to identify what ‘grey’ colours or any another apparent musical ‘moods’ represented for Moeran, since his personal letters do not provide much direct evidence that he wrote music to express his moods. Nevertheless, Moeran had several possible reasons for the melancholic moods that appear to be expressed in his music. The horror of experiencing the Great War was a source of inspiration for many artists and Moeran, although injured, being one of the few musicians to have survived fighting on the Western Front, probably felt the urge to use his music to transmute experience into sound imagery.\textsuperscript{131}

He also began to drink heavily, like so many soldiers returning home from war service, and it appears his sojourn with Peter Warlock probably worsened the problem. Geoffrey Self also comments that;

By his own admission, he led a grey, lonely life which seemed likely to be transformed when he met his future wife. The marriage was apparently not a happy one; this, and the greyness, the alcoholism and the War we would expect all to be reflected in the music, at various times.\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{130} Self, \textit{The Music of E. J Moeran}, 252.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid, 246.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
Perhaps the strongest influence of all was his susceptibility to landscapes. Moeran constantly remarked how the gloomy weather at Kenmare stirred him to compose, and how each environment he visited compelled him to compose different music.\textsuperscript{133}

Another reason that we hear these moods in his music may be because they are translatable from pre-existing material to which they are indebted. Perhaps Moeran uses his music as a platform for the nostalgic moods, heard in works that he knew and admired such as Sibelius's \textit{Tapiola} or Warlock's \textit{The Curlew}, to resonate. Moeran certainly had a way of pulling together several styles of composition to help form his own sound. If this intertextuality were indeed an intentional process, Moeran would be one of the few English composers in that period of time to use this composition technique. Self is nevertheless right to point out that Moeran does not sound like a lesser imitation of his peers when writing in the bigger forms. On the contrary, Warlock showed little to no interest in working in the larger forms, and found little inspiration in nature.\textsuperscript{134}

Interestingly, Moeran wrote to Peers Coetmore in 1949 illuminating his personal struggle with his own technique and the influence of the “sounds” around him:

\begin{quote}
Orchestrally, I am a bit of a fraud! I never mastered orchestral technique from A to Z, but I find I can never resist the impulse of being orchestrally brilliant,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{133} Self, \textit{The Music of E. J Moeran}.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
against my will sometimes, when I can’t resist the result of certain sounds I write down. ¹³⁵

This letter suggests that Moeran was influenced by the sounds around him because he lacked the discipline or commitment to face his own weaknesses in developing his skills and orchestral technique. If this was the case, perhaps the mood changes in his music are in part a result of the cosmopolitan mix of orchestral techniques provided by these “certain sounds I write down”. ¹³⁶

Other moods in Moeran’s music appear to relate to his responses to nature. Huss suggests that because Moeran was not trying to exclusively depict nature through imagery, as so many other British composers did, his music instead expresses his experience and reaction to nature. ¹³⁷ For instance, this means that Moeran would not try to put birdcalls in his music, but he would rather write about his reaction to birdcalls. It is clear from Moeran’s letters that nature was his drive and passion in composing his music, and that when he mentioned nature in his letters as he wrote the cello concerto, the music took a positive and uplifting turn. For instance, Moeran reported to Peers Coetmore in a letter in 1945:

I am longing to see what other ideas crop up as I forge ahead. I think working in bright daylight has more to do with it than anything, together with the pleasant outlook from the window facing me to the green lawn. ¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Moeran. To Peers Coetmore; unknown 1948.
¹³⁶ Ibid.
¹³⁷ Self, The Music of E. J Moeran.
This letter was written around the time when he rewrote the third movement, and Self identifies the letter to be in reference to the return of the first subject, which is almost heroic in its arrival. We can therefore speculate that Moeran’s relationship was strong with his surroundings and that through it he wrote music that made him happy and excited. Perhaps these moments of unbalance are found in the more aggressive parts in his music, where the removal of the lyrical Moeran is replaced with a heightened use of textural effects that produce sound-scapes.¹³⁹ These effects include thematic wanderings, obsessive rhythms and cross rhythms, chromaticism, mixed chords, bitonality, static orchestration, tremolos, string unisons, and clashing dialogues between strings and brass. The tutti passage in the first theme of the cello concerto is just like this, offering a troubled response to the solo cello from the orchestra. The importance of nature in this process will be further explored in the following chapter.

Geoffrey Self argues that the only equivalent English composer who matched the ‘mature Moeran’ in terms of deeply personal compositions, was Elgar who has a thread of melancholy even in his most boisterous works.¹⁴⁰ Moeran certainly developed his individual voice to a level where he could express the poignant moods that take us into his world, even if he did this by borrowing the musical language of other composers in the process. Whether he creates a “grey” sound or any other specific ‘mood’ is again speculative but Moeran certainly gives a heightened importance to orchestral textures that create soundscapes in the concerto. Although these textures add new dimensions to the concerto, he avoids turning it into an actual tone poem. It is nevertheless clear that

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 249.
Moeran had a high awareness of the emotional content of his compositions and that the inclusion of emotional substance was an integral part of his composition process.
Chapter 4 The Role of Nature in Moeran’s Music

Fabian Gregor Huss’ essay The Construction of Nature in the Music of E.J. Moeran (2009) concludes that Moeran’s experience of nature defined his music:

In this light, Welsh and Irish landscapes may after all have influenced Moeran in identifiably different ways, not through their external differences, but through Moeran’s expectation and experience of different associations and responses. This explains why Moeran needed specific surroundings in order to compose: if nature is not merely an external reality, but equally a perceived, internal and personal reality, it becomes more than an external influence, it becomes the internal stimulus, the ‘spark’ itself. Accordingly, ‘nature’ in Moeran’s music is not really an image of nature, but a facet of Moeran’s personality. 141

From Moeran’s personal letters it becomes clear that the effect of his physical environment was so strong that it profoundly influenced his compositional outlook. Throughout his life he drew inspiration from Kenmare and other places in County Kerry, Wales, Herefordshire, the Norfolk marshes and the Suffolk region. Each landscape affected his music differently.

Moeran mentioned several times that his music would not come naturally unless he was able to immerse himself in a natural environment. In a letter to Peers, he mentioned the creative difficulty he faced just after he left the small town of Eynsford and returned to London:

I lost faith in myself round 1926 and composed nothing for several years. I even nearly became a garage proprietor in partnership with Cockerill the ex-air ace...
I had an awfully lazy period in Eynsford. If you knock off for a long time, it is frightfully hard to get going.\textsuperscript{142}

Moeran regained his confidence around 1934 when he began his trips to County Kerry, situated on the south-west coastline of Ireland. Within the first few years he spent in Kerry his compositional output dramatically increased, and it is here that Moeran began to write about the positive effect of his natural surroundings.

In 1945, the year Moeran completed the cello concerto, he sent the score of the third movement to Peers for her to look over, however she never received it in the mail and, as he had not kept a copy of the movement, it was considered lost. Moeran soon began to rewrite the movement, only this time several additions were made. Moeran claimed that these ideas suddenly came to him during his morning walks in the Kerry region, and that the sun shining through his office window as he worked allowed his music to flow with ease.\textsuperscript{143} Moeran’s letters were inundated with praises to nature as he wrote the concerto, and during the writing of his symphony he remarked that it “may be said to owe its inspiration to the natural surroundings in which it was written.”\textsuperscript{144}

Moeran identified with English and Irish landscapes, and he reflected the characteristics of these environments in his music in his own personal way. Moeran’s strong reaction

\textsuperscript{142} Moeran. Letter to Peers Coetmore, 1948.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid. Letter to Peers Coetmore, 1948.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
to nature may have developed in part from his teacher John Ireland, who similarly wrote music in response to nature. Westrup tells us that:

Ireland was very susceptible to the emotional influence of poetry and natural scenes, and even a short visit to the countryside would be enough to start musical ideas working in him.¹⁴⁵

In common with English contemporaries including Vaughan Williams and his good friend Arnold Bax, the idea of nature also permeates Moeran’s pastoral, folk-song influenced output. Moeran founded his English and Irish textures on generally diatonic harmonies that are occasionally displaced with dissonances.¹⁴⁶ Again Westrup attributes the influence to his teacher John Ireland, who frequently decorated his music with clumps of dissonant chords to describe his moods.¹⁴⁷ Ireland also added programmatic titles to several of his works to engage the audience’s attention or imagination.¹⁴⁸ Ireland recalled in an interview with Schafer that a post-Great War trend was for music publishers to request that composers add titles to their pieces that suggested a story and a subject matter; again this was related to the rejection of the European idea of absolute music. This trend was readily identifiable in the titles of many works by Moeran and his contemporaries, however the significance of these titles should not be overstated for often a title was added to a piece to give it wider public appeal.¹⁴⁹

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¹⁴⁵ Westrup, "E. J Moeran", 85.
¹⁴⁷ Westrup, "E. J Moeran."
¹⁴⁹ Schafer, British Composers in Interview.
Stradling and Hughes tell us that Housman’s poem *A Shropshire Lad* became the essence of country life for the English Pastoral School composers such as Moeran and Vaughan Williams:

The poet’s backdrop of village and farm; his diapason of work and play; his protagonists, simple but sturdy yeomen; an emotional range of stoic irony and gentle nostalgia; all these elements harmonised perfectly with the turn towards folk-song. Thus his lyrics became a meeting-place for the Pastoral School, an *agora* where disciples engaged with the master in a Socratic dialogue about the essence of Englishness.\(^{150}\)

Bax’s music also takes inspiration from landscape, particularly Cornwall, Ireland, and the wild-west coast of Scotland.\(^{151}\) Bax and Moeran would stay at the Lansdowne Arms Hotel in Kenmare, where they would compose and enjoy each other’s company. Bax was there in May 1936, as he composed his Third String Quartet. Foreman tells us that in a programme note Bax commented that the first movement of the quartet was “probably influenced by the coming of spring in beautiful Kenmare.”\(^{152}\) Bax later wrote that “summer weather was early in that part of Ireland in 1936” and that there were “more bluebells and primroses than ever.”\(^{153}\) The strong influence of the natural world is also evident in his account of a stirring experience: ‘I walked alone by the sea last night and it did not seem earthy at all... It might have been the western fairyland of

\(^{151}\) Scott-Sutherland, "The Symphonies of Arnold Bax."
\(^{152}\) Louis Foreman, *Bax a Composer and His Times*, 302.
which the old Irish legend tells. It seems almost unnecessary for them to have invented such a place- Ireland being what it is.  

Moeran’s love of nature was not simply founded in his appreciation of the flora and fauna. His favourite outdoor activities included driving his automobile up the mountains of Kerry, discovering new walks with his wife or on his own with his note pad close by, and spending time with the country folk he met in the village pubs who shared their songs and stories with him. Moeran often confessed that nature was the basis of his creativity, though he never claimed that his music was solely about nature. We certainly perceive nature in his music, whether it be in the lush folk tunes, the pastoral settings created by his modal harmonies, or a turbulent storm shaped by jerky rhythms and clashing dialogues. However, as Huss argues, his personal letters do not suggest that he was painting in sound what he saw; rather it is more likely his compositions describe his reaction to what he saw.

Moeran wrote his Sinfonietta during a creative spree in 1944 whilst in Radnor Forest in Wales and mentioned to his friend, Gerald Cockshott, that it would have been a different piece entirely if he had composed it somewhere else, just as the landscape of Wales is very different to that of County Kerry. This suggests that his music has an intrinsic meaning, not associated with titles, symbolism or musical gimmicks; rather his music speaks from the heart. So many other composers who wrote in the ‘nature-idiom’

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155 Rose, "The World Wide Moeran Database."
156 Wild, "E.J Moeran: An Assessment."
158 Wild, "E.J Moeran: An Assessment."
viewed it through rose-tinted glasses because they spent only a short time immersed in it. Moeran, in contrast, was such a purist, that when a folk song appears at the end of his orchestral work *Lonely Waters* (1931), his request is that a young lady sing it in her natural voice, as one would hear in the inns of East Norfolk at that time.\(^{159}\)

It is also reasonable to say Moeran lost confidence in his composition skills when his relationship with nature was interrupted. From a letter in October 1948 to Peers Coetmore it was clear that Moeran’s health had began to decay due to his alcoholism, and Coetmore recommended that he be put under the care of a Dr Hazlett in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, an inland city in south-west England that held its own important music festival.\(^{160}\) Moeran wrote back to his wife from Cheltenham in 1949 saying that his difficulties in composing were due to the serious personal misgivings he had about the environment in which he was composing, referring to the city itself, saying it was interfering with the creative process of his *Second Symphony*, which he sadly never finished:

> This symphony which I started perpetrating in Eire, and which I have been working on here, simply will not stand... I am not inclined to let go what I believe to be second rate. I shall have to scrap this symphony as it is now, nearly finished, and start again on something different... the 'venue' is wrong. If I were in Southern Ireland, I could work it out and finish it, but it is absolutely and irreconcilably impossible to do it here. It started by being Irish, and if I try and put it right here, it only ends up being pastiche Irish... There are only three

\(^{159}\) Rose, "The World Wide Moeran Database."

\(^{160}\) Moeran, Letter to Peers Coetmore, mid October 1948.
alternatives, one is to tear it up and abandon the E flat symphony and the other
is to go to Ireland and complete it, and the third is to write something else.161

It is clear that nature is something that helps Moeran to unify the disparate musical
influences that he absorbed into a distinct personal idiom. The emphasis on nature
would appear to be fundamental to his compositions. As Moran matured, it appears he
associated contrasting moods with each environment he composed in. The Irish
influence, particularly, went beyond a mere pastiche effect and became fully integrated
into the ‘Moeran sound’.

161 Moeran, Letter to Peers Coetmore from Cheltenham, 14th June 1949.
Chapter 5 Survey and Analysis of Influences on the Cello

Concerto

This chapter reviews over sixty examples from Moeran’s *Concerto in B minor for Violoncello and Orchestra* (1945) where a direct link to another composition is plausible. A wide range of influences on Moeran’s cello concerto has been identified in this survey. Passages chosen for study and comparison were analysed by listening to relevant recordings and studying the scores closely, in piano reduction and in full score. It also helped to play the piece on the piano and on the cello. Knowing the cello repertoire well has made it possible to see similarities between other cello concertos that may have been previously overlooked.

The first part of this process was comparing the scores of each concerto and looking at the relationship between them in form, tonality, rhythmic and thematic structure, idiomatic writing for the cello, orchestration and harmony. The second part of this process was to study the background of Moeran’s concerto and how it was written. This entailed observing the autographed short score and original manuscript of the full score, which are kept in a collection bequeathed to University of Melbourne from Peers Coetmore. Through observing these scores his meticulous style was evident. It appears that he firstly wrote in pencil then covered the initial sketching in blue ink, before having it published. A few sketches and some scribbling in pencil near the third movement and on the back of a spare piece of manuscript looked to be possible thematic ideas for the concerto. Interestingly, the original score to the third movement was lost and therefore Moeran rewrote the movement, incorporating new details into the
movement. It would have been most interesting if the two versions were still available today, but sadly the first copy was mislaid. Peers Coetmore’s personal copy of the cello part is also in the collection, giving us an insight into how she manoeuvred around the concerto. Her choices of fingerings and bowings display her sense of taste, colour, and use of portamento, which we hear on the recordings of her playing. It appears very much of the English style of playing that was popular around that time.

It was also imperative to read the personal letters of Moeran and those around him to see what kind of music he may have been influenced by at the time of writing the concerto. For instance, he had copies of the Elgar and Dvořák cello concerto scores, and he had recordings of the Elgar and Schumann concertos. Moeran often spoke about the music he liked and disliked, and he also articulated this in his letters. This chapter attempts to bring to light how Moeran composed his concerto, and to also give an evaluation on the originality of the composition.

The survey of examples below is interspersed with comments along with a track listing for the accompanying audio CD. The CD attached to this thesis will accompany several of the examples in order to make the connections clearer, however there is not an audio track for every single example.

Chester Novello is the only publisher of the piano/cello reduction of the cello concerto, which is now only available as a ‘special order’ item, and the full score still only exists in the manuscript.

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1st movement- *Moderato* (in 9/8, B minor)

The opening of Moeran’s cello concerto is in the time signature of 9/8, marked as a *Moderato* (CD Track 1).

**Example 1.1** E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 1-8. From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (cello part, Novello, 1947)

The markings are very similar to the opening Moderato from Elgar’s *Cello concerto in E minor* (1919), and the metronome marking is nearly identical (CD track 2).

**Example 1.2** E. Elgar, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 9-13. From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Bärenreiter, 2005)

Although the melodic line of the Elgar is smoother than the somewhat jagged melody of the Moeran, they are remarkably similar in that both themes consist of a long brooding
monologue with minimal accompaniment from the orchestra. Self labels the Moeran theme as a ‘processional’, however this description is also fitting for the Elgar, as both themes create a ceremonial mood. The melodic contour of both themes gradually explores the full range of the cello. The intervallic structure of both themes is similar in the use of minor seconds, minor thirds and perfects fourths, however Geoffrey Self points out that Moeran’s theme owes itself to the Dvořák cello concerto (CD track 3) more than anything, using it as its ‘parent cell’ as shown below.¹⁶³

**Example 2.1** Parent Cell for Moeran’s Cello concerto first theme

![Example 2.1](image)

**Example 2.2** Parent Cell for Dvořák’s Cello concerto first theme

![Example 2.2](image)

**Example 2.3** A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, first movement, bb. 1-5. From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra in B minor (piano score, IMC 1994)

![Example 2.3](image)

Self also comments that Moeran took the Dvořák cello concerto as his model for the first movement by using a variation of sonata form where the second subject receives a recapitulation before the first subject.\footnote{Self, The Music of E. J Moeran, 192.}

Dr Rhoderick McNeill offers us a valuable glimpse into Moeran’s compositional process and his preference for a freer use of form:

As the symphony was planned as one large movement, following Sibelius’ Symphony No. 7, it is difficult to recognise a formal procedure on the basis of the manuscript. However, throughout his composing life, Moeran liked to work in a modified sonata-form pattern, as can be observed in the chamber music, the Symphony in G minor, the Sinfonietta and the concertos.\footnote{Rhoderick McNeill, “Moeran’s Unfinished Symphony,” Musical Times 121, no. 1645 (1980), 775.}

It may be observed that several of the great symphonic composers such as Dvořák, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven and Sibelius also used modified sonata-form on occasion. Modified sonata-form was a concept of a gradually evolving movement that had a less rigid structure, meaning that the essential shell of sonata form is present, however not necessarily the classical I-V key relationships or other common features. Westrup attributes this tendency of Moeran to his lyrical gifts, saying he was best suited to smaller forms, and in his bigger works he places more importance on contrasting sections than the coherence of a musical work.\footnote{Westrup, “E. J Moeran”, 174.}
Moeran’s orchestral part also shows some similarities to the opening of Schumann’s *Cello concerto in A minor Op.129* (1850). The opening of the Moeran is mysterious and unwelcoming, and the accompaniment is distant and detached from the solo cello.

**EXAMPLE 3.1**  E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 1-3. From *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* (piano score, Novello, 1947)

The Schumann orchestral part below is also disconnected from the solo cello line, similarly repetitive and ambiguous. Both orchestral parts provide pedal harmonies that keep the downbeat unclear, until the cello solo arrives with its rhythmic pulse.

**EXAMPLE 3.2**  R. Schumann, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 1-6.

From *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* (piano score, Peters Edition, 1999)

This, of course, may only be a coincidence but Moeran knew Schumann’s cello concerto well and thought highly of it; thus a connection is plausible.\(^{167}\)

\(^{167}\) Moeran.
Elgar’s principal theme is passed through the violas to the cello, always falling, then rising. It is similar to the Moeran, with minimal orchestral support, only giving pedal harmonies.

**Example 4.1**  E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement, seven bars after figure 1. From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Novello, 1947)

![Example 4.1](image1)

**Example 4.2**  E. Elgar, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 9-13. From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Bärenreiter, 2005)

![Example 4.2](image2)

Moeran reminds the listener again of the Elgar when, at the end of the first theme, the solo cello climbs up to the highest register of the cello, followed by an emotional outburst of the first theme from the orchestra. This figure appears twice in the Elgar, also near the end of the movement, this time without the allargando, making it closer to
the Moeran. The lower orchestral voice in the Elgar however provides a counter-part to the rising cello line, which also makes it different to the Moeran orchestral part. Here Moeran is already building up with ‘Sibelian’ intensity, preceding the orchestral climax of the recapitulation.

**Example 5.1** E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 31-34. From *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* (piano score, Novello, 1947)

![Example 5.1](image)

**Example 5.2** E. Elgar, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 30-33.

From *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* (piano score, Bärenreiter. 2005)

![Example 5.2](image)
Another cellistic similarity can be traced to the Dvořák concerto when Moeran (Track 4) gives the cello a virtuosic display of sextuplets while the woodwind instruments play the first theme.

EXAMPLE 6.1  E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 40-45.

From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Novello, 1994)

Dvořák, too, (Track 5) gives the solo cello a sextuplet passage, shown below. Though it is marked with a different articulation and as an arpeggiando figure, the cello accompanies the woodwind who also play the theme above it, as in the corresponding passage in Moeran’s concerto.
EXAMPLE 6.2  A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, first movement Figure 6. From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra in B minor (piano score, IMC 1994)

Moeran’s second theme (Track 6) has a ‘pastiche’ Irish folk melody character. It has the shape, tonal qualities and rhythmic structure of a typical Irish melody. The second subject is distinctly more feminine and pastoral than the first, still in the time signature of 9/8, now with a swinging quaver on the up beat and the down beat; the music is now dancing compared to its processional opening. Now in the bright key of D major, the composition is much warmer and in Moeran’s pastoral style. At this point we recall the transformation that occurs in the same section in Moeran’s violin concerto (Track 7), which has a similar character.

EXAMPLE 7.1  E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 68-71.  
From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Novello, 1994)
Example 7.1 (continued)

Example 7.2 E.J Moeran, Violin Concerto, first movement, eight before Figure 9.

From Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (piano score, Novello, 1943)

Elgar (Track 8) used a Sicilian dance rhythm as his second subject in the brighter key of E major. This folk dance rhythm in 12/8 also shares the pastoral and rustic character of the Moeran, though the rhythm is not exactly the same. Moeran also uses the dotted rhythm echo in the accompaniment found in the Elgar, which gives a faint swinging feel to the theme.
EXAMPLE 7.3 Elgar, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 30-33.
From *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* (piano score, Bärenreiter, 2005)

The Moeran theme is more modal, and in this sense it is closer to the Dvořák, whereas the Elgar is mostly diatonic. Dvořák’s second subject (Track 9) uses the pentatonic scale within a D major framework, and, like the Moeran, is also based on a pastiche folk tune (in this case the folk influences come as a mixture from his homeland Prague, and from listening to the Afro-American songs while in America)\(^{168}\).

EXAMPLE 7.4 A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 137-148). From *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra in B minor* (piano score, IMC 1994)

Moeran (Track 10) creates an exciting atmosphere in his orchestral tuttis that contrasts to the lighter role of the orchestra when the solo cello enters.

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EXAMPLE 8.1 E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement 7 bars after figure 10. From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (full score, Novello, 1994)

Moeran’s use of rhythmic changes and jagged rhythms look and sound similar to some of the tutti passages in the first movement of Walton’s Violin Concerto. ¹⁶⁹

EXAMPLE 8.2 W. Walton, Violin Concerto, first movement, Figure 8. From Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (full score, Boosey and Hawkes, 1990)

After the tutti, Moeran’s cello returns in a faster section marked *Tempo Giusto*. With a light orchestral background, the cello dances relentlessly in a 6/8 invention of the main theme. The cello is more virtuosic now with several complicated runs, with 8, 9 and 11 notes in a beat. It recalls some of the white-hot passages found near the opening to the final movement of the Sibelius Violin Concerto.

**Example 9.1** E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement, Figure 14

From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (full score, Novello, 1994)

The tutti passage below is the most turbulent moment in the whole concerto. Moeran’s use of strings against the sustained melody in the lower brass (CD Track 11) produces a fiery response to the cello’s entry. The ostinato rhythm in the strings has “Sibelian intensity”, evoking an image of violent waves crashing on a boat at sea.\(^{170}\)

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EXAMPLE 10.1  E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement, Figure 19

From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (full score, Novello, 1994)

In the example below, Moeran gives the cello a quasi-cadenza in the middle of the first movement, just before the recapitulation. The cello rolls chords and plays double stops in the lower strings, while being accompanied by a 'bird-like' flute solo (Track 12). The inspiration behind this passage appears to lie in the quasi-cadenza in the Adagio of Dvořák's cello concerto (Track 13).
EXAMPLE 11.1 E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement, figure 21.

From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano part, Novello, 1994)

EXAMPLE 11.2 A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, second movement 14 bars before Figure 13.

From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra in B minor (piano score, IMC 1994)
Self also demonstrates that Moeran took the Dvořák cello concerto as his model for the first movement. Both works use a variation of sonata form where the second subject receives a recapitulation before the first subject.\textsuperscript{171}

\textbf{EXAMPLE 12.1} E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, Figure 22. From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Novello, 1994)

\textbf{EXAMPLE 12.2} A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, first movement 14 bars before Figure 13.

From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra in B minor (piano score, IMC 1994)

After the cello plays this theme it is handed to the oboe, which comes as a vision of beauty, however the grim first theme soon returns in the cello beneath it. Moeran closes the movement in mirror image to its opening: sounding dark, lonely and confused.

\textsuperscript{171} Self, \textit{The Music of E.J. Moeran}. 

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2nd movement - *Adagio* (in 3/4, Bb Major)

The second movement is the heart of the concerto, and in it we hear the defining moments that make this work the 'love letter' that it is. The opening of the Adagio (Track 14) begins with a brief bi-tonal orchestral introduction that seems to capture the essence of heartbreak. The chromatic moving bass line in octaves sounds sinister underneath the clashing harmonies of the strings and the woodwind,

**EXAMPLE 13.1** E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement, Figure 19. From

Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Novello, 1994)

Moeran's writing shows great ingenuity here, and the opening comes as a surprise to the listener. This passage reminds the listener of the symphonies of Bax or Vaughan Williams, whom Moeran greatly admired. Vaughan Williams' similar orchestration can be found in a passage near the end of his *Symphony No.4* (ex. 13.2, Track 15). The muted trombones over the low flute produce a haunted atmosphere, however the low flute then leads us to a chorale that comes as a release. There are also several moments
in the concerto that remind the listener of Mahler’s chamber music conception of the orchestra, such as the way Moeran moves into this beautiful low flute solo, and the many occasions where the cello shares a moment with a single instrument from the orchestra. Mahler’s music received much contention in Britain during the 1940s, but it seems the chamber music approach to solo instruments was a quality that both composers shared.\(^{172}\)

**Example 13.2** R. Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 4, second movement, Figure 14.

From Symphony No.4 in F minor (full score, Oxford Uni. Press, 1935)

Moeran then moves into a beautiful chorale in the strings, set in B flat major (Track 16).

EXAMPLE 14.1 E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement, Figure 26. From
Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (reproduction of full score, Novello, 1994,
created on Sibelius 4)

It is the same key as the following passage from the slow movement of Beethoven’s 9th
symphony (Track 17). Lionel Hill recalled the moment when Moeran played him the
concerto on his piano, and when he arrived at this passage Moeran turned to him and
smiled “influenced by Beethoven”. It was not till several years later that Hill realised
what he meant while playing a reduction of the 9th symphony for four hands.\textsuperscript{173} Hill
believed it was the chorale-like movement in the strings that Moeran had imitated to
achieve a similar depth of expression. Hill reflected that the piano reduction of both
scores made the connection clearer in his mind and he might have missed it in their
original setting.\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{173} Hill, \textit{Lonely Waters : The Diary of a Freindship with E. J. Moeran.}
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid.
EXAMPLE 14.2 L. van Beethoven, 9th Symphony, third movement, bb.1-12

From Symphony No. 9 for 2 pianos Op 125 (piano score, Edition Peters, 1980)

Moeran gives us a glimpse of the serenity achieved by Beethoven, through similar use of counterpoint and register.

As both these Adagio’s are in three, Moeran (Track 18) appears to have taken Elgar’s slow movement (Track 19) as the overall model to this movement. In both movements the solo cello is a brooding line characterised with octave leaps and falling minor 6ths against the hushed syncopation of the strings in the background.
EXAMPLE 15.1 E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, four bars before Figure 27. From
Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Novello, 1994)

EXAMPLE 15.2 Elgar, Cello concerto, third movement, two bars after 35. From
Concerto in E minor for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Bärenreiter, 2005)

Moeran’s theme has the Irish influence to it, and the first phrase is very similar to one of
his earlier works, the *Irish Lament for Cello and Piano* (1944). The lament is a setting
of the Irish folk tune ‘Johnny Asthore’, one of Peers Coetmore’s favourite melodies, and Moeran also used it in his *Irish Love Song for Piano Solo* (1926).\textsuperscript{175}

**EXAMPLE 15.3** E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, bb. 9-28. From Irish Lament for cello and piano (cello part, Novello, 1994)

After the ardent middle section of the movement, Moeran brings the principal theme back, this time in pianissimo, accompanied by three cellos in harmony (**Track 20**). It reminds the listener of the cello duet at the end of the second movement of Schumann’s Cello concerto (**Track 21**). It is a tender moment in both works before the material for the final movement is displayed in a full-scale cadenza in the Moeran, and a quasi cadenza in the Schumann.

\textsuperscript{175} McNeill, "A Critical Study."
EXAMPLE 16.1 R. Schumann, Cello concerto, second movement, two bars before Figure H. From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Peters Edition, 1999)

EXAMPLE 16.2 E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, Cadenza, ten bars after Figure 34.
From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Novello, 1994)
The second movement then goes directly into a cadenza that supplies the main thematic material for the last movement. The passage above from the cadenza (Track 22) is very similar to cello writing in the cadenzas in the finale movement and the second movement of the Elgar cello concerto (Track 23). The Elgar (Example 16.3) shares the broken chords passage that leads up to the thirty second notes diminished seventh arpeggio, also in the Moeran.

**Example 16.3** Elgar, Cello concerto, fourth movement bb. 18-20. From
Concerto in E minor for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Bärenreiter, 2005)

![Music Example]

Again, we see the similarity to the Elgar (Example 16.4), with the falling chromatic chord figure, although they are not exactly the same combinations, both appear as a solo cello cadenza.
EXAMPLE 16.4 E. J Moeran, Cello concerto, Cadenza, Figure 35.

From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (full score, Novello, 1994)

EXAMPLE 16.5 Elgar, Cello concerto, second movement b. 12. From Concerto in E minor for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Bärenreiter, 2005)
3rd movement- Allegretto deciso (in 2/4, B minor)

When looking at the rondo form Moeran chose to use in his final movement, we can see that there are clear structural similarities to the Dvořák and the Elgar final movements below (sections are symbolised by letters):

Moeran’s final rondo movement:

Dvořák’s final rondo movement:
Introduction A A1 A A2 B A2 A C (slower folk-like tune) C A Coda (return of first movement)

Elgar’s final rondo movement:
Introduction A B A A2 B A2 A C (slower section) D (return of first movement)
Coda

Moeran (Track 24) has used Dvořák’s finale theme (Track 25) as the ‘parent cell’ for his last movement. Though they are not identical, they are made up of the same basic melodic structure. Moeran has also used the quintuplet turn, found in the Dvořák, in the first subject of this movement. Wild makes the intriguing observation that the principal themes of the 3rd and 2nd movement are related. This is especially true as the two-note up beat figure is used several times, and the general melodic contour is similar in both. Wild also notes that most of the themes in the 3rd movement develop from the principal
cell of the first theme, and this will be seen through the extensive use of the quintuplet figure and the two-note up beat figure.\textsuperscript{176}

**EXAMPLE 17.1** E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, third movement, bb.1-9.

From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (full score, Novello, 1994)

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**EXAMPLE 17.2** A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, first movement, bb.33-40. From

Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra in B minor (piano score, IMC 1994)

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**Example 17.3** Moeran cell grouping of main theme, third movement

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\end{tikzpicture}
\end{music}

**Example 17.4** Dvořák cell grouping of main theme, third movement

\begin{music}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{music}

\textsuperscript{176} Wild, "E.J Moeran: An Assessment."

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Moeran’s first subject has the patter rhythm of an Irish jig and is similar to the well-known Irish folk tune “Star of the County Down”; in fact their endings are identical. The tune below would have been very familiar to Moeran, especially as Vaughan Williams used the tune in his Five Variants of 'Dives And Lazarus' (Track 26).

**EXAMPLE 17.5** Anonymous, *Star of the County Down* bb. 1-8.


![MIDI notation](image)

It appears that Moeran’s second subject (Track 27) also has many features of Dvořák’s second subject (Track 28). Moeran incorporates a version of Dvořák’s theme, the accompaniment of the bassoon and clarinet parts (examples 17.2.1 and 2.2), the tempo marking of *meno mosso*, and the use of the sextuplet figure (example 17.2.3).
EXAMPLE 18.1 E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, third movement, four bars before Figure 39.

From *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* (piano score, Novello, 1994)

EXAMPLE 18.2 A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, third movement, theme begins at *dolce*, 9 bars after Figure 4. (Full score, Simrock, 1896)

18.2.1

Both themes look very similar, although the Moeran moves on the first beat as opposed to Dvořák on the second beat. Moeran also uses the sextuplet figure found in the Dvořák.
Moeran reported in a letter that he had sent the only draft score of the third movement to Peers Coetmore by mail, however she never received it. As Moeran began rewriting the movement, he reported to her that he was much happier with the new ideas that cropped up, and it became “quite another thing to what the other would have been.” Moeran also mentioned to her that he “thought of a lovely bassoon thing this morning that wasn’t there before” which accompanies the cello theme above. Self argues that this “bassoon thing” originated from to the second subject in the third movement of the

Dvořák cello concerto. The melody in the Dvořák later appears on the clarinet, with the bassoon playing the kind of pedal Moeran gives to the horn. Moeran only confuses us by saying it just appeared as a new idea, disguising its possible short windedness.\(^{180}\)

**Example 19.1** E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, third movement, Figure 46.

From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Novello, 1994)

The above passage is similar to a moment in the final movement of Elgar’s concerto, though Elgar achieves an atmosphere more of pomp and humour. The cello plays rolling triplets while accompanied by woodwind in both these examples.

In the codas of both the Moeran and the Elgar, the solo cello arrives in a descending chromatic scale, bringing the music to a near standstill, where the return of an earlier theme occurs.
**Example 20.1** E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, third movement, three before Figure 54.

From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (full score, Novello, 1994)
This slower interlude (marked *Lento* twelve bars earlier) is perhaps the most expressive part of the Concerto. It is structurally analogous to the Dvořák, however it is one of the few passages that is far from the Elgar and the Dvořák in harmonic and textural terms. It is full of modal harmonies and is closer to the pastoral atmosphere of the second movement.

**Example 20.1** E.J. Moeran, *Cello concerto*, third movement, Figure 55.

From *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* (piano score, Novello, 1994)
It may be possible that this passage in both works had a special personal meaning to Moeran, because it is so abstract and similar to the Elgar at the same time. In the passage above from the Elgar concerto, the chromatic falling line in the solo cello and accompaniment creates the impression of a character retiring or giving in. Eventually the music comes to a complete silence, confirming this idea, before the fateful chords of the opening of the concerto return, taking us to short *Allegro Mollo* that almost rudely cuts the piece short and it finishes in a quick blow.

For Moeran, it is also possible that his use of the chromatic falling solo line represents a character withdrawing itself from its context. It falls to triple pianissimo and the orchestra disappears while the cello comes to a quasi cadenza with some chords and rolled notes, it is almost like a final personal reflection. The next section is now a sudden lively 6/8, marked *Allegro Moderato*. This section however is much longer and high-spirited compared to the Elgar, highlighting that although both works go through a similar journey in form, Elgar’s is much more of a fatalistic statement, whereas Moeran carries a lighter mood, more expansive, and with an Irish jig atmosphere.
**Example 21.1** E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, third movement, Figure 60. From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (full score, Novello, 1994)

The cellos and bassoons accompany the theme, which is highly spirited.

Perhaps the idea of this section comes again from Elgar’s *nobilmente* section near the end of his concerto. The Elgar is also played in the lower register of the cello while the double basses and bassoons accompany it.
EXAMPLE 21.2 Elgar, Cello concerto, fourth movement, bb. 197-201. From *Concerto in E minor for Violoncello and Orchestra* (piano score, Bärenreiter, 2005)

There is no denying the ending of Moeran’s concerto was highly influenced by the Elgar; the pizzicato chords on the offbeat in the cello, while the theme is played by the woodwind, is very similar.

EXAMPLE 22.1 E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, third movement, Figure 63.

From *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* (cello part, Novello, 1994)
EXAMPLE 22.2 Elgar, Cello concerto, fourth movement, bb. 255-261. From 
Concerto in E minor for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Bärenreiter, 2005)

da tempo
\[ \text{Music notation}\]

In this final phrase, again Moeran and Elgar are close, though Moeran sounds more 
triumphant in the key of B major compared to the tragic sound of E minor in the Elgar.

EXAMPLE 23.1 E.J Moeran, Cello concerto, third movement, six bars after Figure 68. 
From Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (orchestral score, Novello, 1994)

\[ \text{Music notation}\]

EXAMPLE 23.2 Elgar, Cello concerto, fourth movement, bb. 347- 252. From 
Concerto in E minor for Violoncello and Orchestra (piano score, Bärenreiter, 2005)

\[ \text{Music notation}\]

It should be noticeable by now that Moeran adopted both the Elgar and Dvořák cello 
concertos as the main models for his cello concerto. Similarities are found in the motifs, 
orchestration, layout and structure of each movement, as well as in the solo cello part 
and the role of the orchestra. Moeran also displayed influences from the works of 
several other composers, however these are on a smaller scale.

It is debatable whether Moeran’s intention was to give homage to these composers by 
writing under their influence. Alternatively he may have assimilated these influences
into his own style because he was trying to achieve a similar expression. Regardless of his intentions, Moeran still created a piece that shows many signs of originality. His music is original because of the unique characters of his themes, his absorption of the essence of folk music allowed him to create his own harmonic language, his approach to orchestration and his use of the concerto as a lyrical vehicle rather than making it purely virtuosic. Furthermore, that in bringing together so many styles and influences he creates more than just a pastiche style, but a creative synthesis which incorporates elements from a wide variety of sources and turns them into something new.
Conclusion

Moeran’s cello concerto has qualities that sound familiar to the listener without it directly replicating any another specific work or works. Indeed, it is remarkable how well assimilated the influences are in his music, such that it has a natural flow and does not sound like a patchwork. Thus, while Moeran at times appears strongly influenced by the works of other composers, in particular the Dvořák and Elgar cello concertos, he is original in the way that he synthesises these inflections to create something new.

It is doubtful that Moeran was trying to communicate a specific story in the concerto, except that it was a wedding present to his wife, Peers Coetmore, and he professed that it was only meant for her.\textsuperscript{181} The apparent references to the Elgar and Dvořák concertos and Beethoven’s 9\textsuperscript{th} symphony create several moods that transport the listener to these pieces, however no specific plot can be identified through his use of cross-referencing.

By the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, it became an unspoken expectation that every composer followed the Romantic notion that music had to be expressive and personal. However after the Second World War, most English composers abandoned this Romantic ideal in music, and purely sought to have an original and distinct voice. Thus Moeran’s continued adherence to the romantic style in his cello concerto appears to be very conservative for the year 1945. Ground-breaking new music was appearing in Britain with success all over Europe and, by 1945, Benjamin Britten’s opera \textit{Peter Grimes} and his \textit{Second String Quartet} had both received their first performances. Moeran’s

\textsuperscript{181} Hill, \textit{Lonely Waters: The Diary of a Freindship with E. J. Moeran}.  

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resistance to being progressive, however, meant that his music would struggle to stand the test of time and would appear old-fashioned, when so many of England’s composers were involved in new styles of music. This does not mean that his music is not much loved; on the contrary, his music spoke to the general public, especially the Irish, who were most affectionate towards him. His music is clear, warm, and accessible to a wide public.

In this context Moeran stands out, not for his originality, but for the fact that he did not see himself as an avant-garde composer although he did try to adapt to many styles throughout his career. Ultimately he was most comfortable in his folk idiom style and was best known for it, even though he composed in the shadow of Vaughan Williams in this particular idiom. Contrary to the prevailing trends, Moeran was a traditionalist; his harmonic language was fashionable – closest to Delius and Ireland – rather than innovative, and the genres he used, and instrumentations he wrote for, were similar to those of other composers, such as Elgar and Bax. The significance of the lack of originality in moments of the cello concerto is most likely one reason it has not been played much since his death.

Moeran’s music has been very popular in Ireland, with several Irish orchestras still performing and recording his works, along with several English ensembles aiming to put his entire catalogue of works onto disc.\textsuperscript{182} Nevertheless, the looming question is why the concertos and several of his other masterpieces are not regularly played today. There is little knowledge of his music outside Britain, and access to his music is

difficult as several works are only available on a print-to-order basis. Perhaps another reason for his inability to gain mainstream success was the fact that he moved around England and Ireland most of his life, and did not invest enough time in developing his career in London and the rest of Europe.

The cello concerto’s failure to capture the attention of cellists worldwide may also have to do with the limited number of performances it received while Moeran was alive. Moeran allowed only Peers Coetmore to perform the concerto during his lifetime, which only amounted to just over a dozen performances.\footnote{This is not an inconsequential figure, however Coetmore’s lock on performing the concerto and inability to engage more performances makes her just as much to blame for its inability to capture more attention. Again, her moving to Australia greatly limited the performance opportunities with orchestras in the rest of the world. She made two private recordings earlier in her career that represent her full cellistic abilities, and one commercial recording of the work on the Lyrita label in 1969, when she had already formally stopped giving concerts. She is accompanied by Sir Adrian Boult and the London Philharmonic Orchestra who are both in excellent form, however her playing does not do the work justice and was recorded too late in her career. Sadly, this has probably turned people away from the concerto however, stylistically, the recording is an important release.} Currently there are two professional recordings available; cellist Raphael Wallfisch’s recorded performance for the Chandos label is the best example of the work, and a BBC radio recording of cellist Paul Watkins exists but has not been released commercially.

The violin concerto on the other hand received performances by several well-known cellists.

\footnote{See Appendix E for list of performances and recordings of the concerto with Peers Coetmore.} \footnote{France, "CD Review: Moeran Cello Concerto."}
violinists during his lifetime, and it has had a steady gain in popularity over the last fifty years in the concert halls of Europe.

Because the concerto is so delicately devised to suit Coetmore's 'chamber music style of playing', it would be logical to still perform the concerto in a manner that reflected chamber music as opposed to a dashing virtuosic and powerful display of cello playing. Several English concertos from the mid twentieth century used the concerto platform for more lyrical purposes than merely technical, and this reflected the inward searching for the English voice in that period.\(^{185}\) If modern audiences and concert programmers continue to only want to hear the more popular concertos and solo pieces that display a lot of technical wizardry, several distinguished English concertos will continue to be forgotten by today's audiences and performers.

Hubert Foss' comment that Moeran's music must be "sought before it reveals itself", is particularly true.\(^{186}\) His music may not appeal to every listener on first hearing, however Moeran's compositional language becomes less foreign and more appealing the closer one gets to his music. The moods in his music do not always make the listener feel welcome, yet there is much value in a composer who can write music that expresses on such a personal level.

His music was not considered revolutionary at the time; however as a revival of his music is taking place in the musical world today, it is more noticeable how remarkably original he was. Although he was at times considered to be an unoriginal composer,

\(^{185}\) Mann, "Some English Concertos."

therefore of lesser value than his contemporaries, his process of synthesis actually results in a distinctly individual voice and he produced music of great beauty and aesthetic value.

The hope of this study is that it has cast light on Moeran's compositional process and will provide a model for further research into several more of his significant works. I hope that this will bring more attention to the cello concerto, as it is one of Moeran's finest works, and in the words of Lionel Hill "the cello concerto was the final expression of all that Moeran had strived to say throughout his life."\(^{187}\)

\(^{187}\) Hill, Lonely Waters: The Diary of a Friendship with E. J. Moeran.
## APPENDIX A: TRACK LISTING FOR AUDIO COMPACT DISK

1. E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 1-8  
2. E. Elgar, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 9-13  
3. A. Dvořák Cello concerto in B minor, bb 1-6  
4. E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement, Figure 4-5  
5. A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, first movement, Figure 6  
6. E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 68-71  
7. E.J. Moeran- Violin Concerto - first movement-Figure 9  
8. E. Elgar, Cello concerto, first movement bb. 30-33  
9. A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, first movement, 12 after Figure 5  
10. E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement, Figure 11  
11. E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement, Figure 12  
12. E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, first movement, 3 after Figure 21  
13. A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, second movement, Cadenza  
14. E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, second movement, opening  
15. R.V Williams, Symphony No. 4, second movement, Figure 14.  
16. E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, second movement, Figure 26  
17. Beethoven, 9th Symphony, third movement, bb.1-12  
18. E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, second movement, Figure 27  
19. E. Elgar, Cello concerto, third movement bb. 15-20  
20. E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, second movement, three cellos  
21. R. Schumann, Cello concerto, second movement, double stops  
22. E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, Cadenza

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<td>23.</td>
<td>E. Elgar, Cello concerto, fourth movement bb. 18-20</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, third movement, bb. 1-9</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, third movement, bb. 33-40</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>V. Williams, Five Variants of 'Dives And Lazarus', Theme</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>E.J. Moeran, Cello concerto, third movement, Figure 39</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>A. Dvořák, Cello concerto, third movement, 9 after Figure 4</td>
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APPENDIX B: MOERAN ON IRELAND

Moeran reflects in an article he wrote about John Ireland on taking to him the exposition of a movement in Sonata form: ¹⁸⁸

I lived and worked for a time in a Kentish village. One day I was feeling very pleased with myself; having composed a pianoforte piece that I liked. I was playing it over when my landlord, the village grocer, looked in on me.

"You made that all up yourself, did you?" he asked, and added rather sorrowfully, "Ah, I wish I could do that; but you see, I never had the education."

I should mention that my good friend's knowledge of music amounted to precisely NIL. He was one of those who even had to be told when the National Anthem was being played.

It is undoubtedly a fact that there are some people who imagine that musical composition can be taught, even in the same way that a knowledge of languages, chemistry, mathematics, hairdressing, horse-coping and countless other subjects can hammered into the receptive brain of any willing pupil by a skilled teacher. Also there are many who believe that given enthusiasm and a first-rate professor of composition, any intelligent musician may become a composer if he works sufficiently hard. Hence, unfortunately, the existence of so much of that type of music which is known as 'Capellmeister' music.

In this sense, John Ireland, in spite of the title of this essay, is not a teacher of composition. This is one of his virtues. He is a very wise adviser and an astute critic, both of his own work and of that of others, and he succeeds in instilling

¹⁸⁸ Moeran, "John Ireland as Teacher."
into his pupils that blessed principal of self-criticism. Moreover, he possesses an uncanny knack of immediately and accurately probing the aesthetic content of what is put before him, thus arriving at the state of mind which gave it birth, and understanding its underlying mood and aims. It is here that his sympathy is aroused, for he has the faculty of feeling the music from the pupil's point of view, and his wide experience then steps in to suggest the solution of difficulties, and not only the technical ones.

These are not the qualities of an academic teacher of composition, who is accustomed to dole out weekly lessons of forty minutes' duration to all sorts and conditions of students. Ireland is not a mere machine whose brains may be purchased at so much an hour. I recollect one session - this is a better word than 'lesson' in his case - which lasted for about an hour, then continued for another half-hour after tea. At this point Ireland advised me to go home and work at the problem concerned with while our discussion was still fresh in my mind, and to bring it back to him later in the evening for a final talk.

Ireland does not believe that any standardized technique can be taught. "Every composer must make his own technique," is his dictum. At the same time he is a firm believer of the strict study of counterpoint, and, much to my surprise and sorrow, I found myself expected to spend many weary hours, struggling with cantus firmus, and its embellishments in all the species. I state emphatically that I am glad of this today, for I have come to realise that only by this means can a subconscious sense of harmony, melody, and rhythm be acquired.

Genuine harmony arises out of counterpoint, for it implies contrary motion among the parts; otherwise it is no longer harmony, but faux-bourdon.
Moreover there can be no rhythm without melody; otherwise it descends to mere metre, which is not music. On the other hand melody, divorced from harmony and rhythm, descends into a meandering succession of fragmentary ideas, bearing little relationship one to another, and totally lacking organic unity. Thus it is that the greatest music, from Palestrina and Vittoria down through Beethoven and Wagner and the present day, has been polyphonic. For without polyphony nothing can be complete, and any attempt to break away from it has invariably ended in a blind alley.

I confessed just now that first of all I was surprised at Ireland's insistence on counterpoint, but I hope I have grown a little wiser than I was just over eleven years ago when I commenced work with him, and I feel unbounded gratitude for having been encouraged to do the drudgery. I deliberately use the word encouraged, for Ireland has no interest in work done which is not worth while, and it is by the lucidity of his argument that he expounds to his pupils the logic of doing something that hitherto may have seemed futile, and the task, distasteful as it may appear at the time, is undertaken with the sure sense that there is a real reason for doing it, and doing it to the best of one's ability. Personally, I have always been so lazy that it would have been nearly impossible to induce me to go to the trouble of working a single counterpoint exercise, had I not been encouraged to believe in some very definite value in so doing.

Ireland's remarkable individuality in his own work does not hinder him from observing and fostering unity of style in the work of his pupils, even though it may be very different from his own. He will not tolerate the slightest falling off or failing in continuity. He has no use for padding in any form, and he does not
consider a piece of work done with until the minutest detail has been scrutinised again, down to the last semiquaver rest and the smallest mark of phrasing and dynamics. "What about that sforzando?" he will ask. "Have you thought carefully about it?"

His own mastery of form has been evolved in the wake of some hard thinking and deep experience, the results of which, apart from his creative work, bear fruit in the guidance which he is able to give to those who study with him. For him, form does not necessarily imply a dry-as-dust formula of first and second subjects, double-bars and so on. He enjoins his pupils to look ahead and plan. I took him one day the exposition of a movement in sonata form. "This is most exciting," he said. "But the question is, will you be able to go one better before the end? Otherwise you will have an anticlimax."

Here again, Ireland is emphasizing one of the raisons d'ètre of the heritage which has come down to us from the old masters. All the music which has escaped consignment to the shelf has been inherently logical. Music, without logical continuity and shape, is lifeless from its inception. As for instrumentation, Ireland holds that the true principles thereof are not necessarily to be found in text-books, but they eventually come about in relation to the music ("Every composer must make his own technique"). It is essential, however, to understand the true nature and character of each individual instrument, apart from its compass and its technical resources. This is knowledge that can only be gained by listening to concerted music, but it is when the beginner sets forth on his own first full score that the experienced adventurer is able to guide his faltering steps. It is here that Ireland's psychological sense, in getting to the rock-bottom of what the pupil is making
for, enables him to put his finger on the weaknesses and, by means of his considered suggestion, to point out the right road to take to overcome them.

I have tried here to show that John Ireland is an exceptional counsellor for those fortunate enough to work under his teaching. When all is said and done, it is the fact that he is the very antithesis of the so-called teacher of composition; that is the secret of his success. He gives unstintingly of his very best to those who come under him, and behind that keen intelligence that brings to bear on their work and its many aspects and problems his pupils soon discover a very human personality and a very warm friend.
APPENDIX C: MOERAN’S SCORES

Below is a partial list of the scores owned by Moeran and Peers Coetmore. They are the most relevant scores to the cello concerto and many of them had Moeran’s signature on them. The list is part of a much larger collection of manuscripts and personal belongings of Moeran generously donated by Peers Coetmore to the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne. Rhoderick McNeill kindly transferred this list from its original documentation, which is no longer presently within the collection.

J.S Bach- Solo Cello Suites (cello part)

Frederick Delius- Double Concerto for Violin and Cello (score)

Ernő von Dohnányi- Konzertstück in D minor for Cello and Orchestra

Antonín Dvořák- Concerto for Cello in B minor Op.104 (score)

Edward Elgar- Concerto for Cello and Orchestra in E minor (miniature score)

Edward Elgar- Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in E minor (miniature score)

Edouard Lalo- Concerto for Cello and Orchestra in D (all parts)

Darius Milhaud- Concerto for Cello (score)

W.A Mozart- Symphony No. 40 in G minor KV. 550

William Walton- Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, owned by Moeran

Felix Werder- Sonata for Cello and Piano Op.22, Manuscript
APPENDIX D: PEERS COETMORE’S PERFORMANCES

A handwritten list of performance dates of the cello concerto by Peers Coetmore was located on the front cover to her own personal copy of the cello part, within her generous bequest of the personal belongings of Moeran and herself to the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne.

Performances of the cello concerto:

1945 Capitol Theatre, Dublin
1946 BBC Peoples Palace, London
1946 Liverpool Philharmonic, Liverpool
1946 Promenade Concert, London
1946 Halle orchestra, Manchester
1947 Radio Eirann, Dublin
February 1949 Melbourne ABC, Australia
November 1949 NBC Town Hall Wellington, NZ
November 1949 NBC Town Hall Auckland, NZ
April 11th 51 SABC Johannesburg, SA
April 14th 1951 Civic Orchestra City Hall Johannesburg, SA
February 18th 1960 Melbourne ABC, Australia
May 30th 1970 Zelman Orchestra Australia

Recording of cello concerto

February 4th and 5th 1969 with LPO and Sir Adrian Boult
April 10th 1946 with BBC SO and Sir Adrian Boult
1949 with MSO and Percy Code\(^{189}\)

\(^{189}\) McNeill, "A Critical Study."
Bibliography


Freed, Richard "William Walton: Symphony No. 1 in B-Flat Minor [1968 Version]."


Moeran, Ernest J. "Folk Songs and Some Traditional Singers in East Anglia." *Countrygoer* Autumn no. No. 7 (1946).

———. "John Ireland as Teacher." *MMR* no. March (1931).


**Recordings**


Scores


Concerto for Violin and Orchestra London, Novello: 1943


