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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 27, 2019
[Press Room](#)



The Silkroad Ensemble, from left to right: Cristina Pato, Johnny Gandelsman, Nicholas Cords, Sandeep Das, Wu Man, Joseph Gramley, Jeffrey Beecher, Kojiro Umezaki, and Shane Shanahan.
Images of the Silkroad Ensemble are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
THE SILKROAD ENSEMBLE IN
HEROES TAKE THEIR STANDS
A MULTIMEDIA, EVENING-LENGTH WORK IN FIVE PARTS
CO-COMMISSIONED BY CAL PERFORMANCES
FRIDAY, MAY 3 IN ZELLERBACH HALL**

A panel conversation about *Heroes Take Their Stands* takes place the afternoon of the performance, as part of UC Berkeley's Tang Center for Silk Road Studies' annual conference

Berkeley, March 27, 2019 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley welcomes the return of the **Silkroad Ensemble** in a performance of *Heroes Take Their Stands*, an ambitious multimedia project

co-commissioned by Cal Performances, on Friday, May 3 at 8pm in Zellerbach Hall. *Heroes Take Their Stands* was conceived by folklorist and sociologist **Ahmad Sadri** and expresses the magnitude of being fearlessly human in the face of incompatible obligations. For it, five composers and as many collaborators from diverse traditions have created new works that explore the stories of five heroic figures across time and cultures, with subjects ranging from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to Elektra from Greek mythology, to Arjuna from the Bhagavad Gita of the Hindu epic Mahabharata, to Dou E's fable from the Yuan Dynasty, to the Persian epic of Siavosh. Each of the five works were developed as part of a conversation between composer and collaborator, resulting in a multi-part, theatrical performance that brings together more than one dozen live instrumentalists with dance, video, animation, and pre-recorded music. The artistic creators include **Pauchi Sasaki** and **Nomi Sasaki**; **Kaoru Watanabe** and **Wu Man**; **Colin Jacobsen** and **Aparna Ramaswamy**; **Jason Moran** and **Lucy Raven**; and **Kayhan Kalhor** and **Hamid Rahmanian**.

Heroes creator Ahmad Sadri said, "Human societies have used folklore and tradition as means of sharing, reinforcing, and perpetuating values, and conveying deeply held moral and ethical norms. The protagonists we encounter in this suite of five performances were not born heroes. None of them are superior to humankind, nor are they deities or superheroes. They are normal individuals who choose to act or react in ways that spare others' lives or right profound injustices—and their acts offer enduring inspiration for us all. The decisions they make at these crucial moments in their lives—to do the right thing, to do the just thing, regardless of the personal consequences—is what makes them heroes. Their examples demonstrate that each of us is born with a capacity for heroism—and that it is up to each of us to choose to act, to take our stand."

For *Elektra*, composer Pauchi Sasaki and visual artists Nomi Sasaki (co-direction, script, art design, and Chinese black ink animation), **Juan Carlos Yanaura** (co-direction, animation, and post production), and **Omar Lavalle** (3D scanning and sculpture design), combine augmented reality with live performances on *gaita*, *tabla*, and *uchima daiko*, and other elements. Composer and multi-instrumentalist Kaoru Watanabe and creative director and pipa player Wu Man co-conceived of *June Snow*—a reimagining of Guan Hanqing's play *The Injustice to Dou E* (also known as *Snow in Midsummer*). Violinist and composer Colin Jacobsen and Bharatanatyam dancer/choreographer Aparna Ramaswamy of Ragamala Dance Company developed a dialogue between music and dance for *Arjuna's Revelation*. Jazz pianist and composer Jason Moran worked with videographer Lucy Raven for *Moderato 400*, inspired by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s address to Holt Street Baptist

Church in 1955. For *The Prince of Sorrows*, composer and *kemancheh* player Kayhan Kalhor and visual artist Hamid Rahmanian use recorded and live music along with animation, illustration, and calligraphy to tell the story of Siavosh from Ferdowsi's "Book of Kings" (*The Shahnameh*)—the epic poem of Persia.

Founded in 1998 by cellist Yo-Yo Ma, Silkroad comprises musicians and composers from more than 20 countries and draws on a rich tapestry of traditions to create encounters between the foreign and the familiar that reflect contemporary identities. The Silkroad Ensemble has performed in more than 100 cities in over 30 countries and recorded seven albums; its 2016 release, *Sing Me Home*, won the Grammy award for Best World Music Album. The Silkroad Ensemble artists performing *Heroes Take Their Stands* in Zellerbach Hall on May 3 are **Jeffrey Beecher**, double bass; **Nicholas Cords**, viola; **Sandeep Das**, *tabla*; **Haruka Fujii** and **Shane Shanahan**, percussion; **Colin Jacobsen** and **Johnny Gandelsman**, violin; **Kayhan Kalhor**, *kemancheh*; **Karen Ouzounian**, cello; **Cristina Pato**, Galician bagpipes and piano; **Aparna Ramaswamy**, Bharatanatyam dancer; **Kojiro Umezaki**, *shakuhachi*; **Kaoru Watanabe**, *shinobue*, *nobkan flutes*, *taiko*, and *narimono*; **Wu Man**, *pipa*; and **Wu Tong**, *sheng*.

In conjunction with the performance, UC Berkeley's P.Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for Silk Road Studies presents a panel conversation about *Heroes Take Their Stands* on Friday, May 3 at 5pm in the Morrison Room in Doe Library, on the UC Berkeley campus. The presentation features the project's creator, Ahmad Sadri, and is part of the Tang Center's annual Silk Road Conference, which focuses on Indo-Iranian and Sino-Iranian encounters in Central Asia. Participation is free and open to the public.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *The Silkroad Ensemble: Heroes Take Their Stands* on Friday, May 3 at 8pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$30–\$68 (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 more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, May 3, 8pm

Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

New Music

The Silkroad Ensemble

Heroes Take Their Stands (Cal Performances Co-commission)

Program:

Pauchi Sasaki and Nomi Sasaki/*Elektra* [The Oresteia, 5th century BCE]

Kaoru Watanabe and Wu Man/*June Snow* [The stand of Dou E, 13th century]

Colin Jacobsen and Aparna Ramaswamy/*Arjuna's Revelation* [The Bhagavad Gita, 2nd century BCE]

Jason Moran and Lucy Raven/*Moderato 400* [Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the Holt Street Baptist Church, 1955]

Kayhan Kalhor and Hamid Rahmanian/*The Prince of Sorrows* [The stand of Siavosh from The Shahnameh, 10th century]

The Silkroad Ensemble returns to Cal Performances with *Heroes Take Their Stands*, an ambitious multimedia performance that conveys the magnitude of being fearlessly human in the face of incompatible obligations. For the project, conceived by folklorist and sociologist **Ahmad Sadri** and co-commissioned by Cal Performances, five composers, and as many collaborators from diverse traditions, have created new works that explore the stories of five heroic figures across time and cultures, with subjects ranging from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to Elektra from Greek mythology, to Arjuna from the Hindu Bhagavad Gita, to Dou E's fable from the Yuan Dynasty, to the Persian epic of Siavosh.

Tickets: \$30–\$68 (prices subject to change)

Related Event:

Panel Conversation

Heroes Take Their Stands, Commentary

Morrison Room in Doe Library, UC Berkeley campus

Friday, May 3, 5:15pm

In conjunction with the performance, the UC Berkeley Tang Center for Silk Road Studies presents a panel conversation with *Heroes Take Their Stands* creator Ahmad Sadri, and UC Berkeley scholars Soroor Ghanimati and Duncan MacRae as part of the Tang Center's annual Silk Road Conference. Participation is free and open to the public. More information can be found at <http://ieas.berkeley.edu/tcsrs/events.html>.