



**Recital of South African Works
for Violoncello and Piano**

Anmari van der Westhuizen, *cello*

Ahra Oh, *piano*

Tuesday, May 21 at 12:30 pm

László Z. Bitó '60 Conservatory Building

Program

Mamela Mamela Mamela for cello solo (2023)

Lise Morrison (b. 1991)

Sonata per violoncello e pianoforte (2013)

Hendrik Hofmeyr (b. 1957)

- I. Fluido
- II. Ciaccona Canonica
- III. Quasi danza Africana

Ughubu for cello solo (1996)

Hans Huyssen (b. 1964)

Origin “Woke up this morning.....” for cello solo

Matthijs van Dijk (b. 1983)

Anmari van der Westhuizen, Associate Professor and Head of the renowned Odeion String Quartet at the University of the Free State is a cum laude graduate of the University of Stellenbosch, of the “Mozarteum” in Salzburg, of the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne under the tutelage of Professor Maria Kliegel and also of the University of Pretoria, from where she graduated with a PhD in Music Performance with full academic colours for her thesis on solo violoncello music.

Anmari has had extensive chamber music training with members of many famous string quartets, such as the Alban Berg String Quartet, the Amadeus String Quartet, the Borodin String Quartet, the Brodsky String Quartet and the Hagen String Quartet. She also received chamber music training from Hatto Beyerle, Györgi Kurtág and in Historic Performance Practise from Professor Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

She is the winner of many prestigious competitions in South Africa, is conductor of the OSM Camerata and Odeion Sinfonia. Anmari has performed as soloist and chamber musician in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Faroe Islands, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Poland, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the USA, Zambia and Zimbabwe. She was a member of the Koehne String Quartet Wien, Music-on-Line and the Wiener Streichorchester during her eight years of living in Vienna.

She has been recognised for her remarkable contribution towards arts and culture in South Africa and has performed many premieres of cello works by both Austrian and South African composers. During 2019, Anmari was invited to perform at the prestigious International Trio festival at the Château de Coppet in Geneva with renowned international artists, Sarah Rumer (flutist) from Switzerland and Anaïs Crestin (pianist) from France. Anmari has made several CD recordings of which two are solo CD albums with Ilse Schumann. Anmari is invited to play two solo contemporary cello concerts in Vienna and at the Mozarteum in Salzburg in October 2024.

Ahra Oh was born in Seoul, South Korea, and started playing piano at age 5. She has performed at MusicA Braine l’Alleud and Orford Music Academy and venues including Lincoln Center and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York, Verrucano Mels in Switzerland, Harvard Musical Association in Boston, Youngsan Art Hall and Youngsan Grace Hall, and Ewon Arts Cultural Center in Korea. She has performed as a soloist with orchestras including Neues Zurcher Orchestra, Satu Mare State Philharmonic Orchestra, and Hungarian National Radio Symphony Orchestra as well as with Boston University’s Symphony Orchestra.

Ahra has received awards from numerous piano competitions, including East Coast International Music Competition, The Golden Key International Piano Competition, AFAF (American Fine Arts Festival) International Piano Competition, American Protege International Competition, and The Junior Korea Times Music Competition. Dr. Oh received a bachelor’s degree in piano performance at Sookmyung Women’s University where she studied with pianist Jung Ae Sohn.

She came to the United States to pursue a master’s degree and performance diploma at Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, where she studied with Alexander Shtarkman. She moved to Boston and received a doctorate degree from Boston University under the tutelage of Gila Goldstein. As a student of Eri Nakamura, she earned a Master’s degree in collaborative piano with a graduate fellowship at Longy School of Music of Bard College.

Program Notes

by **Anmari van der Westhuizen**

1. Mamela Mamela Mamela for cello solo (2023) Lise Morrison (1991-)

Mamela translates to “listen” in isiXhosa, one of the official languages of South Africa. Portraying speech into music interested me, and the rhythm of the word ‘Mamela’ ended up the gentle opening of the piece.

The directive to ‘listen’ is intended to invite the audience closer : “listen, come close, I have something to tell you”. A tendency to interrupt, digress and repeat formed a structure for the piece -some sounds, some silences.

Mamela Mamela Mamela is based on some small tributes, some small recollections and some other reflections and reiterations - from folk melodies to David Bowie.

Xhosa traditional artwork, often beaded or on textile, communicates with a variety of patterns and colours that symbolise a significant meaning, for instance defiance or solitude. I like to think of compositions as being weaved with communication and meaning in a similar way.

Originally composed for violin in 2017, the version for cello was made especially for Prof Anmari van der Westhuizen.



2. Sonata per violoncello e pianoforte (2013)

Hendrik Hofmeyr (1957-)

- a) Fluido- Appassionato
- b) Ciaccona Canonica: Grave
- c) Quasi danza Africana- Cantando

Hofmeyr's Sonata for Cello and Piano is in three movements. The first movement, in free sonata form, opens with a glistening piano texture which serves as background to the floating first theme with which the cello enters after two bars. A canonic dialogue between the instruments gradually spirals downwards, leading to a cello cadenza, which serves as introduction to the dark second theme (Appassionato). Both themes open with a falling and rising open fifth, which forms an important referential element in both the outer movements. Further canonic dialogue between the instruments is followed by the closing theme, a lyrical idea that is announced in the high register of the cello. The development section consists mainly of contrapuntal combinations of the first two themes, heard in alternation with imitative development of the closing theme. A brief cello cadenza leads to the recapitulation, in which the first two themes are now announced by the piano. The closing theme initiates the coda, but the movement ends with references to the second theme.

The second movement, entitled Ciaccona canonica, consists of a set of variations on a harmonic pattern. The theme is announced by the solo cello, after which it is taken over by the piano, against a new melody on the cello. In each new variation, the cello's melody from the preceding variation is taken over by the piano, resulting in a canonic structure. This procedure is continued until the central seventh variation, after which it is reversed, with the cello now taking over the piano's melody in each successive variation. The movement, which as a result forms a kind of palindrome, ends again with the original theme on the solo cello.

The ternary third movement opens with a lively dance-like idea (Quasi danza africana) in irregular metre. The main theme is based on the harmonic use of open fifths, which are also used melodically together with other elements from the first movement. The lyrical middle section (Cantando), which recalls the closing theme of the first movement, leads via a cello cadenza to the varied reprise of the first section. In the coda, the transformed theme of the middle section is combined with the dance-like idea. The movement ends with a brief reference to a melodic motif shared by the two themes.

3. Ugubhu for cello solo (1996)

Hans Huyssen (1964-)

Short and energetic character piece alluding to the Ugubhu gourd-bow as it is employed in indigenous isiZulu music; homage to the musical bow as arguably the most ancient ancestors of all string instruments; starts off with col legno imitations of idiomatic Ugubhu playing but subsequently exploits the full range of the cello as a representative of the present-day descendants of the musical bow; stays clear of conventional cello lyricisms and instead requires articulate and rhythmically precise playing, as motivic figures and groupings of elementary pulses keep on changing quickly throughout the piece.



4. Origin “Woke up this morning.....” for cello solo (1983-)

Matthijs van Dijk

Origin (“Woke Up This Morning...”)

“Origin” was written as a small tribute to the various musicians that were very influential to me as a teenager and music student, and those that inspired me to write my own music later on. It blends together a sound world of rock and blues (ala Jimi Hendrix/Led Zeppelin), heavy metal (ala System Of A Down), Shostakovich, and the electronic dance music gestures I was using a lot of at the time (something I delved into due to artists like Radiohead and Prodigy). While the subtitle “Woke Up This Morning” is very much a blues inspired line, I’ve always thought of it as a slight nod to my other musical hero, Mahler, as a slight variation to his song (and the theme from his 1st symphony) “Ging heut’ Morgen ueber’s Feld”.