

# Program A

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Friday, March 16, 2007, 8pm  
Zellerbach Hall

## The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma

### PROGRAM A

#### *Silk Road Suite*

Kayhan Kalhor (b. 1963) Gallop of 1,000 Horses  
Dong-Won Kim (b. 1965) &  
Kojiro Umezaki (b. 1968) When the Wind Circles...  
Kim Once We Were...  
Romanian Traditional (arr. Ljova (b. 1978)) Doina Oltului (Song of the River Olt)

#### *Classical Music of Azerbaijan*

Traditional Mugham  
Fikret Amirov (1922–1985) Kor Arab  
Uzeyir Hagibeyov (1885–1948) Shikasta

### INTERMISSION

Kayhan Kalhor The Silent City\*

Osvaldo Golijov (b. 1960) Air to Air†  
Wah Habibi  
Aiinin Taqtiru  
Kwadulupe  
Tancas Serradas

\* The Silent City was made possible by a grant from the Fromm Music Foundation and was first performed at Harvard University in 2005. This arrangement was commissioned by the Carnegie Hall Corporation.

† Commissioned by the Carnegie Hall Corporation.

*Ford Motor Company is continuing as a Global Corporate Partner to the Silk Road Project as part of its longstanding tradition of arts education support.*

*This presentation is made possible, in part, by Nancy Livingston and Fred M. Levin, The Shenson Foundation; Bank of America; and the National Endowment for the Arts.*

*The Silk Road Project Cultural Exchange Initiative activities are assisted financially by the U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

*Cal Performances' 2006–2007 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*



## A View from the Silk Road

*“When we enlarge our view of the world, we deepen our understanding of our own lives. The Silk Road Project hopes to plant the seeds of new cultural growth, and to celebrate traditions and musical voices everywhere.”*

**I**N 25 YEARS OF PERFORMING in different parts of the world, I have become increasingly intrigued by the migration of ideas among communities. And in my musical journey, I have learned from a wealth of different musical voices. Now, I would like to invite you to join me in exploring the rich cultural traditions of the Silk Road, the historic trade route that connected the peoples and traditions of Asia with those of Europe.

Throughout my travels, I have thought about the cultures, religions and ideas that have been influential for centuries along these historic land and sea routes, and have wondered how these complex interconnections occurred. How did an eighth-century Japanese *biwa*, a pear-shaped stringed instrument, come to be decorated with Persian designs; how did such string instruments as the Arab *oud*, Chinese *erhu* and Indian *sarangi* come to influence both East and West?

We live in a world of increasing awareness and interdependence, and I believe that music can act as a magnet to draw people together. Music is an expressive art that can reach to the very core of one's identity. By listening to and learning from the voices of an authentic musical tradition, we become increasingly able to advocate for the worlds they represent.

Yo-Yo Ma  
*Artistic Director*  
The Silk Road Project

## A Message from the Executive Director of the Silk Road Project



*“Cultural exchanges like those that occurred thousands of years ago are at the very heart of why the Silk Road Project was established.”*

**I**T IS MY PLEASURE to introduce these Silk Road Project program notes to you. The Silk Road Project was founded to bring new ideas, talent and energy into the world of classical music, and to simultaneously nurture musical and artistic creativity, drawing on both ancient and modern civilizations along the Silk Road. Today we serve as a common resource for a number of artistic, cultural and educational programs—reflecting the heritages of the countries once connected by the ancient 4,000-mile network of trading routes that spanned three continents, from Europe to Asia.

Given the contemporary global, political and commercial environment post-September 11, 2001, the motivating concepts of multicultural learning, artistic exchanges and international collaborations that inspire the Silk Road Project are even more compelling today than they were at the project’s inception in 1998. By sharing music across divides we hope to enrich our understanding of each other and of the three and a half billion people who live along the Silk Road. We would like to express our deepest appreciation to our Global Corporate Partner, Ford Motor Company, for their ongoing support, and to our many generous and thoughtful supporters and individual sponsors.

Many of the Western performers in the Silk Road Ensemble say that their experience with Asian music has broadened them and continues to enhance all of their performances. The music-making includes improvisation and a “newfound freedom and spontaneity.” The Asian masters of ancient arts, instruments and vocal techniques note that while the differences in music are very clear, so are the similarities. As Yo-Yo Ma has remarked, “The musicians may come from many different places, but they all share a common interest in stretching their horizons.”

The Silk Road has had a mesmerizing effect on people throughout many centuries. Some have said that the music produced by Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble traverses “the timelessness of an ancient soundscape.” Although we may not be able to travel to the faraway places that were the birthplace of this compelling music, we hope that in some small way these performances will bring home to you some of the magic of this ancient trade journey.

Sincerely,  
Laura Fried  
CEO and Executive Director  
The Silk Road Project

# Program A Notes

The story of “The Silk Road” is a tale of one of the world’s oldest and most historically important trade routes and its influences on the culture of China, Central Asia and the West. Commonly thought of as a solitary artery, it was actually a complex network of numerous diverging tracks, spanning thousands of miles. Between the second century BCE and the 14th century, it served as the major route for transporting material goods and knowledge between Europe, the Near East, India and China—the four major centers of civilization at the time. Towns along the Silk Road were open to influences from all of those civilizations, so much so that long after many of the routes and towns passed into history, the Silk Road remains a metaphor for commercial as well as cultural exchange.

Both historic and symbolic elements are central to the work of the Silk Road Project, which was created to study the global circulation of culture, music and musical ideas. The repertoire of the Silk Road Ensemble includes traditional music (both in the oral tradition—passed down from generation to generation—and in melodies arranged by and for members of the ensemble) as well as newly commissioned works, many of which combine non-Western and Western instruments creating a unique genre that transcends traditional musical borders.

This evening’s concert begins with the *Silk Road Suite*, a collection of four compositions representing musical traditions of Iran, Korea and the Roma people. The first work is Kayhan Kalhor’s *Gallop of a Thousand Horses*. Kalhor, born in 1963 in Iran, is of Kurdish descent. He studied classical violin at age six, but found his musical voice in the Persian traditional instrument, the *kemancheh*, a bowed, spiked fiddle. He is not only considered a master of the *kemancheh*, but is also a passionate advocate for the musical traditions of Iran, teaching Persian classical music to conservatory-trained students in Teheran. Echoing Kalhor’s own fondness for horses, *Gallop of a Thousand Horses* draws on the folk melodies of the Turkmen people, who live in northeastern Iran, Turkmenistan and parts of several other nations. In the culture of the nomadic Turkmen

there is a deep connection to horses, and this piece suggests the wild freedom of a large herd crossing the plains. The rhythms of the *tombak* (Persian drum) complement the sense of motion provided by the *kemancheh* and other strings.

The *Suite* continues with *When the Wind Circles...*, described by the performers, Dong-Won Kim and Kojiro Umezaki, as “an improvisatory musical dialogue between *shakuhachi* (Japanese bamboo flute) and Korean vocal improvisation. The ideal sound of the *shakuhachi* is commonly described as wind blowing through an old, decaying bamboo grove. Korean and Japanese poetry and song often refer to wind as a metaphor for the hardness of life and sorrow. Voice and flute (both articulated by breath) circle together in this performance to express this basic emotion, which, although linked to stress and pain, can ultimately bring forth opportunity for ripeness, learning and sublimation to awareness and peace.”

*Once We Were...* by Dong-Won Kim features the percussionists of the Silk Road Ensemble. Inspired by collaboration with his fellow percussionists over the last several years, the composer sought to combine Korean rhythmic energy and easily shared performance patterns. Kim writes, “musically, this piece contains rhythms grouped in threes as well as some compound rhythms (combinations of twos and threes).” The patterns seem to say, “Listen to us.... We are all different, the instruments, rhythms and way of playing are different.... But, we are enjoying being together, playing together and sharing a musical energy, among ourselves, and with the audience....”

The *Suite* concludes with *Doina Oltului* (Song of the River Olt). A traditional song from Oltenia (in southwest Romania), it is part of the great musical tradition of the Roma people—a diverse nomadic group originally from north-central India, who migrated to Europe and North Africa via the Iranian plateau around 1050 CE. It is interesting to note that in the 15th century, Europeans mistook the dark complexioned Roma for Egyptians, coining the term “gypsies.” Today, the Roma can be found on almost every continent: In Spain they are called *Calo*, in Germany and France they are *Sinto*, and in the Middle East they are

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known as *Nawar*. The *doina* as a musical form is characterized as a lyric song, defined by its flexible structure, rubato rhythm and dense, complex ornamentation.

This evening's presentation of *Classical Music of Azerbaijan* spotlights acclaimed vocalist Alim Qasimov, one of the world's truly gifted singers. He is a master of the *mugham*, a modal music popular among the Caucasus and the Turkish-speaking people of Central Asia. Qasimov, the recipient of the international IMC/UNESCO Music Prize in 1999, has been hailed for his vocal dexterity and emotional delivery. His performance of the *mugham* follows the customary interpretation by a trio that includes a *tar* (long-necked lute), a *kemancheh* (spike fiddle) and a *daf* (frame drum played by the vocalist). *Kor Arab*, sung in the *mugham* style, recounts the tale of an Arab servant who fell in love with a khan's daughter, and rather than risk betraying her, blinded himself. *Shikasta* (Minstrel's Song) was composed as part of the 1937 *mugham* opera *Koroghlu* (Son of the Blind Man), written by the beloved Azerbaijani composer, Uzeyir Hajibeyov. This song tells of a rebel leader who fights the rule of a brutal khan; the hero, Koroghlu, sings before the khan's court, foreshadowing how love will conquer tyranny in the final act.

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About *The Silent City*, Kayhan Kalhor writes, "The piece commemorates the Kurdish village of Hallabja in Iraqi Kurdistan. He chose to base the piece on an altered A minor scale using Kurdish themes to remember the Kurdish people...who are often called a 'nationless nation' and who have been the subject of numerous assaults and difficulties because of their demand for sovereignty. In a way, *The Silent City* is a tribute to all of the cities that were somehow destroyed by humanity, war and natural disaster." *The Silent City* invites the performers into the process of developing the piece by means of improvisation until the last section, which follows a conventional composition and arrangement. Every performance of the piece is different, based on the performers and their mood. The piece, originally commissioned

for the "First Nights" course at Harvard, was first performed there in 2005 by the Silk Road Ensemble, artists in residence at the university. The arrangement heard tonight is the result of Kalhor's commission by the 2006 Weill Music Institute Professional Training Workshop, presented by The Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall in partnership with the Silk Road Project and Boston Symphony Orchestra.

The last work on the program is *Air to Air*, a new commission by Osvaldo Golijov, developed at the 2006 Weill Music Institute Professional Training Workshop. The workshop, presented by The Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall in partnership with the Silk Road Project and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, challenged composers to write works for indigenous Silk Road instruments with varying combinations of strings and percussion.

Osvaldo Golijov was born and raised in Argentina, surrounded by classical music, klezmer and tango. After studying in Israel, he moved to the United States to study with George Crumb. While a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, he studied with Oliver Knussen and first developed his relationship with the Kronos Quartet, with whom he has since collaborated on more than 30 works. Mr. Golijov's recent compositions include a one-act opera, *Ainadamar* (Fountain of Tears); *Ayre*, a set of folksongs; and *Tekyah*, written for a film marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. He is currently working with director Francis Ford Coppola on the score of an upcoming film. The recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, Mr. Golijov is an associate professor at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, and is on the faculties of the Boston Conservatory and Tanglewood.

Golijov describes *Air to Air* as "music borne from community." To him, both the music and the musicians of the Silk Road Ensemble exemplify this concept. In searching for materials for the Silk Road Ensemble, he returned to four pieces originally written for voice. One might anticipate that there would be an added risk and unfair burden for an instrumental group to take on vocal works without text, especially a group that

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combines Western and non-Western instruments. In this case, however, Golijov felt that, because of the extraordinary sensibility the musicians of the Silk Road Ensemble bring, “for them the connection between Western and non-Western is now almost a mutation; they’ve opened the gates of communication. This is good for music.”

Golijov chose to feature Iranian *kemancheh* virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor in the first two movements, *Wah Habibi* (My Beloved) and *Ainin Taqtiru* (My Eyes Weep). Having worked with him in the past, Golijov felt strongly that, “Kahlor and the *kemancheh* are a unique combination of player and instrument, more like the human voice than anything I’ve heard in a long time.” He further states, “Often arranging vocal works for instruments, you lose some of the power of the music. But here, I feel you gain a tremendous effective power.” *Wah Habibi* juxtaposes a sacred song with violent contemporary music through the use of traditional Christian Arab and Muslim Arab melodies. Golijov notes, “It is a blurry, changing frontier between Christian and Arab

music, where one note or inflection can make the music Christian or Arab.” *Ainin Taqtiru* is a traditional Christian Arab Easter Song.

The third movement, *Kwadalupe* (*Festival for the Holy Mother Guadalupe*), is based on music recorded by David Lewiston in the 1970s for a project centered on the indigenous music of many cultures, including Mexico. Lewiston captured on tape a ritual performed during the Festival for the Holy Mother Guadalupe in which the responsibility of taking care of the saint moves from the religious leader of the past year to the new leader. Whereas the first two movements the piece feature one voice (the *kemancheh*), Golijov feels this movement is more of a “collective aerial view” and asks us to think about the question, “Where does prayer become music?”

The piece concludes with *Tancas Serradas* (Walls are Encircling the Land), a protest song from 18th-century Sardinia. Golijov notes, “The sentiment of oppressed people struggling to overthrow power can be applied to all persecuted people today.”

## Education & Community Events: The Silk Road Project

### **Sightlines: The Silk Road Project**

Friday, March 16, 7–7:30pm

Saturday, March 17, 7–7:30pm

Zellerbach Hall

Pre-performance talks by Sanjyot Mehendale, Executive Director, Caucasus Central Asia Program, Institute of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies, UC Berkeley. This *Sightlines* event is free to all event ticket holders.

### **Cultural Exchanges Along the Silk Road**

Saturday, March 17, 2–5pm

Hertz Hall

Celebrating the return of cellist Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Project to the UC Berkeley campus, Cal Performances once again joins with the Caucasus and Central Asia Program to present a series of events exploring the myriad cultural influences of the historic trade routes connecting Asia with Europe.

# Program B

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Saturday, March 17, 2007, 8pm  
Zellerbach Hall

## The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma

### PROGRAM B

#### *Silk Road Suite*

Kayhan Kalhor (arr. Ljova)	Mountains Are Far Away
Zhao Jiping (b. 1945)	Sacred Cloud Music
Zhao	Summer in the High Grassland
Rabih Abou-Khalil (b. 1957)	Arabian Waltz
Angel Lam (b. 1978)	Empty Mountain, Spirit Rain*

#### INTERMISSION

Jeeyoung Kim (b. 1968)	Ancient Bell†
Evan Ziporyn (b. 1959)	Sulvasutra*
Sapo Perapaskero (arr. Golijov & Ljova)	Turceasca

\* Commissioned by the Carnegie Hall Corporation.

† Commissioned by the Silk Road Project.

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This evening’s concert begins with the *Silk Road Suite*, a collection of four compositions representing musical traditions of China, Iran and Lebanon. The first three compositions are part of music developed by the Silk Road Ensemble in 2004 for a 10-part Japanese television documentary series on the Silk Road. The suite begins with *Mountains Are Far Away* by Iranian composer and *kemancheh* (spiked fiddle) virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor. In this piece, Kalhor pays homage to the musical culture of the many nomadic peoples who have traveled the great plains of the Silk Road. Featuring distinctive Turkmen rhythmic patterns, the piece evokes constant motion. The *Suite* continues with two pieces by Chinese composer Zhao Jiping, who is perhaps most well known for his award-winning film scores, *Farewell My Concubine*, *Ju Dou* and *Raise the Red Lantern*.

His *Sacred Cloud Music* is built around one of the earliest Chinese pieces of music known, dating from 640 CE. Following is *Summer in the High Grassland*, with syncopated rhythms and a melodic line reminiscent of Mongolian music, a gesture reinforced by the cello emulating the sound of the *morin khuur* (Mongolian horsehead fiddle). The *Suite* concludes with the dramatic *Arabian Waltz* by Lebanese-born composer Rabih Abou-Khalil. Classically trained on *oud* (Middle Eastern Lute) as well as the flute, Abou-Khalil has recorded albums on both instruments. Compositionally, his works fuse the musical traditions of the Arabic world with jazz improvisation and European classical techniques. *Arabian Waltz* is a propulsive work, driven by complex additive rhythms and improvisatory melodic lines.

The next three works on the program are new commissions, all of which were part of the 2006 Weill Music Institute Professional Training Workshop. The workshop, presented by The Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall in partnership with The Silk Road Project and Boston Symphony Orchestra, challenged composers to write new works for indigenous Silk Road instruments with varying combinations of strings and percussion.

Angel Lam grew up in Hong Kong and Los Angeles and is currently a doctoral candidate at Peabody Conservatory. Her compositions have been performed in the Far East, the United States, Europe and South America. Dedicated “to a memory of my grandmother,” Lam’s *Empty Mountain, Spirit Rain* includes this note:

“Thirty minutes passed, but Grandma still hadn’t arrived. My kindergarten sat on top of a hill, overlooking a narrow street with a muddy pedestrian pathway alongside traffic. It was another hot summer day; the aggressive sun seemed to slow my time but activated the scenery in front of me. Trees moved in the heat like monsters stretching their palms; pedestrians walked slowly, dragged by their long shadows.

“Suddenly, it rained, but the sun still shone. I decided to run home. I was only five. I sprinted down that busy street; people were shouting behind me, like low-pitched murmurings of an-



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cient emperors. The sounding of horns screamed sharply with long mystic tails...

“When a distant temple bell drummed, I saw Grandma—her peaceful smile, and an air of gracefulness that is memorable to this day. This time she seemed bigger...when I reached out to touch her, she floated through me and I turned around, the sun shone directly into my eyes, and Grandma disappeared into the core of the afternoon sun. The evening sun suddenly closed, and rain stopped.

“When I got home, everybody was crying, but I did not cry. I went to my little desk and started a letter:

“Dear Grandma...”

\* \* \*

Jeeyoung Kim’s newest contribution to the Silk Road Ensemble repertoire embodies the spirit of uniting music from the East and the West. Kim is an established composer, having won awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and Meet the Composer, among others. Kim holds degrees from Yonsei University in Seoul, Indiana University and Yale University and was awarded the prestigious Bunting Fellowship at Harvard University in 2001. She has received numerous commissions and her music has been performed in the United States and overseas.

About *Ancient Bell*, Kim writes, “This piece was inspired by an ancient Korean bell called the E-Mil-Le Bell, made in 770 CE, which is treasured for its pure and beautiful tones. Modern attempts to replicate its sounds have failed. Construction of the bell began under King Kyung-Dok (r. 702–737), who hoped to commemorate his father, King Sung-Duk, bring peace in his kingdom and bless those who heard the instrument. King Sung-Duk’s grandson, King Hye-Gong, eventually completed it. There is a legend that a mother sacrificed her baby son for the pure sound of the bell. The bell’s Korean name indicates the sound of a baby’s calling mother.”

Rounding out the most recent commissions is *Sulvasutra* by Evan Ziporyn. Composer and

clarinetist Ziporyn is artistic director of Gamelan Galak Tika and a founding member of the Bang on a Can All-Stars, with whom he has toured since 1992. His awards and commissions include a fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters as well as commissions from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Kronos Quartet. Balinese gamelan, a central influence in his music, has been a passion for over 25 years. His catalogue of recordings appears on Cantaloupe Music, Sony Classical, New World and CRI, among others. Ziporyn’s esteemed collaborators include Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Ornette Coleman and Louis Andriessen. He is currently Kenan Sahin Distinguished Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. About *Sulvasutra*, he writes, “*Sulvasutra* is based on an ancient Sanskrit treatise, probably dating from 800 BCE, that gives rules for the proper construction of Vedic altars. It is in three continuous movements, built around rhythmic cycles of four, five and three—that is, the sides of a right triangle.”

The concert concludes with *Turceasca* (*Turkish Song*), the signature piece of the Romanian gypsy band Taraf de Haiidouks. In 1991, Taraf de Haiidouks performed outside Romania for the first time. Their music drew such interest that filmmaker Tony Garlif featured them in his documentary about the music of the Roma, *Latcho Drom*. Composer Osvaldo Golijov, whose broad, eclectic musical training (including Western classical, Jewish liturgical, klezmer and Argentinean tango) made him an ideal translator, worked with the band to arrange *Turceasca* for the Kronos Quartet. The Silk Road Ensemble, guided by Taraf de Haiidouks’s *tour de force* recording and Golijov’s inventive arrangement, provide additional embellishments to the work with the inclusion of Chinese *pipa* and the *cajón*, a Peruvian drum. The piece, based on a Turkish folk song traditionally played at the end of a wedding party, explodes with rhythmic joy that altogether dissolves standard written notation in favor of momentum and fun.

## The Silk Road Ensemble

Yo-Yo Ma, *Artistic Director*

Jeffrey Beecher *bass*  
Nicholas Cords *viola*  
Sandeep Das *tabla*  
Jonathan Gandelsman *violin*  
Rauf Islamov *kemancheh*  
Colin Jacobsen *violin*  
Siamak Jahangiri *ney*  
Kayhan Kalhor *kemancheh*  
Dong-Won Kim *Korean percussion*  
Yo-Yo Ma *cello*  
Ali Asgar Mammadov *tar*  
Alim Qasimov *vocals and daf*  
Shane Shanahan *percussion*  
Mark Suter *percussion*  
Kojiro Umezaki *shakuhachi*  
Yang Wei *pipa*

### *Tour Management*

ICM Artists  
825 Eighth Avenue  
New York, New York 10019

# About the Artists

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## The Silk Road Project

The Silk Road Project is a not-for-profit arts, cultural and educational organization founded in 1998 by cellist Yo-Yo Ma, who serves as its artistic director, and led by Laura Freid, executive director and CEO. The Project has a vision of connecting the world's neighborhoods by bringing together artists and audiences around the globe. Inspired by the cultural traditions of the historic Silk Road, the Silk Road Project is a catalyst for promoting innovation and learning through the arts.

Central to the Silk Road Project is the Silk Road Ensemble, a collective of internationally renowned artists and musicians interested in exploring the relationship between tradition and innovation in music from the East and West. Nourishing global connections while maintaining the integrity of art rooted in an authentic tradition, the Silk Road Ensemble is committed to artistic excellence and regularly commissions new works. The Ensemble has reached thousands of people at sold-out performances throughout Europe, Asia and North America.

Partnering with other institutions to present musical, visual and narrative traditions from along the Silk Road, the Silk Road Project engages audiences and diverse communities throughout the United States and the world through performances, educational programs, as well residencies in universities, colleges, museums and schools.

Exploring themes of cultural connectedness is fundamental to all our educational programs. The Silk Road Project is affiliated with Harvard University and the Rhode Island School of Design, where the Ensemble collaborates with students and faculty as artists in residence.

Through our passion for education and a wish to inspire self-motivated learning, we hope to create a dialogic process wherein learning and teaching are the same. We believe in knowing things deeply, in sharing ideas broadly, and in stimulating individuals and institutions to collaborate and to think in new ways.

For more information, please visit our web site, [www.silkroadproject.org](http://www.silkroadproject.org).

## Yo-Yo Ma

Yo-Yo Ma is the founder and Artistic Director of The Silk Road Project. His many-faceted career is a testament to his continual search for new ways to communicate with audiences. Whether performing a new concerto, coming together with colleagues for chamber music, reaching out to young audiences and student musicians or exploring cultures and musical forms outside of the Western classical tradition, Mr. Ma strives to find connections that stimulate the imagination. One of his goals is to explore music as a means of communication and as a vehicle for the migration of ideas across cultures. To that end, he has taken time to immerse himself in subjects as diverse as native Chinese music and its distinctive instruments and the music of the Kalahari people in Africa.

Expanding upon this interest, Mr. Ma established the Silk Road Project to promote the study of the cultural, artistic and intellectual traditions along the ancient Silk Road trade route that stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Pacific Ocean. By examining the flow of ideas throughout this vast area, the Project seeks to illuminate the heritages of the Silk Road countries and identify the voices that represent these traditions today.

Mr. Ma is an exclusive Sony Classical artist, and his discography of over 50 albums (including 16 Grammy Award-winners) reflects his wide-ranging interests. Mr. Ma's most recent releases include *Silk Road Journeys: Beyond the Horizon*, with the Silk Road Ensemble; *Yo-Yo Ma Plays Ennio Morricone*; *Vivaldi's Cello*, with Ton Koopman and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra; *Paris: La Belle Époque*, with pianist Kathryn Stott; and two Grammy-winning tributes to the music of Brazil, *Obrigado Brazil* and *Obrigado Brazil: Live in Concert*.

Yo-Yo Ma was born to Chinese parents living in Paris. He began to study the cello with his father at age four, and soon after came with his family to New York, where he enrolled in The Juilliard School. He sought out a traditional liberal arts education to build on his conservatory training, and graduated from Harvard University in 1976.

# About the Artists

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## The Silk Road Ensemble

The Silk Road Ensemble is a collective of approximately 50 artists, including musicians, composers and arrangers, interested in exploring the relationship between tradition and innovation in music from the East and West. Each musician's career illustrates a unique response to what is one of the artistic challenges of our times: nourishing global connections while maintaining the integrity of art rooted in an authentic tradition. Many of the Ensemble artists first came together at a Silk Road Project workshop at the Tanglewood Music Center in Lenox, Massachusetts, in July 2000, under the artistic direction of Yo-Yo Ma.

During the last six years, various combinations of these artists, whose diverse careers encompass and often intermingle Western and non-Western classical, folk and popular music, have performed a variety of programs, both with and without Mr. Ma, in Silk Road Project concerts and festivals in Europe, Asia and North America.

## Artists

Siamak Aghaei, *santur*  
Iran, 1974

Tarana Alieyva, *qanun*  
Azerbaijan, 1970

Edward Arron, *cello*  
United States, 1977

Jeffrey Beecher, *contrabass*  
United States, 1982

Mike Block, *cello*  
United States, 1982

Narangerel Buyanjargal, *yatga*  
Mongolia, 1973

Nicholas Cords, *viola*  
United States, 1974

Gevorg Dabaghyan, *duduk*  
Armenia, 1965

Sandeep Das, *tabla*  
India, 1971

Jason Duckles, *cello*  
United States, 1971

Joel Fan, *piano*  
United States, 1969

Jonathan Gandelsman, *violin*  
Israel, 1978

J. M. González-Rodríguez, *oboe*  
Chile, 1973

Joseph Gramley, *percussion*  
United States, 1970

Ben Haggarty, *storyteller*  
United Kingdom, 1958

He Cui, *sheng*  
China, 1969

Rauf Islamov, *kamancheh*  
Azerbaijan, 1978

Colin Jacobsen, *violin*  
United States, 1978

Eric Jacobsen, *cello*  
United States, 1982

Siamak Jahangiri, *ney*  
Iran, 1971

Hu Jianbing, *sheng*  
China, 1965

Rysbek Jumabaev, *manaschi, epic reciter*  
Kyrgyzstan, 1961

# About the Artists

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Kayhan Kalhor, *composer, kamancheh*  
Iran, 1963

Khongorzul Ganbaatar, *urtiin duu (longsong)*  
Mongolia, 1974

Dong-Won Kim, *Korean percussion*  
Korea, 1965

Ji Hyun Kim, *kayagum, voice*  
Korea, 1973

Anthea Kreston, *violin*  
United States, 1972

Li Hui, *pipa*  
China, 1971

Liu Lin, *sanxian*  
China, 1963

Yo-Yo Ma, *cello, morin khuur*  
United States, 1955

Ali Asgar Mammadov, *tar*  
Azerbaijan, 1977

Max Mandel, *viola*  
Canada, 1975

Gulia Mashurova, *harp*  
Kazakhstan, 1970

Kevork Mourad, *visual artist*  
United States, Syria, 1970

Ilham Najafov, *ney*  
Azerbaijan, 1963

Nurlanbek Nyshanov, *composer, komuz*  
Kyrgyzstan, 1966

Alim Qasimov, *vocalist*  
Azerbaijan, 1957

Melissa Reardon, *viola*  
United States, 1978

Shane Shanahan, *percussion*  
United States, 1972

Mark Suter, *percussion*  
Switzerland, United States, 1967

Kojiro Umezaki, *shakuhachi*  
Japan, 1968

Rachel Walker, *oboe*  
United Kingdom, 1971

Wu Man, *pipa*  
China, United States, 1963

Wu Tong, *sheng*  
China, 1971

Betti Xiang, *erhu*  
China, 1960

Xu Ke, *erhu*  
China, Japan, United States, 1960

Yang Wei, *pipa*  
China, United States, 1960

DaXun Zhang, *contrabass*  
China, 1981

## Composers & Arrangers

Christopher Adler, *composer*  
United States, 1972

Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, *composer*  
Azerbaijan, 1947

Jia Daqun, *composer*  
China, 1955

Gabriela Lena Frank, *composer*  
United States, 1972

Oswaldo Golijov, *composer*  
Argentina, 1960

Kayhan Kalhor, *composer, kamancheh*  
Iran, 1963

Angel Lam, *composer*  
Hong Kong, 1978

# About the Artists

Jee-young Kim, *composer*  
Korea, 1968

Alisher Latif-Zadeh, *composer*  
Tajikistan, 1962

Ljova, *arranger*  
Russia, 1978

Nurlanbek Nyshanov, *composer, komuz*  
Kyrgyzstan, 1966

Sangidorj Sansargereltech, *composer*  
Mongolia, 1969

Vache Sharafyan, *composer*  
Armenia, 1966

Byambasuren Sharav, *composer*  
Mongolia, 1952

Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky, *composer*  
Uzbekistan, 1946

Zhao Jiping, *composer*  
China, 1945

Zhao Lin, *composer*  
China, 1973

Evan Ziporyn, *composer*  
United States, 1959

## Recordings & Publications



*Silk Road Journeys: When Strangers Meet*  
Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble perform improvisations, commissioned works by Byambasuren Sharav (Mongolia), Zhao Jiping (China) and Kayhan Kalhor (Iran), and existing pieces that signify a theme of cross-cultural exchange.



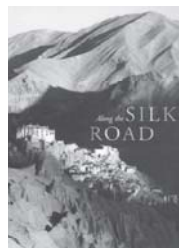
*The Silk Road: A Musical Caravan*  
A two-CD compilation of music from the present-day Silk Road that serves as a companion volume to *Silk Road Journeys: When*

*Strangers Meet*. This compilation was produced by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings in partnership with the Silk Road Project.



*Silk Road Journeys: Beyond the Horizon* (Sony Classical)  
Among the featured composers: Zhao Jiping, known for such soundtracks as *Farewell My Concubine*,

*Ju Dou* and *Raise the Red Lantern*, and Kayhan Kalhor, virtuoso composer and *kamancheh* player.



*Along the Silk Road: Asian Art and Culture, Vol. 6*  
A richly illustrated book published by the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution. Part of a series, it includes Yo-Yo Ma's insights into contemporary music and the Silk Road.

## How the Silk Road Project Was Born: A Conversation with Yo-Yo Ma

In 1998, cellist Yo-Yo Ma founded the Silk Road Project Inc. to study the global circulation of music and musical ideas along the fabled Silk Road, and to explore ways that traditional cultural expression can help revitalize contemporary culture. Along the way, Ma sat down with Theodore Levin, an ethnomusicologist, to discuss the origins the Project—and its future.

*Your interest in the Silk Road did not begin as a scholarly involvement; it came out of your own life experiences. Could you talk a little bit about this personal journey?*

I probably have to start about 25 years ago when my experience taking a liberal arts curriculum as an undergraduate opened many new worlds for me. It's almost as if everything that I do now has a reference point to those incredible years when I was stimulated by anthropology classes, history classes, a broad range of courses—not just music courses. I feel I am definitely a product of a liberal arts education, and I've benefited so much from that.

*You have talked often about how those anthropology courses led you to visit and study the music of the Kalahari bushmen in Africa and how, even as you pursued your career as a musician immersed in the classical Western concert repertoire, you were interested in all kinds of music-making.*

I have had lots of extraordinary teachers in my life, among them the violinist and fiddler Mark O'Connor and the bass player Edgar Meyer, both wonderful musicians. Mark and Edgar introduced me to Appalachian music, which has been influenced by musical traditions from Ireland, from Scotland and from Scandinavia.

Apart from the actual fiddling itself, one of the most useful things that Mark taught me was the importance of oral traditions in which music is transmitted but also changed, through emigration and diaspora. For example, 18th- and 19th-century immigrants from Anglo-Celtic lands brought their jigs, reels and hornpipes to the New World, where



Michael Lurch, 2004

Yo-Yo Ma, artistic director and cellist

successive generations of musicians transformed them into a range of different styles and repertoires. These days, there is little common ground between the repertoires of, say, a Texas fiddler and a fiddler from Ireland, yet the two traditions reveal an unmistakable kinship. So I started thinking about how music sometimes stays the same and how it sometimes changes. I began to wonder what actually makes music change.

*What, specifically, led you to Asia?*

A number of chance occurrences drew me to that part of the world. One of them was a trip to Jordan with some friends right after the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan was signed in 1994. We went to see Petra, a wonderful city with magnificent stone monuments, the terminus of a great caravan trade 2,000 years ago, and we tried to figure out why the city was so wealthy for so many years. It's because they taxed everyone who traveled through.

That got me thinking about trade links in this part of the world. Then we met King Hussein and

Queen Noor and, on the spur of the moment, Queen Noor asked me to give a master class in Amman the next day, on the way back to Tel Aviv. In that master class, I met some kids who were so passionate about music, who spoke about music in such poetic ways, that it made me think I had to learn about these young people, understand their driving forces, do something to encourage their talents. And there were kids just like that in Israel and other parts of the Middle East. This early, chance encounter led to the formation of the Middle Eastern Youth Orchestra, under the direction of Daniel Barenboim. In addition to making wonderful music, the members of the youth orchestra are forces for peace and communication in this often contentious part of the world.

*You also had an important encounter with ancient Japanese culture, right?*

Yes. An art historian and friend, Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, told me about an incredible eighth-century Japanese collection called the Shosoin collection, in Nara, Japan, which reflects the arts of the Mediterranean world, Iran, India, Central Asia, China, Korea and Japan. The collection includes painting, sculpture, lacquer ware, ceramics, calligraphy, swords, furniture, Buddhist altar fittings, perfumes, medicines, musical instruments, dance costumes and masks. As luck would have it, I was taken to see this collection soon after, when I was visiting Japan.

I was, of course, fascinated by the musical instruments, especially the pear-shaped lutes—called *biwa* in Japanese or *pipa* in Chinese. A five-stringed lute in the Shosoin collection is the only lute of this sort in Japan. The design on the plectrum guard, underneath the strings where the plectrum falls, evokes the Silk Road and its camel caravans. This plectrum guard is a band of tortoiseshell inlaid with mother-of-pearl design of an Iranian figure riding a camel and playing a four-stringed lute. Of course, camels were unknown in Japan, so I can imagine how exotic this instrument looked to eighth-century Japanese. Several four-stringed lutes in the Shosoin collection are similar to ones still played today. I was fascinated by the *biwa* with a plectrum guard showing a group of entertainers

riding on the back of an elephant in the midst of a mountainous landscape. This scene must have seemed excitingly strange to Japanese people in the eighth century. There were, of course, no elephants in Japan, and the four entertainers themselves suggested foreign lands. An Iranian figure with a big nose and beard plays a hand drum while two youthful Chinese-looking musicians play transverse flutes to accompany a dancer with long sleeves billowing in the breeze.

I think part of what I do as a musician is think about the imagination in a disciplined way. What do I know? What don't I know? I think musicians need to delve into the inner lives of composers and other musicians to figure out who they are and then to advocate and represent them.

*So your experiences in Jordan and Japan, among other things, led to your founding the Silk Road Project in 1998?*

Yes. Up until then, I looked at lots of little pieces of information and said: aren't these interesting? And then I asked myself whether we could start to connect all those little dots. Could we actually do research and find vibrant traditions linking different parts of Asia, linking Asia and the West, linking past and present, that we didn't yet know about? Certainly from my own work with fiddlers and in looking at musical traditions in other parts of the world, I feel there are wonderful traditions that are worthwhile to discover, encourage and celebrate.

*Then you organized several conferences, bringing together scholars and musicians and other people to see if such a project focused on Silk Road lands would be viable?*

Yes, and there were other, often spontaneous events that were as positive and encouraging as the conferences. I was introduced to a Mongolian fiddle in Amsterdam. We heard that there were four Mongolian musicians who had driven 10,000 kilometers in seven days from Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, to Amsterdam. They had been living in Amsterdam for a couple of months playing music on the street. One night they came and played for us and introduced us to the *morin khuur*, a



# Interview

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two-stringed fiddle with a horsehead carving on the end of the scroll. We had a wonderful evening, and they started to teach me how to play the horsehead fiddle. It's a beautiful instrument, but really hard to play. We were so impressed by their playing that we invited them to come and share my recital the next day, which they did. They appeared on the concert stage dressed in Mongolian clothes, and they played fabulously. I think everybody in the hall went crazy. So now we are studying music of the historical Silk Road, and we are commissioning new compositions from composers in Silk Road lands. We are exploring all sorts of musical and cultural connections and convergences in this enterprise.

*But is there a major difference between, on the one hand, looking backward as a historian on the kinds of cultural convergences that have taken place and the kinds of artifacts they've produced and, on the other hand, actively designing and shaping those convergences? Does the Silk Road Project run the danger of creating convergences that may in retrospect seem forced or artificial in comparison to the convergences that took place over hundreds of years as a result of people's acknowledgment of what was really necessary?*

I think it is legitimate for us to try to see what we can find out, to see if we can forge old and new knowledge. People may not know where something comes from. Sometimes C may think that something comes from B, but may not know that it actually comes from A. And if you can establish that, in fact, certain parts of B come from A, then A becomes connected to C. That's new knowledge. That's important knowledge because A and C may not know they are connected. But, actually, they share a common tradition. In our world where people seem increasingly interested in finding their own identities, their cultural roots, sometimes we can get into trouble by saying my roots have no connection with your roots and therefore we're separate. But if we uncover the knowledge which shows that in fact there are connections, this can be very liberating and incredibly valuable for cross-cultural understanding. If what you think is based on an old knowledge as well as a new knowledge, then you actually have to rethink things. I think that's very valuable for everybody. And it is equally valuable if we create artistic works based on the new knowledge we have uncovered, making these connections in a presentation or in a new musical composition.



Yo-Yo Ma and Sandeep Das (tabla)

Michael Lutch, 2004

*In other words, you're saying that your feeling of freedom to connect different aspects of tradition is informed or legitimized by the actual history of these traditions in which connections that may not be apparent to us now did exist? Are you trying to recover lost aspects of tradition and use them as bases for new kinds of convergences?*

Some people engaged with the project are trying to recover this earlier knowledge. I'm trying to learn and to share whatever we learn with other people. As a musician, I feel that one of the things that I do when I perform is bring to audiences the totality of my experiences. I am trying to put into sound form my experiences and the things that I have learned and that I have been taught. I don't know whether that's recovery, but it becomes part of our collective imagination. I think it's important to develop a collective imagination because then we actually have a shorthand of communication.

*But are there risks involved in trying to revitalize aspects of traditional culture in Silk Road lands? Do you risk contaminating traditions that have survived up until now in a more or less authentic form?*

We seem to have two main jobs—to investigate and give credit to the past, on the one hand, and then to encourage new kinds of cultural development, on the other. All cultures evolve. And since we're more and more connected in this global world, we can't say, well, we'll keep something separate. That is certainly one way to kill cultural expressions very quickly. Look at the development of instruments for example, how technology continually allows for the updating of instruments for society's needs for musical performance. There seem to be certain moments when we need to delve very deeply into our specialties, and there are other times when we need to be really good generalists. I think this is a moment in time when it's appropriate to bring specialists together to see whether we can find a consensus about common knowledge that will enrich our own specialties. Otherwise, I think we could just dig ourselves into deeper and deeper specializations without really communicating with other people. That's one of the reasons that we got together, because we actually found that there's

greater strength in working together with other people as we explore, seek and learn.

*In the time of the Silk Road there was no question about the distinction between East and West. There was a geographical East and a geographical West, and a cultural East and a cultural West. And there was exchange, and there was appropriation, and there were technology transfers and cultural transfers. But these days when we evoke the metaphor of the Silk Road for this East–West exchange, does it still make sense to talk that way about East and West? And specifically, about East and West in music?*

It depends on the individual. Some people will think so and some people won't. For me, one of the things that stimulates both scholarship and creativity is new knowledge. In this project we're on a steep learning curve because we're constantly faced with the unfamiliar—whether different cultures, languages, musical instruments or disciplines. All that I'm learning will certainly change the way I play the cello, and it will change the way I think about the world. What's important is to start from inner knowledge and experience. Whatever our project contributes—new works, authentic convergences, innovative exchanges—will come from understanding music, people and cultures from the inside.

Excerpted from "A Conversation with Yo-Yo Ma and Theodore Levin," *Along the Silk Road*