

## Australian composer wins 'Nobel Prize' of Classical Music

### ANAM Celebrates Brett Dean's Historic Win

The Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) congratulates Artistic Director Brett Dean on his historic win of the 2009 Grawemeyer (pronounced GRAV-mayer) Award for his violin concerto, entitled *The Lost Art of Letter Writing*.

The annual award, often described as 'the Nobel Prize of classical music', was established in 1984 by the University of Louisville in the United States, and is the world's most prestigious prize for composition. With the announcement in the US at 2pm EST today, Brett Dean becomes the first Australian to win this coveted prize, which brings with it prize money of US\$200,000. Previous winners of the prize have included John Adams, Pierre Boulez, Witold Lutoslawski, György Ligeti, Kristoff Penderecki, Tan Dun and Thomas Ades.

"The recognition that this award brings places Brett Dean in company with the greatest composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries", said Nick Bailey, ANAM's Artistic Manager. "Australia has been fortunate that a musician of such towering international renown has chosen to base himself at ANAM and contribute so powerfully to the training of the country's finest young musicians".

The music of *The Lost Art of Letter Writing* follows a poetical narrative based around four famous 19<sup>th</sup> century letters including in the final movement Ned Kelly's Jerilderie Letter. "It's a wonderful solo vehicle that also contains terrific writing for orchestra," said Prof. Marc Satterwhite from University of Louisville who directs the award.

Nick Bailey added "Brett is the perfect role model for young musicians. He is an artist whose music making is passionately engaged with the community, and powerfully illuminates contemporary lived experience. His vigorous public stand over the past five weeks against the Commonwealth Government's unceremonious closure of ANAM has provided a powerful example to musicians everywhere – but most vitally to our talented young students - as to how an artistic life should be lived in Australia in the first decades."

*The Lost Art of Letter Writing* was commissioned by the Cologne Philharmonie and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra for violinist Frank Peter Zimmermann. Brett Dean conducted the world premiere with Frank Peter Zimmermann and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in 2007.

Brett Dean (b.1961) studied viola in Brisbane, and joined the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra at the age of 22. After 15 years in Berlin he returned to Australia to concentrate on composition and other activities, and in 2006 was appointed Artistic Director of ANAM.

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- For information, contact Nick Bailey – 0422 211 909
  - Brett Dean will be in Canberra on Tuesday 2 December and will be available for interviews.