**Matthew Barley - Program note - by Gabriel Prokofiev**

Matthew Barley first appeared on my own musical radar due to his reputation as the well-established classical cellist, who was also a very experienced specialist in combining Cello with electronics. This isn’t surprising since from very early in his career he has been dedicated to exploring the Cello’s relationship with electronics, performing most of the repertoire, and commissioning a decent percentage of it too. Despite this interest in technology his playing is so full of humanity, his phrasing beautifully elegant, and his lines naturally lyrical; he has a distinctively gentle touch. Yet he also loves to explore the outer limits of the instrument and is a master at extended techniques.

Over about three decades of performing most of the repertoire for Cello and Electronics, Matthew realised that there wasn’t actually ‘go-to’ album for the medium, and that many works do not yet exist in properly recorded versions, and so this project was born.

The album opens in a huge open space, looking out to a rich musical landscape of ethereal images and unidentified objects in Jan Bang’s *Implanted Memories*, before moving into a more intimate mood with John Metcalf's *Constant Filter*. The electronic pulse continues with Anna Meredith’s *Moonmoons*, in an exploration of the concept of ‘worlds within worlds’ (the moons of moons).

In Joby Talbot’s *Motion Detector*, roles are reversed: a rhythmic pulse now taken by the cello, the drone in the electronics, before returning to Yan Bang’s cosmic open space in Matthew’s beautifully nuanced pizzicato improvisations for *Replica*

For Anna Meredith’s *Blackfriars*, we enter a yearning, romantic mood – Matthew multitracks his cello to create a choir of warm yet at times crunchy sustained chords, which are underpinned by a ticking clock. For the central track of this album, we step back in time to 1984, for one of the seminal works for solo cello (or trumpet) and electronics, by Jonathan Harvey.

Contemporary synthesisers return in Anna Meredith’s *Honeyed Words*, before the third episode of Jan Bang’s ‘Noticing Things’ – a spacious sound-world flooded with images of a ghostly post-apocalyptic warehouse corridor.

With Oded Ben Tal’s *Present, Perfect*, Matthew’s improvising partner is in the form of Artificial Intelligence, which responds in real-time to his playing, before Karen Tanaka’s *The Song of Songs* takes us right back into ancient times with a direct response to Solomon’s love poem of the same name.

In *Falling* we hear the more lyrical voice of Joby Talbot, with a quasi-baroque solo cello opening which glides across the full range of the instrument.

The album closes with a gentle, sad yet hopeful lament by Michael Gordon – *Light is Calling* – composed in the days and months after September 11, 2001.