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**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY
TO LAUNCH BERKELEY RADICAL INCLUSION SEASON-LONG THEMATIC
STRAND WITH WORLD PREMIERE OF
LAYLA AND MAJNUN BY MARK MORRIS
Major Full-Length Work Co-Commissioned by Cal Performances
Performed by MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP
Music Performed by the SILK ROAD ENSEMBLE
Music Arranged by ALIM QASIMOV, JOHNNY GANDELSMAN, COLIN JACOBSEN
Sets and Costumes by HOWARD HODGKIN, Lighting by JAMES F. INGALLS
September 30 – October 2, 2016**

**2016/17 SEASON-LONG THEMATIC INCLUSION STRAND ALSO TO FEATURE
KRONOS QUARTET – December 3, 2016
Contemporary Serbian and Armenian Compositions
BLACK ARM BAND – February 12, 2017
Musical Theater Work *DIRTSONG* Addresses Aboriginal Struggle
THE NILE PROJECT – February 18, 2017
Musical Communities Joined by the Shared Resource of Water**

**Collaborative UC Berkeley campus and community events: Artist Talks, Film Series at
BAMPFA, SchoolTime Performances, Teacher Workshops, Digital Documentation, and
Other Engagement for All Ages to Accompany Presentations**

Berkeley, CA, August 12, 2016 — Cal Performances begins the second season of its Berkeley Radical initiative by addressing one of the most pressing and immediate issues in contemporary society: *Inclusion*. A thematic strand that informs performances and activities spanning multiple

genres from September 2016 – February 2017, *Inclusion* seeks to explore how universal themes can arise from diverse, culturally specific artists or ensembles, and how artists use the idea of inclusion in their creative process. Regardless of cultural backgrounds, audiences can see themselves in such works because the artists aim intentionally for inclusion.

To launch the *Inclusion* engagement strand, and to open the 2016/17 season, September 30 – October 2, Cal Performances presents the world premiere of *Layla and Majnun*, a major new evening-length work by choreographer **Mark Morris**. The sets and costumes for *Layla and Majnun* were created by British artist **Sir Howard Hodgkin**, the lighting was designed by **James F. Ingalls**, and the music will be performed by the **Silk Road Ensemble** with Azerbaijan’s preeminent *mugham* vocalists **Alim Qasimov**, named “one of the greatest singers alive” by the *New York Times*, and his daughter **Fargana Qasimova**. *Layla and Majnun* is a classic story of forbidden love most notably expressed by the great Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi. Cal Performances is proud to serve as the lead commissioner for *Layla and Majnun*, and as Mark Morris Dance Group’s longtime West Coast home—this production marks the company’s 13th world premiere presentation at Cal Performances.

Three other *Inclusion* programs this season, spanning oceans and genres, tell stories about diverse worlds through the lenses of distinct artistic disciplines. On December 3, 2016, **Kronos Quartet** performs commissioned works, including those by composers from its *Fifty for the Future* commissioning project, for which Cal Performances is a Legacy Partner. On February 12, 2017, Australia’s **Black Arm Band** places the Aboriginal struggle at the center of its musical theater work, *Dirtsong*. Returning to Cal Performances on February 18, 2017, **The Nile Project** draws on a rich mix of musical communities gathered around a shared, precious resource: water.

“With increasingly apparent conflict in a volatile contemporary world, Cal Performances, through our Berkeley Radical initiative, seeks to explore the crucial idea of Inclusion,” commented executive and artistic director Matías Tarnopolsky. “In the arts, no one is a stranger, no one is a foreigner. We want to embrace diversity, not just in programming choices, but also in deeper conversations about an individual work, and importantly about the relationships between works that emanate from the rich tapestry of cultures represented on our stages in this powerful programming strand. Our audiences have the opportunity to see four fascinating performances, to actively

conceive of and build their own bridges between cultures, and, I hope, especially for younger people, to discover new points of entry into the performing arts — we believe that the shared experience of being in a concert hall at a performance is among the most democratizing acts in our society.”

Each Berkeley Radical strand of artistic exploration in Cal Performances’ 2016/17 season—*Inclusion*, *Innovation*, and *Immersion*—encourages audiences to reimagine conventional ideas of the performing arts. Performances are complemented with related academic symposia, public programs, education programs, and community interactions that connect Cal Performances with the singular learning environment of the University of California, Berkeley. Under the banner of Berkeley Radical, artists, curators, UC Berkeley faculty, and other noted figures contribute to imaginative, immersive programs that enhance the commissioning, creation, and presentation by Cal Performances.

Layla and Majnun

Layla and Majnun is a classic Arabian love story, widely adapted throughout the Middle East in Muslim, Sufi, Hindu, and secular contexts, and most closely associated with the Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi. Layla and Qays (called Majnun, which means “possessed”), are in love from childhood but are not permitted to unite. Layla is married off to another, and Majnun becomes a hermit, devoting himself to writing verses about his profound love of Layla. Although the lovers attempt to meet, they die without ever realizing a relationship. In 1908, *Layla and Majnun* became the subject of the first Middle Eastern opera, written by Azerbaijani composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli (1885–1948.) Hajibeyli combined symphonic and choral sections with *mugham*, a traditional Central Asian style of improvised singing, and the work has since become a cornerstone of Azerbaijani culture.

Morris’ new full-length work features 16 dancers in a chamber version of Hajibeyli’s opera, arranged by Alim Qasimov, Johnny Gandelsman, and Colin Jacobson for the Silk Road Ensemble in 2008. *The Los Angeles Times* praised Morris’ last premiere at Cal Performances, *Acis and Galatea* (2014), for its deep connection with the musical score: “every movement looks new because it is newly made to meet the music... Morris’ patterns have the power to make you hear the music the way he wants you to, and that is never predictable.”

The new production brings together leading artists in contemporary and traditional concert music, visual art, and dance in the first major retelling of the *Layla and Majnun* story in the West.

Alim Qasimov, named a Living National Treasure of Azerbaijan for his preservation of the art of *mugham* vocal tradition, performs with his daughter and protégée, **Fargana Qasimova**. They are joined by musicians of the acclaimed **Silk Road Ensemble** on traditional Asian instruments (*kamancheh*, *tar*, *shakuhachi*, *pipa*), Western strings (violins, viola, cello, contrabass), and percussion. Esteemed British painter **Howard Hodgkin**, also a collector of antique Mughal miniature paintings, will design the production. Musicians and dancers will share the stage in front of a breathtaking backdrop, Hodgkin's painting *Love and Death*.

Layla and Majnun is a Mark Morris Dance Group/Cal Performances, UC Berkeley production in association with Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Chicago, Illinois; Hopkins Center for the Arts, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.; Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois; Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York, New York; Meany Center for the Performing Arts, Seattle, Washington; Sadler's Wells, London, England; and University Musical Society of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Cal Performances' *Layla and Majnun* campus and community events

A rich selection of related activities enhances the performances of *Layla and Majnun*, including a public interview with Mark Morris (September 26), a community dance class with Mark Morris Dance Group members (September 30), and an in-depth examination of the story of *Layla and Majnun*, including a reenactment by Golden Thread Productions, and artist and roundtable discussions (October 1). And in collaboration with the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), Morris will host a specially curated series of films from Iran and the former Soviet Union designed to echo the theme of unrequited love found in the centuries-old tale (September 24 – October 1.)

About Mark Morris

Mark Morris has been hailed as the “the most prodigiously gifted choreographer of the post-Balanchine era” (*Time*). In addition to creating close to 150 works for his dance group, he conducts orchestras, directs opera, and choreographs for ballet companies around the world. Morris is a Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation and has received 11 honorary doctorates to date, as well as several awards, including the Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime

Achievement, the Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award for the Elevation of Music in Society, the Benjamin Franklin Laureate Prize for Creativity, and this year, the Doris Duke Artist Award. He was inducted into the Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Whitney Hall of Fame at the National Museum of Dance in Sarasota Springs, New York, in 2015. Morris has been a close collaborator of Cal Performances for more than two decades, and considers Berkeley his West Coast home. In recognition of this significant long-term collaborative relationship, Morris received the Cal Performances Award of Distinction in the Performing Arts in 2012.

About the Silk Road Ensemble

The Silk Road Ensemble has been called “vibrant and virtuosic” by the *Wall Street Journal*, “one of the 21st century’s great ensembles” by the *Vancouver Sun*, and a “roving musical laboratory without walls” by the *Boston Globe*. Made up of performers and composers from more than 20 countries, the Silk Road Ensemble was founded by artistic director Yo-Yo Ma in 2000. Since then, the group has been embraced by audiences and critics in more than 30 countries throughout Asia, Europe, and North America, and been lauded for virtuosic performances promoting cultural understanding and artistic innovation. The Silk Road Ensemble has recorded six albums. *The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble*, a documentary by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Morgan Neville, premiered in US movie theaters this summer. Silk Road Ensemble musicians performing in *Layla and Majnun* will be Shawn Conley, contrabass; Nicholas Cords, viola; Johnny Gandelsman, violin; Rauf Islamov, *kamancheh*; Colin Jacobsen, violin; Wu Man, *pipa*; Karen Ouzounian, cello; Shane Shanahan, percussion; Kojiro Umezaki, *shakuhachi*; and Zaki Valiyev, *tar*. Yo-Yo Ma will not perform in *Layla and Majnun*.

About Cal Performances

Cal Performances is the performing arts presenter and producer of the University of California, Berkeley, fulfilling its mission by presenting, producing, and commissioning renowned and emerging artists in music, dance, and theater. Cal Performances reaches over 150,000 people annually through concerts as well as campus and community events including talks, symposia, lecture demonstrations, and academic courses based on Cal Performances’ season. Under the leadership of Matías Tarnopolsky, the organization launched Berkeley Radical (Research and Development Initiative in Creativity Arts and Learning) to cultivate the artistic literacy of future audiences and connect some

of the most innovative artists in the world with the intellectual capital of UC Berkeley. For details about the many public events offered to enhance the experience of Cal Performances' 2016/17 season, please visit calperformances.org/public-programs.

Ticket Information

Tickets for Mark Morris Dance Group with the Silk Road Ensemble: *Layla and Majnun*, Friday–Saturday, September 30 – October 1, at 8pm; and Sunday, October 2 at 3pm, in Zellerbach Hall range from \$36–\$126 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For information about discounts, visit calperformances.org/discounts.

Tickets to *Layla and Majnun* campus and community events range from free to \$12 (see details in the calendar section below).

Cal Performances' presentation of *Layla and Majnun* is made possible, in part, through the Mark Morris Dance Group's New Works Fund with support from the Friends of Mark Morris Dance Group, the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, the Howard Gilman Foundation, Ellsworth Kelly Foundation, Elizabeth Liebman, a special grant from The Henry Luce Foundation, PARC Foundation, Poss Family Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Trust for Mutual Understanding. Funding has also been provided by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS

Friday, September 30, 8pm

Zellerbach Hall

Saturday, October 1, 8pm

Bancroft Way at Dana Street, UC Berkeley

Sunday, October 2, 3pm

Berkeley Radical

Layla and Majnun (World Premiere, Cal Performances co-commission)

Mark Morris Dance Group

Silk Road Ensemble

Alim Qasimov, *mugham* vocals (Majnun)

Fargana Qasimova, *mugham* vocals (Layla)

Mark Morris, choreography and direction

Howard Hodgkin, scenic and costume design

James F. Ingalls, lighting design

Uzeyir Hajibeyli, music; arranged by Alim Qasimov, Johnny Gandelsman, Colin Jacobsen

Program: Mark Morris' lyrical choreography, the emotive voices of Azerbaijan's Alim Qasimov and Fargana Qasimova, the vibrant musicality of the Silk Road Ensemble, and the striking visual palette of British painter Howard Hodgkin combine in this world premiere performance. The story of the tragic love between Layla and Majnun originated in 7th-century Arabia, and later was the foundation for the first opera of the Muslim world. Mark Morris' new work expresses themes of love, tragedy, and social justice in a juxtaposition of the traditional and the new.

Berkeley Radical: These performances are part of Cal Performances' Berkeley Radical *Inclusion* thematic programming strand, embracing the idea that in the world of the arts, no person, no group, no art form is excluded. More information at calperformances.org/berkeley-radical-inclusion.

Tickets: Tickets range from \$36–\$126 (prices subject to change).

#

Residency Activities

September 24–October 1

BAMPFA Barbro Osher Theater

Cinema Mon Amour: Mark Morris

2155 Center Street, Berkeley

The Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive screen four classics of world cinema that resonate with the central theme of *Layla and Majnun*, unrequited love. All films selected and presented by choreographer Mark Morris.

Saturday, September 24, 5:30pm, *Through the Olive Trees*

Abbas Kiarostami (Iran, 1994) Imported Print

Introduction by Mark Morris

Through the Olive Trees is about a film crew from Tehran shooting in an earthquake-ravaged village using the local inhabitants as actors.

Sunday, September 25, 4pm, *The Wishing Tree*

Tengiz Abuladze (USSR, 1977) 35mm Archival Print

Introduction by Mark Morris

The textures of folk legend and striking visual allegory permeate *The Wishing Tree*, an episodic pastorelle set in a pre-revolutionary Georgian village and spanning four seasons in the lives of various village characters.

Friday, September 30, 4pm, *Ashik Kerib*

Sergei Paradjanov (USSR, 1988)

Introduction by Mark Morris

This is a true trans-Caucasus venture, produced by a Georgian studio and directed by an ethnic Armenian who selected Azerbaijani as the language of his film—simply because he loved the sound of it.

Saturday, October 1, 5:45pm, *Eliso* (silent film with live piano accompaniment)

Nikoloz Shengelaia (USSR, 1928) New 35mm Print

Introduction by Mark Morris

Live music featuring Judith Rosenberg on piano

This historical epic evokes the tragic fate of a nation pacified in 1864 by the Tsarist Russian Empire.

Tickets: \$12 general admission; \$7 for BAMPFA members, UC Berkeley students; \$8 for UC Berkeley faculty, staff, retirees, non-UC Berkeley students, 65+, 18 & under, disabled persons; free for Cal Student Film Pass holders. \$2 discount off general admission tickets for any patrons holding tickets to *Layla and Majnun*. Available at bampfa.org and in person at the BAMPFA admissions desk, Wednesday, Thursday, Sunday, 11am–7pm, and Friday and Saturday, 11am–9pm.

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Monday, September 26, 6pm
Berkeley Forum Interviews Mark Morris

Moffitt Library, room MM106

The UC Berkeley student-run Berkeley Forum hosts an interview with choreographer Mark Morris.

Tickets: Free and open to the public. Visit [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com) to reserve seats online.

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Saturday, October 1, 11am–12:30pm

Bancroft Studio

Dance with MMDG: A Community Dance Class with the Mark Morris Dance Group

Company members teach excerpts from *Layla and Majnun*.

Tickets: Registration opens September 1, 2016. Tickets are \$5, pre-registration required at calperformances.org.

#

Saturday, October 1, 2–5pm

BAMPFA Barbro Osher Theater

***Layla and Majnun* Symposium**

2155 Center Street, Berkeley

This free afternoon symposium provides valuable context through which to experience Mark Morris' *Layla and Majnun*, the first major event of Cal Performances' Berkeley Radical 2016/17 season-long *Inclusion* theme. Presented in association with the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and the UC Berkeley Silk Road Initiative.

2–2:45pm *Layla and Majnun*

Story enactment in Persian and English by Golden Thread Productions accompanied by images from Arabic, Persian, and Turkic sources, curated by Sanjot Mehendale, lead scholar of the Silk Road Initiative, UC Berkeley.

2:45–4pm Mutual Understanding: Making Art Together Across Cultures

Dancers from the Mark Morris Dance Group and musicians from the Silk Road Ensemble share their cross-cultural experiences working together on *Layla and Majnun*.

4–5pm *Layla and Majnun*, Universal Truths from a Story of Unrequited Love

Roundtable discussion on the universality and significance of the story of *Layla and Majnun* throughout many Middle Eastern and sub-continental cultures with Aida Huseynova, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, author of *Music of Azerbaijan: From Mugham to Opera*; Fateme Montazeri, doctoral student, UC Berkeley Department of Near Eastern Studies, whose master's thesis for the Graduate Theological Union was on the story of *Layla and Majnun* and its reception three centuries after its creation as attested by illustrations of a manuscript of the story; and Karen Barkey, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, Haas Distinguished Chair in Religious Diversity, UC Berkeley Department of Sociology.

Tickets: Free and open to the public.