

# ANAM RECITAL: JAMES MORLEY (SA) CELLO

WEDNESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2021, 3PM  
ROSINA DORM 1, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

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**Liza Lim (b. 1966)** *Invisibility* for solo cello (2009)

**György Ligeti (1923-2006)** Sonata for solo cello (1948-53)

(i) *Dialogo*

(ii) *Capriccio*

**Brett Dean (b. 1961)** *Eleven Oblique Strategies* for solo cello (2014)

**Liza Lim** *Cello Playing ~ as Meteorology* for solo cello (2021)\*

**James Morley** *cello*

Durations: 10 – 8 – 11 – 10

\*Commissioned by ANAM as part *The ANAM Set* (2021). *The ANAM Set* was funded by the Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund – an Australian Government Initiative.

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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

James Morley grew up in Adelaide studying with Hilary Kleinig, Janis Laurs, and Rachel Johnston. He studied on scholarship at Sydney Conservatorium with Julian Smiles, and is currently training at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) with Howard Penny.

James was a finalist for the 2020 Freedman Fellowship Award. He won the Audience Choice award in the 2019 ANAM Concerto Competition, and in the same year was awarded ANAM's highest honour for chamber music and the Outstanding First-Year Prize, followed by the prize for Most Outstanding Recital in 2020. James has performed solo with Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Youth Orchestra, Sydney Youth Orchestra Wind Orchestra, and Ensemble Apex. He has been a semi-finalist in the Gisborne International Music Competition and a finalist in the Sydney Conservatorium Concerto Competition.

James has performed with the Australian Youth Orchestra many times, including as Principal Cello for many of their programs, and with AYO's Momentum Ensemble. Whilst based in Sydney, James was also Principal Cello of Ensemble Apex. In 2019, James was an Emerging Artist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Formed in 2019, James is a founding member of the Rathdowne Quartet, and is also a member of the Butcherbird Quartet. With both of these ensembles, James has participated in international schools and festivals, and several unique performances at home. James is also a founding member of Continuo Continuum, an Adelaide-based early music ensemble.

James is passionate about modern music, and has closely collaborated with many composers. He has premiered works for Extended Play Festival, Ensemble Apex, and various other initiatives, mostly with an electro-acoustic focus. James has also been accepted for the 2021 Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra.

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## PROGRAM NOTES

This performance has been brewing in my mind for quite a while — its original iteration was scheduled for late August, and with a different program. My intention back then was to perform a program of all-Australian works, three of which would have been premieres. Due to the troubling nature of being in lockdown and the ways it affected myself and my composer-collaborators, I am today only able to present a shadow of that original intention. I've added Ligeti's sonata for solo cello for no reason of particular significance, but because it feels right in this program (and because in lockdown I felt like I needed something fast to practise and I went to this).

*continued over*

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2021 ANAM Recitals recorded in partnership with Australian Digital Concert Hall (ADCH)

We acknowledge with gratitude that the production of this printed program is supported by the Estate of Audrey Urve Tuvik.

ANAM respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands spread across Australia on which we work and live. We uphold and honour their continued relationship to these sites, we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



The other three works are by who I see as two of Australia's greatest composers. One of these is by Brett Dean, written as a competition set piece which now serves as the groundwork for his cello concerto, apparent in its virtuosity and physical demand. The others are by Liza Lim, both highly considered and gestural works with many parallels to one another, the second of which we'll be hearing publicly for the first time today.

#### **invisibility // Liza Lim (2009)**

"...The Invisibility of the title of the piece is not about silence, for the work is full of sounds. Rather, as in Grosz' and Deleuze's conception, I'm working with an idea of the invisible or latent forces of the physical set-up of the instrument. What emerges as the instrument is sounded in various increasingly rhythmicised ways, is a landscape of unpredictable nicks and ruptures as different layers of action - speed, tension, pressure of the bows, of the strings - flow across each other. The composition also works with magnifications of the level of these disruptions by intensifying various paradoxical combinations - eg: playing a string at a non-harmonic node so that the string vibrates in highly complex ways. The string doesn't settle in any one vibrational zone but flicks or flickers (shimmers) between states so that what results is an unpredictable array of different noises and harmonics.

The two kinds of bow used in the piece offer different possibilities of friction, for instance, the stop/start structure of the serrated bow adds an uneven granular layer of articulation over every sound. Like the cross-hatched designs or dotting effects of Aboriginal art, the bow creates a highly mobile sonic surface through which you can hear the outlines of other kinds of movements and shapes. Moving rapidly between places of relative stability and instability in terms of how the cello is sounded, the piece shows up patterns of contraction and expansion, accumulation and dissipation, aligning with forces that are at work within the instrument-performer complex."

#### **sonata for solo cello // György Ligeti (1948/1953)**

György Ligeti wrote the first movement for a cellist he fell in love with while at university... and the second he added for another a few years later. This work is extremely juvenile compared to the later work of Ligeti, who wrote far more complex avant-garde works such as *Requiem*, *Le Grand Macabre*, and *Atmosphères*. We're more used to hearing these terrifyingly freaky soundworlds in the likes of Stanley Kubrick films. But here we have a far more simple concordant offering for cello, beginning with a dialogue between two voices and evoking Hungarian folk-like idioms, followed by an unrelenting though somehow optimistic and celebratory caprice.

#### **eleven oblique strategies // Brett Dean (2014)**

1. "Listen to the quiet voice"
2. "A line has two sides"
3. "Don't stress one thing more than any other"
4. "Look at a small object, look at its centre"
5. "What are the sections sections of?"
6. "Don't be frightened to show your talents"
7. "Disciplined self-indulgence"
8. "Bridges - build - burn"
9. "Ghost echoes"
10. "Disconnect from desire"
11. "In a very large room, very quietly"

"The term "oblique strategies" was coined jointly by British musician Brian Eno and German-born British visual artist Peter Schmidt to describe a series of printed cards they developed throughout the 1970's. The cards had their origins in sets of uncannily similar working principles that both artists had established independently, and featured aphorisms intended as a means of triggering inspiration or providing useful stimulus during the creative process, particularly when encountering difficulties of fatigue or time constraint. As Eno and Schmidt wrote in their introduction to the first edition in 1975:

*They can be used as a pack (a set of possibilities being continuously reviewed in the mind) or by drawing a single card from the shuffled pack when a dilemma occurs in a working situation. In this case, the card is trusted even if its appropriateness is quite unclear. They are not final, as new ideas will present themselves, and others will become self-evident.*

I chose eleven of Eno and Schmidt's strategies, ordering them in a way that revealed to me a logic and potential inter-relatedness within a hitherto disparate set of single ideas I had assembled for solo cello, each of them in turn a reflection upon the commission's initial purpose of creating a test piece for the 2014 Emanuel Feuermann cello competition.

It's my hope then that the resultant composition may provide not only an interesting test of the competitors' talents but also offer the interpreter an opportunity to reflect upon the delights and pitfalls of creativity as he or she comes to terms with the various musical and technical challenges to be found within these ten minutes of music for solo cello."

#### **'cello playing ~ as meteorology // Liza Lim (2021 world premiere)**

"This work began with a conversation in a café with the 'cellist James Morley centred particularly on his relationship with the 'cello he plays, the 'Ex-Robert Barrett' made in 2004 by Australian luthier Rainer Beilharz on loan from Professor Mitra Guha in memory of her late husband. James mentioned the 'cello had lain unplayed for some ten years before he got it and came with a 'closed' sound. In the process of working with and playing the 'cello, it has gradually 'opened' and grown in vibrancy.

There is an animacy to instruments that all musicians commune with.

The act of playing the cello involves incredibly complex co-ordinations across human and beyond-human capacities. It is a meeting between two similarly-sized bodies, each with appendages or prostheses for touching, stroking and reaching towards the other.

This work is about expanding our thresholds for sensing the vibrancy of things and for sensing the ways in which the liveliness of the body unfolds the world in every inhalation and exhalation. In this work, patterns of respiration guide the performer in weaving an appearing and disappearing path together with horsehair, wooden or carbon-fibre sticks, metal strings and the great curving terrains of the 'cello body. Sounds and silences, voicings and breaths are traces of this 'wayfaring through a weather world'.

This thinking is indebted to the writing and ideas of eco-anthropologist Tim Ingold, and of philosopher-theorists Jane Bennett and François Julien, as well as others!"