

for Marion Neilson and the Fair City Singers  
**The Boatman (Fear a' bhàta)**

translated from the Gaelic by Thomas Pattison (1828-1865)

Traditional Gaelic air adapted and arranged by Tom Cunningham

♩. = 60-66

*mp* 1. How of - ten hunt - ing the high - est

*mf*

*dim.....* *mp*

4

hill - tops I scan the o - cean thy sail to see; *p* Wilt come to - night, love, wilt come to -

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hill - tops I scan the o - cean thy sail to see; *p* Wilt come to - night, love, wilt come to -

*cresc. - - -*

*p* *cresc. - - -*

8

mor - row, Or ev - er come, love, to com - fort me? *mf* Fhir a' bhà - ta, na ho - ro

mor - row, Or ev - er come, love, to com - fort me? *mf* Fhir a' bhà - ta, na ho - ro

mor - row, Or ev - er come, love, to com - fort me? *mf* Fhir a' bhà - ta, na ho - ro

*mf*

"Fear a' bhàta" is a Scottish Gaelic song on a familiar theme - longing for an absent loved one. The title is "The Boatman" (nominative case) and is pronounced *fair a vata* (the first a is long, the second is a schwa). In the refrain, "Fhir a' bhàta" means "O boatman" (vocative case) and is pronounced *ir a vata* (ir with an Italian i); in some dialects Fhir is pronounced *ith* as in with. In the other phrase "na horo eile", the word "eile" is pronounced like the French "et le".

I have used an English translation by Thomas Pattison (1828-1865).