

Sunday, October 27, 2013, 7pm
Zellerbach Hall

Silk Road Ensemble

Yo-Yo Ma, *Artistic Director*

15TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON



Max Whitaker

Jeffrey Beecher *double bass*
Mike Block *cello*
Nicholas Cords *viola*
Sandeep Das *tabla*
Johnny Gandelsman *violin*
Joseph Gramley *percussion*
Colin Jacobsen *violin*
Kayhan Kalhor *kamancheh*
Cristina Pato *gaita*
Shane Shanahan *percussion*
Kojiro Umezaki *shakubachi*

PROGRAM

Silk Road Suite

Cristina Pato (b. 1980) Caronte
Shane Shanahan (b. 1984) Saidi Swing
Rabih Abou-Khalil (b. 1957) Arabian Waltz (*arr.* Ljova)

Colin Jacobsen (b. 1978) Ātashgah¹

Mike Block (b. 1982) & Cristina Pato Celtibera

INTERMISSION

Angel Lam (b. 1978) Empty Mountain, Spirit Rain²

Sandeep Das (b. 1971) & Kayhan Kalhor (b. 1963) Jugalbandi

John Zorn (b. 1953) Suite from *Book of Angels*³
(*arr.* Silk Road Ensemble)

¹ Commissioned by the Laguna Beach Music Festival for Kayhan Kalhor and Brooklyn Rider and premiered in 2011.

² Commissioned by Carnegie Hall through The Weill Music Institute in partnership with the Silk Road Project, Inc. The world premiere was given at Carnegie Hall on September 16, 2006.

³ Arrangements commissioned by the Silk Road Project.

Hyosung Corporation is Lead Sponsor of the Silk Road Project.

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Cal Performances' 2013–2014 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

A MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:
A MUSICAL MODEL



Throughout my travels and performances around the world, I have had the opportunity to explore a wealth of different cultures and musical voices—from the immense compassion and grace of Bach’s Cello Suites, to the ancient Celtic fiddle traditions alive in Appalachia, to the soulful strains of

the *bandoneón* of Argentina’s tango cafés. I have met and been guided by musicians who, like my Silk Road Ensemble colleagues, share my wonder at the creative potential that exists where cultures intersect.

The Silk Road Ensemble is a musical model that requires curiosity, collaboration, and whole-hearted enthusiasm. The music we play does not belong to just one culture or solely to the Silk Road region. Our interest in exploring cultural diversity has led us to perform in an astonishing range of locations, from the premier forum for

global conversation, the United Nations General Assembly Hall, to the hushed, sacred space of Todai-ji Temple in Nara, Japan.

The Project’s work consists of careful investigations, joining tradition with new knowledge and innovation. We have had the honor of collaborating with some of the world’s best composers, and our commissioning workshops have had a remarkable record of producing successful works for our repertoire. Our creativity begins with play—exploring sounds, testing ideas—and I am delighted that this has allowed several of our performers to compose and arrange music for us as well. Above all, I am tremendously grateful for the opportunity to undertake this work, for the abiding friendships and partnerships we have developed along the way, and for the warm reception we have received from people all over the world.

Yo-Yo Ma, Artistic Director

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
A SILK ROAD FOR OUR TIME



It is difficult to comprehend the scope of the Silk Road, the ancient trade network that connected Asia to the Mediterranean. For centuries this primary route for the exchange of goods, arts, and scientific discoveries also enabled the spread of religions, the growth of languages, and

the migrations of people and their cultures. Historically, the Silk Road offers unparalleled insight into how ancient societies intersected. As a metaphor, it speaks to our contemporary fascination with cultural exchange.

It is in this broad sense that the Silk Road has captivated the imaginations of not only scholars and artists, but also global citizens the world over. Our living Silk Road reveals the truth that nothing, and no one, exists in isolation.

The Silk Road Project takes inspiration from the ancient Silk Road as a model for constant exchange. While we often focus on the geographical region, our approach to music, and to education and business as well, embraces knowledge from many sources, enriching our understanding of our complex and interconnected world. This year, as we celebrate 15 years of connection, collaboration, and community, we

extend our appreciation to everyone in the Silk Road’s global village. Your enthusiastic support has enabled our mission not only to survive, but also to thrive. In particular we offer our thanks to the generous supporters who share our vision of worldwide connection, including: our Lead Corporate Sponsor, Hyosung Corporation; Pershing Square Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

At its heart, the Silk Road Project is a catalytic organization. It transcends the edges of culture, education and business to forge new paradigms of global change. Since the Project was incorporated in 1998, audiences on three continents have embraced the multinational Silk Road Ensemble. Teachers, musicians, arts educators, business leaders, and committed citizens from all over the world have collaborated with us in innovative, new ways. The Silk Road metaphor is alive now more than ever, encouraging all of us to explore, discover, and grow—and to join together to build new pathways into the unknown. We hope that you will be similarly inspired to “Silk Road It” with us in the years to come!

Laura Freid, CEO and Executive Director

Tour Management

Mary Pat Buerkle, *Senior Vice President,
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FOR NEARLY 2,000 YEARS (ending in the 14th century), the historical Silk Road, a series of land and sea trade routes, crisscrossed Eurasia, enabling the exchange of goods and innovations from Japan to the Mediterranean Sea. Over the centuries, many important scientific and technological innovations migrated to the West along the Silk Road, including the magnetic compass, the printing press, silk, gunpowder, mathematics, and ceramic and lacquer crafts. In this way, the Silk Road created an intercontinental think-tank of human ingenuity. Interactions among cultural groups spread knowledge, religious beliefs, artistic techniques, and musical traditions, so much so that long after its decline, the Silk Road remains a powerful metaphor for cultural exchange.

This historic trade network provides both a namesake and a metaphor for the Silk Road Project's vision of connecting artists and audiences around the world. Yo-Yo Ma calls these routes, which resulted in the first global exchange of scientific and cultural traditions, the "Internet of antiquity."

Both historic and symbolic elements are central to the work of the Silk Road Project, which takes inspiration from this age-old tradition of exchange between cultures and disciplines. The repertoire of the Silk Road Ensemble includes traditional music (both as an 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 these compositions combine non-Western and Western instruments, creating a unique genre that transcends customary musical classification.

Tonight's concert opens with a *Silk Road Suite*, a selection of pieces that offer a preview of the range of styles and influences that distinguish the work of the Silk Road Ensemble. The audience is greeted by Galician bagpipes, known as *gaita*, in a musical introduction by Spanish-born composer and performer Cristina Pato. *Caronte* was inspired by the Greek myth of Kharon, the boatman who transported the souls of the deceased across the river Acheron, which separates the world of the living from the world of the dead.

Next in the *Suite* is *Saidi Swing*, a piece by Ensemble percussionist and composer Shane Shanahan, inspired by the traditional Arabic rhythm known as *saidi*. This rhythm is believed to have originated in Upper Egypt and commonly accompanies dance. Shanahan composed variations on this basic rhythm, featuring several types of hand drums used throughout the Middle East and Asia, such as the *riq*, an Egyptian tambourine; *darbuka*, a goblet-shaped drum; *tabla*, a pair of drums played extensively in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan; and the frame drum, the oldest and most widely used drum in the world.

The *Suite* concludes with the dramatic *Arabian Waltz* by Lebanese-born composer Rabih Abou-Khalil, classically trained on *oud* (Middle-Eastern lute) and flute. 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.

When Silk Road Ensemble members Nicholas Cords and Colin Jacobsen visited Kayhan Kalhor in Iran in summer 2004 on a cultural exchange grant made possible by the Silk Road Project, one of many sights that impressed them was an ancient fire temple, or *ātashgah*, outside the city of Esfahan. Originally built as a holy site for the Zoroastrian religion in the Sassanid period of Iran's history (third to sixth centuries CE), it felt to these travelers like a place of significant power—a place that makes one aware of the layers of history. For Jacobsen, the experience of listening to Kalhor play music can be "like watching a fire in a fireplace; it is mesmerizing, hypnotic, and yet constantly changing. His music comes from a deep inner creative fire." Jacobsen caught a spark of that creative fire, and on returning from Iran that summer, was inspired by his experience to do something with what he had heard and experienced. He has been writing and arranging music ever since, and *Ātashgah*, composed for *kamancheh* (Persian spike fiddle) and Western strings, is one result of that inspiration. *Ātashgah* appears on the latest album by the Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma, *A Playlist Without Borders*, released in September 2013 by Sony Masterworks.

Next the audience is invited to journey from Persia to the westernmost tip of Europe where, as early as the sixth century BCE, Celtic tribes put down roots in what is now north-central Spain. With its own language (Celtiberian) and way of life, this group formed a deep and enduring culture whose influences can be discerned even today. In *Celtibera*, created to premiere on this 2013 West Coast concert tour, Mike Block and Cristina Pato explore connections between traditions from the Celtic nations, the Iberian Peninsula and North America through the common personal experiences shared by the people of these far-flung regions. The experimental work, partially improvised, features *gaita* and cello, with other instruments joining an uncharted migration through a wide range of musical languages, from traditional to jazz and folk.

Angel Lam grew up in Hong Kong and Los Angeles and received her doctorate degree from Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University. A recipient of numerous and prestigious scholarships and awards, Lam's compositions have been performed around the world. *Empty Mountain*, *Spirit Rain* was the first of three commissions for Carnegie Hall. Dedicating this piece "to a memory of my grandmother," Lam provides the following personal 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 ancient 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...."

Jugalbandi is the Sanskrit term for duet. In tonight's duet, the audience will experience, along with Kayhan Kalhor (playing *kamancheh*) and Sandeep Das (playing *tabla*), a journey without notation, based on an improvisation that is crafted in the moment. Persian and Indian collaboration and influence can be traced back to the 13th century. In fact, according to Das, "at times the two musical traditions are so closely intertwined that it is difficult to distinguish one from the other." When Kalhor and Das first played together, Das reflects, it felt like "a meeting of two lost cousins." Today, that journey of musical discovery and joy still permeates the soul of their music making.

Tonight's concert closes with a *Suite from Book of Angels* made up of short pieces by the prolific and often avant-garde American composer John Zorn, whose distinctive music reflects lifelong influences ranging from jazz to cinema, and from classical to klezmer and rock. Zorn's *Book of Angels* is the second in a series of collections that form his Masada project, an experiment in Jewish musical styles inspired by the composer's own heritage. In exploring this collection, Ensemble members drew on their own respective musical interests from around the world to arrange individual songs from diverse and sometimes unexpected cultural perspectives. Arrangements by Mike Block, Shanir Ezra Blumenkranz, Johnny Gandelsman, Kayhan Kalhor, Cristina Pato, and Shane Shanahan have so far contributed to this ongoing venture.

Isabelle Hunter,
The Silk Road Project, 2013

THE SILK ROAD PROJECT:
CELEBRATING 15 YEARS

NOW CELEBRATING its 15th anniversary, the Silk Road Project is an internationally minded performing arts nonprofit with cultural, educational, and business missions that promote innovation and learning through the arts. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma founded the Project in 1998 with a vision of connecting the world's neighborhoods by bringing together artists and audiences around the globe. The Project takes inspiration from the historical Silk Road trading routes and uses the Silk Road as a modern metaphor for sharing and learning across cultures, art forms and disciplines. Under the artistic direction of Mr. Ma and the leadership of CEO and Executive Director Laura Freid, the Silk Road Project has become a catalyst for transcending the edges of culture, education and business to forge new paradigms of global change. The Project has inspired artists, teachers, business leaders, and committed citizens all over the world to connect, collaborate and create community.

Known for presenting performances by the acclaimed Silk Road Ensemble, the Silk Road Project also holds cross-cultural exchanges and residencies, leads workshops for learners of all ages and partners with cultural institutions to create innovative educational programs and materials. Silk Road Connect, the Project's multi-disciplinary arts-integrated approach to education, works with students and teachers to inspire passion-driven learning. The Silk Road Project has commissioned and performed more than 70 new musical and multimedia works from composers and arrangers around the world.

For more information about the Silk Road Project, Silk Road Connect and the Silk Road Ensemble, please visit www.silkroadproject.org, subscribe to the Silk Road Project newsletter and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Hailed as “one of the 21st century’s great ensembles” by *The Vancouver Sun*, the **Silk Road Ensemble** draws together distinguished performers and composers from more than 20 countries in Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Since the Ensemble formed under the artistic direction of Yo-Yo Ma in 2000, the group’s innovative artists have eagerly explored contemporary musical crossroads. *The Seattle Times* praised the result as “a cornucopia of music ideas...featuring instrumental and vocal artists of almost unimaginable virtuosity.”

The Boston Globe has called the group “a kind of roving musical laboratory without walls.” The description is apt: the Ensemble’s approach is experimental and democratic, founded on collaboration and risk taking, on continual learning and sharing among a kaleidoscope of cultures and art forms.

Members explore one another’s traditions, celebrating the multiplicity of approaches to music from around the world. They also develop new repertoire that responds to the multicultural reality of our global society. As the *Los Angeles Times* has said, “The Silk Road Ensemble vision of international cooperation is not what we read in our daily news reports. Theirs is the better world available if we, like these extraordinary musicians, agree to make it one.”

The Silk Road Ensemble has performed to critical acclaim throughout Asia, Europe, and North America and has recorded five albums. A recent recording, *Off the Map*, was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Classical Crossover Album in 2011. The Silk Road Project’s 15-year mission to promote innovation and cross-cultural understanding through the arts is showcased in a new CD, *A Playlist Without Borders*, and DVD, *The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma: Live from Tanglewood*, released in September 2013 by Sony Masterworks.