

Frankie & Johnny

**Jerome
Moross**

**A Tall Story for Orchestra
Biguine**

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
JoAnn Falletta, conductor

**Concerto for Flute
with String Orchestra**

New Zealand Chamber Orchestra
Donald Armstrong, leader
Alexa Still, flute



Jerome Moross

An American Original

Jerome Moross (1913-1983) was one of America's finest and most respected composers. Until quite recently, however, his significant contributions to the musical scene were both underrated and underappreciated. Although he considered himself primarily a composer of concert music, he is still best known to the general public mainly through an outstanding series of motion picture scores, beginning with *Close-Up* (1948) and ending with *Hail, Hero!* (1969). Chief among these are *The Proud Rebel* (1958), *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1960), *The Cardinal* (1963), *The Warlord* (1965), *Rachel, Rachel* (1968), and his magnum opus in the field, *The Big Country* (1958), a landmark effort for which he received an Academy Award nomination, and which is arguably the finest score ever written for a Western. Moross

also wrote the theme song and music for six episodes of the popular television series *Wagon Train*. With the recording in 1993 of his *Symphony No. 1*, *Variations on a Waltz* and *The Last Judgement*, a major reappraisal of his music was initiated. It is hoped that the present album will enable a new generation of listeners to become familiar with his works and realize that a unique and compelling composer from America's most important cultural era has been unjustly neglected.

Moross was born in Brooklyn, New York on August 1, 1913. His father, initially an electrician, had invested a good deal of money in the stock market, but lost practically everything in the big crash of 1929. Reorganizing his life with the help of his strong-willed wife, he became a real estate agent specializing in movie theatres in the New York area, and become involved with the people who distributed films there.

For a short time, the family even owned a nickelodeon on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Like so many people who have gone on to significant careers in the performing arts, the young Jerome was a prodigy, both musically and intellectually. He seems to have inherited his musical gifts from his mother's side of the family, for his mother and all of her sisters were musically inclined, and his mother played the piano and gave lessons in their home. The youngster started playing the piano by ear when he was only four, and the following year his mother gave him his first formal lessons. It was not long before she realized that this was no ordinary talent, and as his command of the keyboard increased at this early age, new teachers were found to guide him. He first began to compose when he was eight. He was an extraordinarily bright youngster. He attended DeWitt Clinton High School, graduating when he was fifteen. While there, he became good friends with another musically precocious teenager named Bernard Herrmann, who would likewise go on to a very distinguished career as a composer and conductor. This friendship, which developed into a very close one both professionally and personally, was to continue undiminished until Herrmann's untimely death in 1975. Moross attended New York University, graduating when he was just eighteen, and during his senior year there he also held a conducting fellowship at the celebrated Juilliard School of Music. While at Juilliard, Moross enjoyed the first public performance of one of his works when Bernard Herrmann conducted the premiere of *Paeans* on February 13, 1932. The work was written in a rather severe, *avant-garde* idiom, an idiom which he abandoned shortly thereafter in favor of a more conservative and accessible style of composing. Although he had a solid grounding in harmony, counterpoint, sight-reading, orchestration and the like, Moross never actually studied composition formally with anyone. He felt very strongly that any teacher would try to impose his own personal style on a student, and so he preferred instead to find his style on his own. That he found this style remarkably early in his career is testament to the strength of his musical personality and vision. What were the major influences of this style? In Moross' own words: "I was surrounded all of my life by American folk music, things we sang when I was a child, at camp... I found myself writing themes that used the intervals and rhythms of the sort of American music that was around me. They're part of me, part of my style."¹ Popular music of the day was another pervasive influence, particularly from the days the young Moross spent playing piano in jazz bands and for dance classes, and it seemed perfectly natural for him to incorporate those elements into his works as well. Musical comedy, vaudeville, spirituals, blues — in short, virtually all of the American musical scene, old and contemporary, was to have a significant effect on Moross' music. As to what the finished product should be, the composer had this to say: "I do feel that a composer should write not only to put down on paper what he feels, but in

such a way that his audience experiences the emotions anew. In addition, the composer must reflect his landscape, and mine is the landscape of America. I don't do it consciously, it is simply the only way I can write. It would be impossible for me to write in the so-called international style which has nothing to do with my experiences."²

There was apparently no composer or teacher or style or trend that had any appreciable influence on Moross' developing musical vocabulary with one exception. Moross himself acknowledged that Bernard Herrmann was a major influence in his life, but that by the time the two of them met and formed their strong friendship, he (Moross) had already begun to develop his unique and clear personal style. (Just for the record, it was also Herrmann's influence that nurtured in Moross what was to develop into a lifelong passion, namely the playing of music for piano duet. The two young enthusiasts played an enormous amount of music for piano four-hands, both original and transcriptions, and later in his life Moross made piano-duet arrangements of some of his own orchestral works, a very popular two piano arrangement of Louis Moreau Gottschalk's virtuoso solo piano work *The Banjo*, and even wrote a *Sonata for Piano Duet and String Quartet*.)

Moross graduated from NYU in 1932 with a B.S. degree in Music Education, and began supporting himself by playing the piano in a variety of situations and by composing works for use in ballet classes and the theatre. His first major work for the stage was a political revue entitled *Parade*, first produced by the Theater Guild in New York on May 20, 1935, with the young Eve Arden as a cast member. Although it was not a great success, it established the then 21-year-old composer as a major new force on the American musical scene. (There is an interesting connection here with Moross' later work in Hollywood. The young David Raksin, who would go on to win fame as a composer for such films as *Laura* and *The Bad and the Beautiful*, did some of the orchestration for *Parade*. Then, in 1947, Moross did some of the orchestration of Raksin's score for the Danny Kaye vehicle *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*.) Writing for the theatre was to remain his first love as a composer, and all through his career he displayed an instinctive grasp of what worked on the stage, and how dramatic tensions could best be utilized. There followed a succession of theatre pieces, including *American Pattern* (1936); *Frankie and Johnny* (1938); *Ballet Ballads* (four ballet-operas composed between 1941 and 1946); *The Golden Apple* (1954); *The Last Judgement* (1953); *Gentlemen. Be Seated!* (1959-61); and *Sorry, Wrong Number* (1977), this latter work based on the radio

play by Lucille Fletcher, Bernard Herrmann's first wife. *The Golden Apple*, which Moross once described as "a pure opera for Broadway," and which was written in collaboration with John Latouche, received the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical for the 1953-54 season. It was the composer's greatest theatrical success: a marvelous work that cries out for a first-rate modern recording — and even more important, a first-rate modern revival. Following the premiere in March of 1954, the New York Daily Mirror's theatre critic Robert Coleman hailed it as "...quite the most original and imaginative work of its kind to blaze across the theatrical horizon in many a moon," and there are some scholars who feel that *The Golden Apple* had a good deal of influence on Leonard Bernstein when he came to write his Broadway opera *Candide* a few years later.

As a writer of concert music, Moross' compositions went from the already-mentioned *Paeans* (1931) to the *Concerto for Flute with String Quartet* (1978 — his last completed work). In between those works came, among others, *Biguine* (1934), *A Tall Story for Orchestra* (1938), the *Symphony No. 1*, which had its premiere by the Seattle Symphony Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham!, *Variations on a Waltz* (1946), *Music from the Flicks* (1965, based on several of his film scores 1952-1965), and four *Sonatinas for Diverse Instruments* (1966-1970). At the time of his death he was working on an opera based on Susan Glaspell's play *A Jury of her Peers*, which would have completed a trilogy of one-act operas begun with *Sorry, Wrong Number* (1977), and *Willie the Weeper* (1945/61).

In 1940 Moross decided to head out to Hollywood to look for work as a film composer. There he found that his reputation had preceded him as one of the leading lights of the younger generation of composers, but in this instance it worked against him. Hollywood was then very much ruled by the grand' European-influenced romantic music of composers such as Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Max Steiner and Franz Waxman, among others, and the "new" American style was decidedly not in vogue, so nobody wanted to hire Moross or anyone like him to write an original film score. He therefore spent most of the next ten years doing orchestrations for composers such as Waxman, Adolph Deutsch, Frederick Hollander, Hugo Friedhofer, and, ironically, Aaron Copland. It was Copland who had been responsible for getting Ruth Page to commission Moross to write *Frankie and Johnny* (more about that later on), and when Copland came to Hollywood in 1940 as a "name" composer to write his first film score for *Our Town*, he specifically asked for Moross to orchestrate the music. Once again, Moross' extraordinary gifts worked against him in a sense, and he

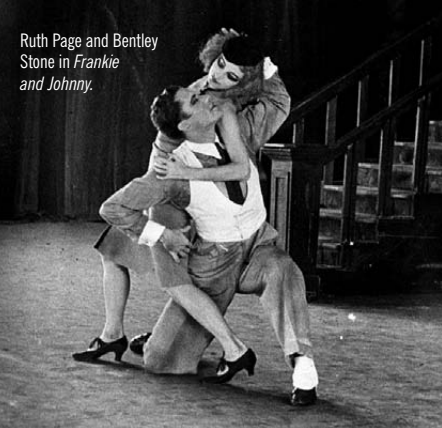
became pigeonholed for a time as a dependable and first-rate orchestrator. He finally was offered his first original score in 1948 for a now totally-forgotten film called *Close-Up*, but it was his lyrical and tender score for *When I Grow Up* in 1950 that finally established him as a film composer of exceptional talent. The rest, as they say, is history.

In 1981 Moross suffered a major heart attack that was followed ten days later by a stroke. Although he basically recovered from these double blows, his physical state was weakened to the point where he could no longer endure the often-brutal New York winters. He therefore bought a small condominium in Miami where he could escape the northern winters and be close to his daughter and her family who had been living there for some time. In June of 1983 he went to Miami to attend the grade school graduation of his youngest grandson. Shortly after arriving he was taken seriously ill, was hospitalized, and died there on July 25th, 1983, just one week short of his 70th birthday. His untimely death robbed the musical world of a man of unique and remarkable talents.

Frankie and Johnny

In the years immediately following World War One, the U.S. had no contemporary dance groups or classical ballet companies, and the dance was the almost exclusive provenance of opera companies and musical theatre. Into this milieu came Ruth Page, a native of Indianapolis whose love for dancing manifested itself at a very early age. She began her formal studies at the age of twelve, and shortly thereafter came to the attention of the legendary Russian prima ballerina Anna Pavlova, with whom she danced on Pavlova's last tour of South America. There followed a series of successes, among them the position of principal dancer of Irving Berlin's *Music Box Revue*, dancing with the celebrated Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, acting as ballet mistress of the Ravinia Opera Company in Chicago, and becoming the first American solo dancer to be engaged by the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York. In the early 1930s Page gave a highly successful series of solo dance recitals that took her all over the United States. In 1933 the city of Chicago celebrated the 100th anniversary of its incorporation with the Century of Progress Exposition, and Page was invited to create a series of special ballet performances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra commemorating the cultural history of the city. While there, Page first encountered the work of dancer/choreographer Bentley Stone whose dance pieces were a popular attraction at the English Village.

Ruth Page and Bentley Stone in *Frankie and Johnny*.



In 1934 Page was appointed Director of Ballet of the recently-revived Chicago Grand Opera Company, and immediately asked Bentley Stone to join the company as principal male dancer. The two of them danced together in several full-length ballets to Page's own choreography, thus becoming the first dancers to present evenings of ballet with a major American opera company. In 1938 they formed the Page-Stone Ballet Company, and for the next two seasons gave performances of dance works created expressly for the Federal Theatre Project in Chicago. In 1940 the Page-Stone company became the first American ballet troupe to tour South America under the auspices of the U.S. government.

In 1934 Aaron Copland had founded the Young Composers' Group in New York, and Moross was a member of the group for two years. Copland was very impressed with the young man's creative abilities, and on more than one occasion referred to him as probably the most talented composer of his generation. When Copland heard that Ruth Page was looking for new composers to write music for her original creations, he recommended that she get in touch with Moross. The initial fruits of this collaboration were three ballets, *An American Pattern*, *Frankie and Johnny* and *Guns and Castanets*, this latter piece being a reworking by Moross of some of the music in Bizet's opera *Carmen*, with songs set to poems by Federico Garcia Lorca. *Frankie and Johnny*, the major work on this album, was given its premiere performance by the Page-Stone company, under the auspices of the Federal Theatre Project, in the old Great Northern Theatre in Chicago on June 20 1938. Ruth Page and Bentley Stone created the title characters, with Ann Devine as Nellie Bly, Sean Marino as the bartender, and Velma Replogle, Vera Pollitt and Frances Oliver as the three Salvation Army girls. The choreography was listed as being by Ruth Page and Bentley Stone, but it now appears that Page's contribution was limited mainly to her own interpretation of the role of Frankie, and most of the rest of the choreography was done by Stone. Inasmuch as almost all of Moross' music is closely related to the American experience, it is no surprise that his most famous — some might even say infamous — work

should be based on one of the best known popular songs in the land, the ballad of Frankie and Johnny, and the most famous version of the song is used by the composer in several sections of the work. Actually, Moross started working on an initial concept of the ballet while he was in Hollywood in 1936, and at the time enlisted the help of a young playwright named Michael Blankfort to work out a scenario, but it was Page's commission that ultimately brought the work to completion. It was with the writing of this ballet that Moross felt he had finally consolidated his own individual style, that he was finally being himself, and no longer needed to follow in anyone else's footsteps.

Although experts disagree on exactly when the song first made its appearance, the first publication of a Frankie and Johnny song was in New York in 1904. Some scholars claim that the song was based on an actual incident that occurred in St. Louis in the fall of 1899 when a prostitute named Frankie Baker shot and killed her pimp following a violent argument. Whatever the case, one of the definitive comments about these songs was made by the great American poet Carl Sandburg in his wonderful 1927 book *American Songbag*: "A Frankie song is like a grand opera role; interpretations vary. It is stark and fierce or it is serio-comic — as you like it. If America has a classic gutter song, it is the one that tells of Frankie and her man. It is a simple and mournful air... with notes of violence and flashes of exasperation. It may be said that the Frankie songs, at best, are an American parallel of certain European ballads of low life... While the Frankie story deals with crime, violence, murder and adultery, its percentage in these respects is a good deal less than in the average grand opera."

Frankie and Johnny is comprised of an introduction and seven dance sequences *which* are played without interruption. The breakdown of the story is best described in Moross'own words:

1. INTRODUCTION (Sets the scene and the mood)
2. STOMP (The doings around town)
3. BLUES (A duet between Frankie and Johnny)
4. RAG ONE (The barroom scene. Johnnie goes off with Nellie Bly; Frankie comes looking for him; the local denizens help; Nellie and Johnny get away)

5. RAG TWO (The bartender's dance. The bartender tells Frankie what's what, in the meantime offering himself as a substitute)
6. TUNE (Frankie whips herself into a frenzy and goes off to get her gun)
7. FOXTROT (Frankie catches Johnnie with Nellie Bly and shoots him)
8. ONESTEP (The funeral. Everybody gets roaring drunk, and Frankie and Nelly end up crying on one another's shoulders)

One of the cleverest aspects of the work is the inclusion of a trio of Salvation Army girls wandering through the scenes playing tambourine, bass drum and cymbals, and commenting on the action, much in the manner of a modern-day Greek chorus. At the very end of the work the three girls, beer mugs in hand and feet on Johnnie's coffin, intone the final lyrics: "This story ain't got no moral, Oh, this story ain't got no end, Oh, this story just goes to show you that you can't put no trust in any man." Commenting on this unusual trio of singers, Moross once stated: "I thought it was rather amusing that the Salvation Army girls, who would be in a slum parading around trying to save souls, would be singing the narrative of what was then considered a very naughty poem."³ In some respects this would prove to be Moross; most influential work, and it is interesting to speculate on Leonard Bernstein's inclusion of a trio of night-club-type singers who similarly comment on the action in his 1952 one-act opera *Trouble in Tahiti*.

To say that the premiere production of *Frankie and Johnny* was a success would be an understatement. Initially scheduled to play for just a few performances, it proved to be such a smash hit with audiences and critics alike that the run was extended to six weeks, becoming the longest run that any ballet had ever had in Chicago up to that time. Typical of the reviews was a comment by critic Cecil Smith that "From the stand point of the audience, *Frankie and Johnny*, a brand-new piece placed at the end of the evening, was a genuine wow." Herman Devries wrote that the three works on the program were "... presented last night before an audience that entirely filled the theater, and showed unmistakable joy by demonstrations of approval intermingled with shouts at the termination of each episode. *Frankie and Johnny*, with choreography by Ruth Page and Bentley Stone, culminated this extraordinary spectacle." In the words of critic Dempster MacMurphy, "... the Frankie and Johnny ballet, currently on view at the Great Northern Theater under the auspices of the WPA, is a swell show. It is as native as a ball game or a prize fight ... The cast is

amusing and intelligent, Jerome Moross' music is amusing and engaging, the scenery is amusing and convincing." The other two works on the program, by the way, were *An American Pattern*, also with Moross' music and choreography by the Page Stone duo (first produced in Chicago the preceding year), and *Behind This Mask*, with music by David Sheinfeld.

Considering how successful the original production of the work had been, it is remarkable that *Frankie and Johnny* had to wait another seven years for its second staging. The famous Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo (the same company for which Ruth Page had danced in the 1920s) bought the rights to the work, and in early 1945 it presented the ballet in New York. While the company used the original Page-Stone choreography and the original Clive Rickabaugh settings, it pushed the suggestive aspects of the story to the limit. This would later create major problems with some censors, ultimately leading to the company withdrawing the ballet from its repertoire. The New York premiere, however, was even more successful than the original Chicago presentation, and once again the critics outdid themselves in showering the work with praise. On this occasion the title roles were danced by Ruthanna Boris and Frederic Franklin (both of whom were coached in their performances by Bentley Stone), with Nikita Talin as the bartender, and Pauline Goddard as Nellie. The production won the *New York Times* Annual Award as Best Ballet of the 1945 Season, and in his article announcing the award the *Times*' dance critic, John Martin, wrote that "...*Frankie and Johnny* was certainly the best ballet of the season. Racy, humorous, flavorsome and full of comment, it succeeds in breaking away admirably from the set formulas into which ballet composition tends more and more to fall, and in being good theatre." In a later article in the *Times*, Martin continued, "At second seeing the work is even better than at first, though even then it obviously had virtues of considerable note ... The choreographers, with the admirable assistance of Jerome Moross' score and Clive Rickabaugh's setting, have achieved a fine, rip-roaring flavor, full of warm humor and an awareness of the essential qualities of urban folklore. It deserves to rank among the very best of American genre works." Writing in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, Miles Kastendieck said, "Described as a dance-melodrama, *Frankie and Johnny* lives up to its name with the dash of satire that will put it over in a big way ... What places it in the forefront of new works is the musical score which is essentially that and not a Broadway excuse for one. Jerome Moross has provided musical entertainment as well as giving the dancers something with which to work." The production even made the pages of *Time* magazine, and in the issue of March 12, 1945, an unnamed critic wrote, "...the big novelty in Manhattan was a rowdy, corn-likkered, genuinely U.S. ballet: *Frankie*

and *Johnny*, an adaptation of a well-known U.S. folk ballad. Chicago, which saw some 50 performances of *Frankie and Johnny* as a WPA Federal Theater project, had pronounced it a 'wow' and 'as native as a ballgame.' Eastern balletomanes, seeing it for the first time last week, plunged into the heated controversy about the strutting, non-classical acrobatics and gun-toting melodrama. Critics couldn't agree on whether it was 'good, lusty folklore' or merely a 'dirty show.' *Frankie and Johnny* landed in the East at just the right moment to add fresh fuel to Manhattan's roaring theatrical censorship squabble."

The Ballet Russe took the new production on tour, and one of the cities visited was Chicago, where it had all begun in 1938. On the occasion of the revival, Felix Borowski of the *Chicago Sun* wrote, "...*Frankie and Johnny* was hailed — and still remains — one of the outstanding contributions to American ballet... There was no doubt of the success of *Frankie and Johnny* last night. The curtain was raised a number of times to permit the dancers to acknowledge the applause... All this enthusiasm was well deserved... The bizarre music of Jerome Moross gave point to the action of the ballet, and the orchestra, conducted by Emanuel Balaban, played it well." Remi Gassman, of the *Chicago Times* said, "...it will be remembered because these gifted American choreographers were able to convince us that folksy America has the stuff of good theater in its young bones — that it has the kind of satiric possibilities to make our present-day hypocrites, our vote-gathering, moralizing politicians... totter with remorse, if not laughter... Jerome Moross' music is still a brash and utterly unsubtle but effective background for the tale, without pulling too many punches, in front of Clive Rickabaugh's amusingly realistic stage set." Finally, critic C.J. Bulliet had this to say: "...*Frankie and Johnny* becomes a worthy mate among American ballets like *Rodeo* [Aaron Copland] and *Fancy Free* [Leonard Bernstein]."

The next major revival of the work was in Paris in 1950, the premiere of which touched off a traditional French scandal. How this came about is a rather interesting story. Immediately after World War Two, cultural exchange between the United States and Europe was very slow. In 1946 a ballet company led by Serge Lifar came to New York with some new and avant-garde productions. The performances were not well received, however, mainly because the choreography was simply too "modern" and incomprehensible to audiences and critics alike, but also because of lingering resentment over accusations that Lifar had been a Nazi collaborator during the war. So it was that when *Frankie and Johnny* received its Paris premiere in May 1950, Lifar's followers seized upon the opportunity to retaliate against his hostile reception in New

York. They bought out the first few rows of seats in the mezzanine of the theatre, and proceeded to shout insults at the stage throughout the performance, and at one point actually threw some objects at the dancers while throwing chairs around in the mezzanine. After the premiere, counter demonstrations were mounted against the Lifar crowd and in favor of the ballet, and the celebrated artist Le Corbusier even wrote a lengthy article in one of the Paris journals in praise of the production. All of this only had the effect of increasing the public's curiosity about the ballet, and it received no less than 20 performances in the space of one month. Later on, when the first LP recording of the work was being prepared, Moross wrote to the American Recording Society: "I hope your recording starts something again. Life just never seems right when there is no *Frankie and Johnny* scandal going on somewhere."

There is one final footnote to this remarkable saga. In 1953 Moross and Ruth Page collaborated one final time on a ballet entitled *The Last Judgement*. Unfortunately, this work, which is one of the composer's finest creations, has yet to be staged. Page certainly intended to produce it, but for reasons which are not entirely clear, she never did, and the work is known today only as a concert suite for orchestra and in Moross' own arrangement for piano duet. For the record, Page died in 1991 at the age of 92, and was by all accounts a very active and energetic woman right up to her last days.

Biguine

Mention has already been made of Moross' first major stage work, *Parade*, which was performed in New York in 1935. While he was working on the score, one theme particularly caught his fancy, and he developed it into a separate work that he entitled *Biguine*. Although it was originally intended as a dance piece for Charles Weidman (for whom Moross had written the ballet *Paul Bunyan* in 1934), it, too received its first performance during a CBS broadcast, when John Green conducted the CBS Orchestra on November 21st, 1934, some six months prior to the *Parade* premiere. The curious spelling of the name is the composer's own, although nobody seems to know exactly why he spelled it that way. (Could he have been thinking of it as a "big" beguine? We probably will never know.) At any rate, the main theme of the work together with its rhythmic background resurfaced somewhat altered in the score that Moross composed for the 1956 motion picture *The Sharkfighters*.

A Tall Story for Orchestra

If *Frankie and Johnny* can be said to be a “city” work, then *A Tall Story* surely qualifies as a “country” work, the country in this instance being the wide-open spaces of the American West. This was the first work in which Moross consciously sought to evoke the American landscape, and had its origins in an almost metaphysical experience he had while on his way to Hollywood in 1936. As the composer later recalled, “I remember it was really one of the most wonderful experiences I’d had — that first view of the Great Plains and the far west. The dimensions of everything starting with the Great Plains just overawed me. It did something to me that was extraordinary — don’t ask me what — it’s like people getting religion or something. . . I remember I got off the bus at Albuquerque and stayed there a few days because I just couldn’t leave. . . You walked eight blocks and you were in the desert. That was all I could do, I could look at this desert, and I never thought the desert and the mountains could be absolutely marvelous. I remember that about a year later, in the early part of ’38, CBS commissioned me to do a piece, and the first thing I wanted to do was to write about this feeling, this marvelous sensation I had. So I wrote my first Western piece called *A Tall Story*.”⁴ Moross was 24 when the commission came through, making him the youngest composer ever to receive such a commission from CBS up to that time. The work was given its premiere in a broadcast over the CBS radio network on September 25th, 1938, with Howard Barlow conducting the CBS Orchestra. In a note prepared for that first performance, Moross stated: “There is no program for *A Tall Story*, but I hope the listeners will get the feeling of Western America and the love I have for this country as a whole.”

Concerto for Flute with String Orchestra

In 1978 Moross wrote his last major work, a *Concerto for Flute with String Quartet*. It was to be the last work that he ever completed. It actually began its life as a work for clarinet and string quartet, but as he worked on it he began to realize that the musical ideas that were forthcoming were better suited to the tone quality and agility of the flute. Originally conceived of as chamber quintet, Moross also began to realize that the flute part was becoming so prominent and virtuosic that he decided to call it a Concerto. Ever the practical musician, when the work was completed he added an optional string bass part so that it could be performed with a string orchestra as well. It is certainly significant that, true to form, the composer’s last work should be a shining example of his remarkable ability to write a piece of genuine musical substance but which also has great popular appeal and accessibility. The year after it was completed, the work received

its first recording in its original scoring for flute and string quartet, along with his 1975 *Sonata for Piano Duet and string Quartet*. In a review of the recording in the *High Fidelity/Musical America* magazine, critic Irving Lowens wrote: "The two lively works... show him to be something of an American Poulenc, with the same crystal-clear handling of odd instrumental combinations, the same engagingly light touch, the same neatness and wit, the same spontaneous vigor. Then again, the simple, diatonic melodies and persuasive American rhythms give a curious, clean outdoorsy feeling reminiscent of Copland in his folk-like moods." This is the first recording of the Concerto in the version for string orchestra.

—© 1996, Charles Greenwell

¹ Jerome Moross interview with John Caps, 8/31/79

² David Ewen: *American Composers A Biographical Dictionary*. G. Putnam & Sons, New York 1982

³ Jerome Moross interview with Paul Snook on WRVR-FM, New York, 1970

⁴ Jerome Moross interview with Mike Shell, 2/4/78

Ruth Page and Bentley Stone
in *Frankie and Johnny*.



Frankie and Johnny

Frankie and Johnny were lovers
Oh Lord, and how they could love
Swore they'd be true to each other
True as the stars up above.

He was her man
But he done her wrong
So wrong.

Frankie went down to the corner saloon
To buy her a large glass of beer
She said to the big fat bartender
"Has my lovin'est man been here?"

He was her man
But he done her wrong.

I ain't, I ain't, I ain't
I ain't gonna tell you no fable
I ain't, I ain't, I ain't
I ain't gonna tell you no lie

I ain't gonna tell you no fable
I ain't gonna tell you no lie
Your lovin'est man
Just left this place
And with him went Nellie Bly.

Frankie went back to the crib
This time it wasn't for fun
'Cause under her old red kimona
She toted a Forty Four gun.

Frankie went down to the Parlor house
She looked through the transom so high
And there she saw her lovin'est man
A lovin' up Nellie Bly.

Frankie threw open the Parlor house door
Johnny yelled "Frankie don't shoot"
Frankie, she whipped out her Forty Four
And with it went
Root-a-toot toot
Root-a-toot toot
Root-a-toot toot, Toot.

Roll me over easy
Roll me over slow
Roll me on my right side
'Cause my left side hurts me so.

Get out your rubber tired carriages
Get out your rubber tired hacks
'Case they're gonna bury her Johnny
Any they ain't gonna never bring him back.

Frankie and Johnny were lovers
Oh Lord, and how they could love
They swore they'd be true to each other
True as the stars up above.

He was her man
But he done her wrong.

This story ain't got no moral,
Oh, this story ain't got no end
Oh, this story just goes to show you
That you can't put no trust in any man.

JoAnn Falletta



JoAnn Falletta is internationally celebrated as a vibrant ambassador for music and an inspiring artistic leader. An effervescent and exuberant figure on the podium, she has been praised by *The Washington Post* as having “Toscanini’s tight control over ensemble, Walter’s affectionate balancing of inner voices, Stokowski’s gutsy showmanship, and a controlled frenzy worthy of Bernstein.” Acclaimed by *The New York Times* as “one of the finest conductors of her generation,” she serves as the Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Principal Conductor of the Ulster Orchestra in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Brevard Music Center.

Ms. Falletta is invited to guest conduct many of the world’s finest symphony orchestras. Highlights of her recent international guest conducting appearances include her South American debut with the Orquesta Sinfonica de Chile in Santiago Chile, and performances with the London Symphony, Korean Broadcast Symphony, Beijing Symphony, the Haifa Symphony (Israel), Goettingen Symphony (Germany), Netherlands Radio Orchestra, National Philharmonic of Lithuania, Orquesta de Extremadura (Spain), Warsaw National Philharmonic, Kraków Philharmonic, Orchestra National de Belgique, Seoul Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic in Manchester, Ensemble Kanazawa (Japan), Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra, Orchestra of Asturias (Spain), Rotterdam Philharmonic, Orchestre National De Lyon, Northwest German Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Lisbon Metropolitan Symphony, as well as a tour of Germany and Italy with the Sudwestdeutsche Philharmonie. She has guest conducted more than 100 orchestras in North America, including the orchestras of Philadelphia, Detroit, Montreal, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Houston, Rochester, Utah, Edmonton, Quebec and the National Symphony. Ms. Falletta’s summer activities have taken her to numerous music festivals including the Brevard Festival in North Carolina, where she is Principal Guest Conductor, Aspen, Tanglewood, Hollywood Bowl, Grand Teton, Wolf Trap, Eastern Music, Cabrillo, OK Mozart International, Lanaudiere, Peter Britt, Breckenridge, Brevard and Interlochen, among others. She is also Artistic Adviser to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra that was founded in 2011

Ms. Falletta is the recipient of many of the most prestigious conducting awards including the Seaver/ National Endowment for the Arts Conductors Award, the coveted Stokowski Competition, and the Toscanini, Ditson and Bruno Walter Awards for conducting, as well as the American Symphony Orchestra League's prestigious John S. Edwards Award. She is an ardent champion of music of our time, introducing more than 400 works by American composers, including more than 100 world premieres. Hailing her as a "leading force for the music of our time", she has been honored with eleven ASCAP awards. Ms. Falletta serves as a Member of the National Council on the Arts.

Since stepping up to the podium as Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in the fall of 1999, Maestro Falletta has been credited with bringing the Philharmonic to a new level of national and international prominence. Under her direction, the Buffalo Philharmonic has become one of the leading orchestras for the Naxos label, earning two Grammy Awards and five Grammy nominations. The orchestra is regularly featured on national broadcasts of NPR's Performance Today and SymphonyCast, and international broadcasts through the European Broadcasting Union.

Under JoAnn Falletta's direction, the Virginia Symphony Orchestra has risen to celebrated artistic heights. Recent achievements of the Virginia Symphony under her baton include 14 recordings, a performance of Peter and the Wolf that was aired on National Public Radio, new audience development through residences at the College of William and Mary, Newport News and Virginia Beach, and critically acclaimed performances at the Kennedy Center and New York's Carnegie Hall.

As Principal Conductor of the Ulster Orchestra Falletta made her Proms debut in Royal Albert Hall in August 2012, and will conduct many of the main season programs, select regional concerts and other events. She is the first American and the first woman to lead the Orchestra. Under Falletta's leadership, the Ulster Orchestra entered into an exciting new multi-year recording relationship with Naxos. The first disc was released in June 2012 and includes works of Gustav Holst, with upcoming discs to feature works of Moeran and Boyle.

With 18 Naxos discs released under her baton in the past ten years garnering nine Grammy nominations and two Grammy Awards, there were four additional recordings with four different orchestras released in 2012; an exceptional accomplishment in the current recording environment. These include Naxos' thirteenth

disc featuring the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (Gershwin), the first of three discs with the Ulster Orchestra (Gustav Holst), the 1st Naxos recording with the Virginia Symphony (Adolphus Hailstork), and a world premiere recording with the London Symphony (Kenneth Fuchs). In the past ten years, her recordings for Naxos have garnered nine Grammy nominations, including two Grammy awards in 2009 for John Corigliano's *Mr. Tambourine Man* with the BPO. Maestro Falletta's growing discography, which currently includes almost 70 titles, consists of recordings with the London Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Virginia Symphony, Ulster Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony, Long Beach Symphony, Czech National Symphony, Philadelphia Philharmonia and Women's Philharmonic, among others.

Ms. Falletta received her undergraduate degree from the Mannes School of Music in New York, her master's and doctorate degrees from The Juilliard School, and has been awarded twelve honorary doctorates.

Alexa Still



Alexa's many recordings on the Koch International Classics label have garnered unanimous praise: "impeccable in technique and taste, seductive in phrasing" (Stephensen Classical CD Guide). "Still plays... so convincingly I cannot separate her from the music" (American Record Guide), "whatever she plays sounds musical in every turn of the phrase" (Gramophone), "a stunning showcase for the astonishing Alexa Still" (Fanfare). Alexa studied in New York (SUNY Stony Brook), won competitions including the New York Flute Club Young Artist Competition, and, East and West

Artists Competition and then returned home as principal flute of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra at the age of 23. Other awards include a Churchill Fellowship and a Fulbright. She eventually left the NZSO to devote more time to solo engagements and teaching, based first at the University of Colorado at Boulder, then the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and now at Oberlin Conservatory, USA. Alexa has performed and taught in England, Germany, Slovenia, Turkey, Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, Canada, Korea, China, Australia, New Zealand, and of course across the United States. Alexa has also served her profession as President

of the National Flute Association (USA), and regularly writes for flute journals across the globe. Her flute was made by Brannen Brothers with gold or wooden headjoints by Sanford Drelinger. When her flute is in its case, Alexa is an avid motorcyclist, and she shares a daughter and two dogs with her husband. You can read much more about Alexa on her website: www.alexastill.com.

Acknowledgments

Recorded January, 1996 at Symphony House, Wellington, New Zealand

Produced by Michael Fine

Engineered by Keith Warren

Executive Producer: Susanna Moross Tarjan

Assistant Producer: Tamra Saylor Fine

Production Manager; Susan Napodano DelGiorno

Publisher: Subito Music Corporation

Cover Design: Judith Goldstein

Photo of JoAnn Falletta: Mark Dellas

Images of Ruth Page and Bentley Stone courtesy of Ruth Page Foundation.

Special thanks to John Caps, Charles Moross, Henry Skolnick, Mike Snell, Paul Snook, Peter Tarjan and John Waxman.



TROY1400

Albany
RECORDS

WWW.ALBANYRECORDS.COM

ALBANY RECORDS U.S.
915 BROADWAY, ALBANY, NY 12207
TEL: 518.436.8814 FAX: 518.436.0643

ALBANY RECORDS U.K.
BOX 137, KENDAL, CUMBRIA LA8 0XD
TEL: 01539 824008

© 2013 ALBANY RECORDS MADE IN THE USA

FROM THE
disc
DIGITAL AGE

DDD

Cover Image:
Ruth Page and Bentley Stone
in *Frankie and Johnny*.

WARNING: COPYRIGHT SUBSISTS IN ALL RECORDINGS ISSUED UNDER THIS LABEL.

Jerome Moross

Frankie & Johnny

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
JoAnn Falletta, conductor

- 1 **Frankie and Johnny (1938)** [18:46]
Ursula Allen, Wendy Thomson,
Amanda Winfield, singers
- 2 **Biguine (1934)** [4:49]
- 3 **A Tall Story for Orchestra (1938)** [9:04]

**Concerto for Flute and
String Orchestra (1978)**
- 4 I. Allegro [9:25]
- 5 II. Andante [6:31]
- 6 III. Vivace [7:58]
Alexa Still, flute
New Zealand Chamber Orchestra
Donald Armstrong, leader

Total Time = 56:37

TROY1400

Albany
CLASSICS

WWW.ALBANYRECORDS.COM

ALBANY RECORDS U.S.
915 BROADWAY, ALBANY, NY 12207
TEL: 518.436.8814 FAX: 518.436.0643

ALBANY RECORDS U.K.
BOX 137, KENDAL, CUMBRIA LA8 0XD
TEL: 01539 824008

RE-ISSUED 2013 BY ALBANY RECORDS
© 2013 ALBANY RECORDS MADE IN THE USA

compact
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

DDD

