

# Lincoln Center presents

2008/2009 Great Performers Season

*Saturday Evening, June 6, 2009, at 8:00*

## The Silk Road Ensemble

Yo-Yo Ma, *Artistic Director*

Jeffrey Beecher, *Bass*

Nicholas Cords, *Viola*

Sandeep Das, *Tabla*

Jonathan Gandelsman, *Violin*

Rauf Islamov, *Kamancheh*

Colin Jacobsen, *Violin*

Dong-Won Kim, *Jang-go and Vocals*

Yo-Yo Ma, *Cello*

Ali Asgar Mammadov, *Tar*

Alim Qasimov, *Mugham Vocals*

Fargana Qasimova, *Mugham Vocals*

Mark Suter, *Percussion*

Kojiro Umezaki, *Shakuhachi*

Wu Man, *Pipa*

Wu Tong, *Sheng*

GABRIELA LENA FRANK ***Ritmos Anchinos (2006)***

Harawi para Colquipocro

Charangos de Chinchá

Kachampa

*Silk Road Suite*

DONG-WON KIM and KOJIRO UMEZAKI ***When the Wind Circles (2006)***

AHMET ADNAN SAYGUN ***Allegretto, from Partita, Op. 31 (1954)***

TRADITIONAL ***Classical Music of Azerbaijan***

EVAN ZIPORYN ***Sulvasutra (2006)***

*Intermission*

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Tonight's performance is dedicated to Mildred and George Weissman on the occasion of their 65th anniversary.

The Lincoln Center Presentation of The Silk Road Project is sponsored by Continental Airlines. Additional corporate support is provided by Mitsubishi International Corporation and the J.C.C. Fund.

***This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.***

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**Alice Tully Hall**, Starr Theater

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**Upcoming Silk Road Ensemble Event:**

*Tuesday Evening, June 9, 2009, at 8:00, in Damrosch Park, Free Event*

**The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma**  
*Silk Road Suite*

Improvisation: *Wandering Winds*  
Chinese Traditional: *White Snow in the Sunny Spring*  
RABIH ABOU-KHALIL: *Arabian Waltz*

SANDEEP DAS: *Shristi*  
*Music of Azerbaijan*

FIKRET AMIROV: *Kor Arab*

UZEYIR HAJIBEYOV: *Shikasta* ("Minstrel's Song")  
ZHAO LIN: *Yanzi* ("Swallow Song")

KAYHAN KALHOR: *Blue as the Turquoise Night of Neyshabur*

OSVALDO GOLIJOV: *Wa Habibi, Tancas Serradas a Muru*

*This event is part of the Lincoln Center 50 Years Celebration.*

Visit [LincolnCenter.org/GreatPerformers](http://LincolnCenter.org/GreatPerformers) to view essays, interviews, and other information relating to this season's programs.

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*We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.*

*In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces, not during the performance. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.*

UZEYIR HAJIBEYOV (arr. Jonathan Gandelman and Colin Jacobsen)

***Layla and Majnun (arr. 2008)***

Love and Separation  
The Parents' Disapproval  
Sorrow and Despair  
Layla's Unwanted Wedding  
Layla's Demise  
Majnun's Madness

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## Program Summary

The historical Silk Road, a series of land and sea trade routes that crisscrossed Eurasia, enabled the exchange of goods and innovations from China to the Mediterranean Sea for nearly 2,000 years, until the 15th century. Interactions among cultural groups also 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.

Both historic and symbolic elements are central to the work of the Silk Road Project, which takes inspiration from this age-old tradition of learning from other 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 which combine non-Western and Western instruments, creating a unique genre that transcends customary musical classification.

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## Notes on the Program

### **Ritmos Anchinos (2006)**

GABRIELA LENA FRANK

*Born September 26, 1972, in Berkeley, California*

*Approximate length: 16 minutes*

This evening's concert begins with Gabriela Lena Frank's *Ritmos Anchinos*, which incorporates Latino/Latin American mythology, archeology, art, poetry, and folk music into Western classical forms, reflecting the composer's Peruvian-Jewish-Chinese heritage. Frank writes:

It has taken me a long time to appreciate the scope of Peru's multicultural history. As the America-born daughter of a Peruvian woman, I had primarily long been aware of Peru's Native American and Spanish past, but it's only recently that I've begun to try and understand its twofold African legacy from the Moorish-influenced Spanish conquerors and their West African slaves. More personal to me, though, is the Asian presence due to a great-grandfather who left China in the late 1800s to open a country store in the Andean mountains.

*Anchino* is a hybrid between *chino* (Chinese) and *andino* (Andean). The three movements of this work are: *Harawi para Colquipocro*, in the style of an indigenous melancholy mountain song traditionally done on a solo flute, the harawi. *Charangos de Chincha*, a more lighthearted movement reflecting my time visiting Chincha, a coastal town (with a Chinese-sounding name!) known for its Chinese and African population. The charango is a small mandolin-like instrument adopted by the Indians that can sound very similar to the Chinese

pipa. Brief allusions to Indian zapoña panpipes are also made. *Kachampa* is inspired by an indigenous dance of combat known as kachampa. I allude to the erquencho, a strident, clarinet-like wind instrument of the South Andes that can sound similar to the sheng. *Ritmos Anchinos* is dedicated to my grandfather, Máximo Cam Velazques (1911–68).

*Ritmos Anchinos* was commissioned by Carnegie Hall through the Weill Music Institute in partnership with the Silk Road Project.

### **Silk Road Suite**

*When the Wind Circles* (2006)

DONG-WON KIM

*Born 1965, in Korea*

KOJIRO UMEZAKI

*Born 1968, in Japan*

Allegretto, from Partita, Op. 31 (1954)

AHMET ADNAN SAYGUN

*Born September 7, 1907, in Izmir*

*Died January 6, 1991, in Istanbul*

Classical Music of Azerbaijan

TRADITIONAL

*Approximate length: 16 minutes*

The *Silk Road Suite* begins with *When the Wind Circles*, created by two Silk Road Ensemble members, Dong-Won Kim and Kojiro Umezaki, who also perform it this evening. The composers call the piece "an improvisatory musical dialogue between shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute) and Korean vocal improvisation," and explain further,

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.

A cello solo by Ahmet Adnan Saygun (widely regarded as one of the most important 20th-century Turkish composers) follows. Saygun's compositional style emerged from an education in the Western classical tradition and a dedication to researching and preserving the folk music of his homeland. East and West are beautifully woven together in the simple, yet artful *Allegretto* movement from his Partita, Op. 31, for solo cello.

Closing the suite is an improvisational performance of traditional Azerbaijani music, featuring two popular Central Asian instruments: the tar, a cousin of the Indian sitar and Western guitar, among other members of the lute family, and the kamancheh, a bowed instrument featured in courtly, folk, religious, and secular settings since at least the 12th century C.E.

**Sulvasutra (2006)**

EVAN ZIPORYN

*Born 1959, in Chicago, Illinois*

*Approximate length: 18 minutes*

*Sulvasutra* was written by composer and clarinetist Evan Ziporyn, 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. Balinese gamelan, a central influence in his music, has been a passion of his for more than 25 years. Ziporyn, who teaches at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has collaborated with Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Ornette Coleman, and Louis Andriessen. About tonight's piece, he writes, "*Sulvasutra* is based on an ancient

Sanskrit treatise, probably dating from 800 B.C.E., 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."

*Sulvasutra* was commissioned by Carnegie Hall through the Weill Music Institute in partnership with the Silk Road Project.

**Layla and Majnun (arr. 2008)**

UZEYIR HAJIBEYOV

*Born September 18, 1885 in Agjabadi, Azerbaijan*

*Died November 23, 1948 in Baku, Azerbaijan*

Arranged by

JONATHAN GANDELSMAN

*Born March 27, 1978, in Moscow*

COLIN JACOBSEN

*Born 1978, in the United States*

*Approximate length: 42 minutes*

The concert concludes with *Layla and Majnun*, a multimedia chamber arrangement of an opera by composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov that was first staged in Azerbaijan in 1908, itself based on a classic Arabian love story known and beloved throughout Central Asia. Similar in some respects to *Romeo and Juliet*, the original story dates back to the seventh century and has been interpreted by poets such as Nezami and Fuzuli. The Silk Road Ensemble's chamber arrangement incorporates instrumentation from Asian and Western traditions along with mugham, a complex form of Azerbaijani modal music in which stories and emotions are interpreted through song with accompaniment by traditional instruments such as kamancheh, tar, and daf. The leading performer of Hajibeyov's *Layla and Majnun* over the past two decades has been Alim Qasimov, Azerbaijan's foremost bearer of mugham. Because

of his preservation of the art of mugham, the country of Azerbaijan has named Qasimov a Living National Treasure. Qasimov continues his interpretation of the part of Majnun in tonight's performance, while his student and daughter, Fargana Qasimova, interprets the role of Layla.

The Silk Road Ensemble arrangement of *Layla and Majnun* was made possible in part by the generous support of the Academie Musicale de Villecroze and of the Qatar Museums Authority.

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## ***Layla and Majnun***

### **Love and Separation**

*Majnun:*

My soul is on fire because we are apart  
I want to join my beloved.  
My heart is heavy because I am alone  
I want to see my beloved.  
I feel like a nightingale that cries in pain, trapped in a cage  
I want a flower garden.

*Layla:*

My heart has been breaking since I was overcome by love,  
What kind of sorrow is this?  
I do not have the strength to describe the sorrow in my heart,  
I cannot bear being apart from you.

*Majnun:*

Seeing your face—as lovely as the sun—has made me weak  
I cannot be still.  
My only wish is to perish in the world of love,  
I thank God that my wish is granted,  
I have no more desire.

*Layla:*

My true love knows my heart is breaking  
He knows what sadness lives in my heart  
There is no need for me to explain my grief  
He knows every sliver of sorrow in my heart.

*Majnun:* Yes, I know.

*Layla:* Yes, he knows.

*Majnun:* Yes, I know.

*Layla and Majnun:*

Your movements tantalize me  
Your smile—like a flower—makes me weep  
Your sweet scent renders me motionless  
Your tousled hair drives me mad.

### **The Parents' Disapproval**

*Both:*

You fell in love, desperately in love  
And your love is mixed with sadness and grief.

*Majnun:*

Father and Mother—my soul, my spirit  
Father and Mother—my heart  
How could I know that falling in love with Layla would turn out this way?  
What could I say, what could I do?  
I cannot control this love  
I'm powerless—I have no strength  
I can only worship this one idol until the very end of my life.

*Layla:*

Mother, Father—it's not my fault that I went to school  
I've never done anything to disobey you.  
I swear this was not my intention  
I just wanted to be a carefree schoolgirl.  
Don't say any more  
Have mercy and stop tormenting me.

*Majnun:*

Father, Mother, my love will drive me mad.

### **Sorrow and Despair**

*Majnun:*

Dear God, let me be at peace with my troubles  
Let me feel the despair of my love  
Have mercy on me in my grief  
Let me feel even more despair for my love.

*Layla:*

Your eyes are closed, your heart is broken  
Your mind is tortured, and your legs are bound  
You are burning from head to toe  
And your heart smolders.

*Majnun:*

I yearn to feel this sorrow as long as I live  
I need this sorrow because this sorrow needs me.  
I will not surrender  
I will not be called unfaithful.

*Layla:*

I am as faithful as you are  
Maybe even more so  
You are on fire only at night  
While I am on fire night and day

*Both:*

Like Fuzuli, I am inspired. Please, God, let me be.

*(Please do not turn the page until the completion of the movement.)*

### **Layla's Unwanted Wedding**

*Majnun:*

Why are you in the garden with a stranger  
Enjoying yourself, bestowing favors on him?  
How could you break your word?  
Did you forget about our vows? How cruel!

*Layla:*

No, no, my soul mate, please listen to me.  
If this were up to me I would never want anyone but you.  
Fate has dealt me a cruel blow,  
I don't know how this happened.

*Majnun:*

What did I do to make you turn away from me?  
How could you choose a stranger to share your grief and happiness?  
Is this what you call love?  
You are cruel! You broke our vows!

*Layla:*

God, what torture! What agony!  
I was burning with love for you. Now I know the torture of being apart.

*Majnun:*

So this is your loyalty, Layla?  
Can someone who is unfaithful be loved?

### **Layla's Demise**

*Layla:*

Being tormented by my beloved brings me joy,  
But do not call me unfaithful.  
I am lifeless without you  
Only the hope of being with you keeps me alive.  
Don't leave me in this cradle of sadness  
Oh, moon, heal me with your nectar.

### **Majnun's Madness**

*Majnun:*

True love means sacrificing one's life for his beloved  
A soul that has not been given to a beloved is a wasted soul.  
Lovers want to be together  
But separation brings them joy forever.

## Meet the Artists



**Yo-Yo Ma**

The many-faceted career of cellist Yo-Yo Ma is testament to his continual search for new ways to communicate with audiences and to his personal desire for artistic growth and renewal. Mr. Ma maintains a balance between his engagements as soloist with orchestras worldwide and his recital and chamber music activities. His discography includes more than 75 albums, including 16 Grammy Award-winners. One of Mr. Ma's goals is the investigation of music as a means of communication and as a vehicle for the migration of ideas; in 1998, he established the Silk Road Project to promote the study of cultural, artistic, and intellectual traditions along the ancient Silk Road trade routes.

Mr. Ma was born in Paris to Chinese parents who later moved the family to New York. He began to study cello at the age of four, attended The Juilliard School, and in 1976 graduated from Harvard University. He has received numerous awards, including the 1978 Avery Fisher Prize, 1999 Glenn Gould Prize, 2001 National Medal of Arts, 2006 Sonning Prize, 2006 Dan David Prize, and 2008 World Economic Forum's Crystal Award. In 2006 he was designated a United Nations Messenger of Peace by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan. In 2007 Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon extended his appointment. In January 2009, at the invitation of President-Elect Barack Obama, Mr. Ma played in the quartet performance of John Williams' *Air and Simple Gifts* at the 56th Inaugural Ceremony.

### **Jeffrey Beecher**

Jeffrey Beecher (bass, U.S.) pursues a varied musical career as both an energetic performer and educator. He is the principal bass with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and serves on the faculties of the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music and the University of Toronto.

### **Nicholas Cords**

As a soloist Nicholas Cords (viola, U.S.) has appeared with the Philadelphia, Chicago Symphony, Minnesota, and New York String Seminar orchestras. He has had a role in organizing and developing new creative projects and programming for concerts and museum residencies, as well as an active role in residencies at Rhode Island School of Design and Harvard University.

### **Sandeep Das**

Sandeep Das (tabla, India) is considered one of the leading tabla players today. One of the favorite disciples of the legendary tabla maestro Pandit Kishan Maharaj, Mr. Das' talent for music and communication has allowed him to bridge the divide between Indian and Western classical music. In 2001 he performed a work composed by Kayhan Kalhor with the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Kurt Masur. His recent composition *Shristi* received its world premiere at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall in September 2006.

### **Jonathan Gandelsman**

Although Jonathan Gandelsman (violin and composer, Israel/Russia) has been performing as a soloist since he was a child, he discovered his true love for music through lifelong friendships that were formed at the Curtis Institute of Music, where he was a student. He was the concertmaster of Wild Ginger Philharmonic, a groundbreaking orchestra founded by his classmate and conductor David Goodman, which led to the

creation of the string quartet Brooklyn Rider, of which he is a member.

### **Rauf Islamov**

Rauf Islamov (kamancheh, Azerbaijan) has studied at the Asaf Zeynalli Music College and the National Conservatory. Among his teachers were Azerbaijan's renowned kamancheh performers Fakhraddin Dadashov and Adalat Vazirov. Since being awarded the laureateship at the mugham competition in Azerbaijan in 1998, he has performed internationally as a part of traditional mugham trio led by Alim Qasimov. Mr. Islamov has been teaching the kamancheh class at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory since 2006.

### **Colin Jacobsen**

Colin Jacobsen (violin and composer, U.S.), a 2003 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient, began his violin studies at age four, graduated in 1999 from The Juilliard School, and continued his studies at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague. He has enjoyed cross-disciplinary explorations with several dance companies and is a member of the string quartet Brooklyn Rider. In the summer of 2006, Brooklyn Rider helped to found the Stillwater Music Festival in Minnesota.

### **Dong-Won Kim**

Born in Pusan, Korea, Dong-Won Kim (Jang-go/ vocals and composer, Korea) began studying Korean traditional percussion music in 1986. He has worked with master performers such as Duk-Su Kim and is versed in Jindo-sitgim-gut (the shaman ritual of the Jindo region), Kyong-gi-do-dang-gut (the shaman ritual of the Kyong-gi area), samul-nori (farmer's music), pansori, and maulgummul-gut (farmer's music).

### **Ali Asgar Mammadov**

Ali Asgar Mammadov (tar, Azerbaijan) studied at the Bul-bul Music School and the Baku Music Academy. He was part of a traditional mugham trio led by Alim Qasimov from 1999 to 2000 and resumed collabora-

tion with the singer in 2005. Mr. Mammadov has worked with the orchestra of the Azerbaijan Opera and Ballet Theater since 1998 and has taught at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory since 2005.

### **Alim Qasimov**

Named a Living National Treasure of Azerbaijan, Alim Qasimov (mugham vocals, Azerbaijan) has performed as a soloist at the Azerbaijan Opera and Ballet Theater and on Azerbaijan's most prestigious stages, including the Heydar Aliyev Palace and the Azerbaijan Philharmonic Hall. Mr. Qasimov's numerous awards include the International IMC-UNESCO Music Prize; the title of the People's Artist of Azerbaijan, the highest artistic rank in the country; and the Medal of Glory.

### **Fargana Qasimova**

Fargana Qasimova (mugham vocals, Azerbaijan), Alim Qasimov's daughter and student, studied mugham at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory. She grew up with sounds of mugham and verses from the classical poetry of Azerbaijan; since the age of four, she often performed along with her father at home. Her international performances at various concerts have earned her a reputation as a master of mugham.

### **Mark Suter**

Mark Suter (percussion, Switzerland/U.S.) appears as a chamber musician and collaborative artist in both Western classical and world music arenas. Currently associate principal percussionist with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, he has also been avidly exploring his love of hand percussion, having studied and performed in Costa Rica, Brazil, Cuba, and Kazakhstan.

### **Kojiro Umezaki**

Kojiro Umezaki (shakuhachi and composer, Japan) grew up in Tokyo, where he began studying Western flute and the shakuhachi. His career encompasses both traditional

and technology-based music and a range of electronic media. He holds a degree in electro-acoustic music from Dartmouth College and is assistant professor of music at the University of California, Irvine.

### **Wu Man**

Since moving to the United States from China in 1990, pipa virtuoso Wu Man (pipa, China) has not only introduced the traditional Chinese instrument and its repertoire to Western audiences, but has also successfully worked to give this ancient instrument a new role in today's music. She studied at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where she became the first recipient of a master's degree in pipa.

### **Wu Tong**

Born to a musical family in Beijing, Wu Tong (sheng, China) has become his generation's most visible proponent of traditional Chinese music. As a founding vocalist of the pioneering rock band Lunhui ("Again") he has achieved an unparalleled following for Chinese music on three continents.

### **The Silk Road Ensemble**

The Silk Road Ensemble is a collective of approximately 60 internationally renowned musicians, composers, arrangers, visual artists, and storytellers from more than 20 countries. Each Ensemble member'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 authentic tradition.

Many of the musicians first came together under the artistic direction of Yo-Yo Ma at a workshop at Tanglewood Music Center in Massachusetts in 2000. Since then, in various configurations, Ensemble artists have collaborated on a diverse range of musical and multimedia projects, presenting innovative performances that explore the relationship

between tradition and innovation in music from the East and West. The Silk Road Ensemble has recorded four albums and performed to critical acclaim throughout Asia, Europe, and North America. For more information, please visit [www.silkroadproject.org](http://www.silkroadproject.org).

### **The Silk Road Project**

The Silk Road Project is a not-for-profit artistic, cultural, and educational organization with a vision of connecting the world's neighborhoods by bringing together artists and audiences around the globe. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma founded the Project in 1998 as a catalyst to promote innovation and learning through the arts. The Silk Road Project takes inspiration from the historical Silk Road trading route as a modern metaphor for multicultural and interdisciplinary exchange.

Under the artistic direction of Mr. Ma and led by CEO/Executive Director Laura Freid, the Silk Road Project presents performances by the Silk Road Ensemble, engages in cross-cultural exchanges and residencies, leads workshops for students, and partners with leading cultural institutions to create educational materials and programs. Developing new music is a central mission of the Silk Road Project, which has been involved in commissioning and performing more than 60 new musical and multimedia works from composers and arrangers from around the world.

In New York, the Silk Road Project has been invited by Chancellor Joel Klein to conduct a multiyear, multidisciplinary educational program as part of the New York City Department of Education's Campaign for Middle School Success. The program, Silk Road Connect, aims to inspire passion-driven learning by empowering students and teachers to seek connections across all areas of study, both in and out of the classroom.

## Lincoln Center's Great Performers

Initiated in 1965, Lincoln Center's Great Performers series offers approximately 100 classical and contemporary music performances annually. One of the largest music presentation series in the world, Great Performers runs from October through June with offerings in Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Walter Reade Theater, Clark Studio Theater, Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse, and other various performance spaces throughout New York City. In 2005, Great Performers expanded to include presentations in the Rose Theater and The Allen Room at the Time Warner Center at Columbus Circle. The world's outstanding symphony orchestras, vocalists, chamber ensembles, and recitalists are featured in Great Performers, as well as special repertoire-focused festivals, themed series, and educational activities. During the 1998–99 season, Great Performers added a new dimension to the classical music experience through its New Visions series. In productions specially commissioned by Lincoln Center, New Visions offers innovative stage presentations and groundbreaking collaborations among the world's leading directors, choreographers, and classical performers. This season a new series has been added to

Great Performers, The Literary Muse, which focuses an innovative lens on the world of literature.

## Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community relations, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. As a presenter of more than 400 events annually, LCPA's series include American Songbook, Great Performers, Lincoln Center Festival, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Midsummer Night Swing, and the Mostly Mozart Festival. The Emmy Award-winning *Live From Lincoln Center* extends Lincoln Center's reach to millions of Americans nationwide. As a leader in arts and education and community relations, LCPA takes a wide range of activities beyond its halls through the Lincoln Center Institute, as well as offering arts-related symposia, family programming, and accessibility. And as manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and its 11 other resident organizations.

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*The Silk Road Project gratefully acknowledges its partners around the world whose generosity continues to help us connect the world's neighborhoods: Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, New York Fund for Public Schools, Pershing Square Foundation.*

# The Silk Road

The historical Silk Road was a series of trade routes that crisscrossed Eurasia for almost 2,000 years, until about the year 1500 C.E. While its name suggests routes over land, Silk Road sea routes were also important for trade and communication. The extent of exchange of art, ideas, and innovations between cultural groups trading on the routes is illustrated by the eighth-century Shōsōin collection of artifacts. Culled by a Japanese emperor, it contains luxury goods from the Mediterranean, Persia, India, Central Asia, China, Korea, and Japan. By the 16th century Europe was trading along the Silk Road routes, as well.

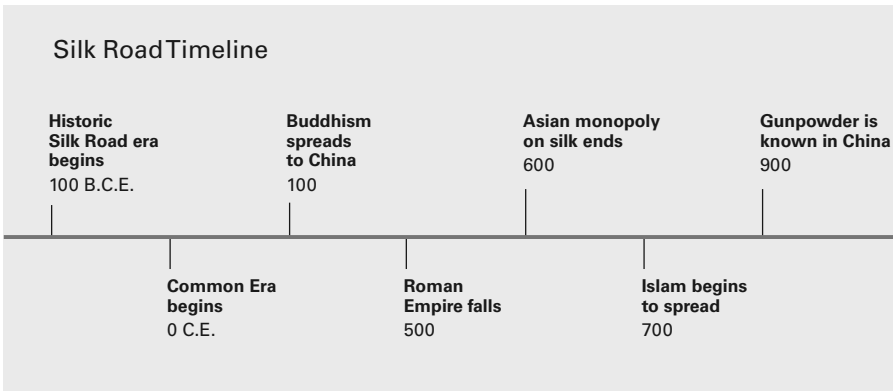
Over the centuries, many important scientific and technological innovations migrated to the West along the Silk Road, including gunpowder, the magnetic compass, the printing press, silk, mathematics, and ceramic and lacquer crafts. Eastern and Western string, wind, and percussion instruments also traveled between regions and had strong influences on one another over time. Among other instruments, the Shōsōin collection contains lutes from India and Persia. The

Persian mizmar, a reed instrument, appears to be an ancestor of the European oboe and clarinet. Cymbals were introduced into China from India, and Chinese gongs made their way to Europe.

Resources, information, and innovations were exchanged between so many cultures over so many hundreds of years that it is now often difficult to identify the origins of numerous traditions that our respective cultures take for granted. In this way, the Silk Road created an intercontinental think tank of human ingenuity.

## Why the Silk Road?

This historic trade network provides a namesake-worthy metaphor for the Silk Road Project’s vision of connecting artists and audiences around the world. Yo-Yo Ma has called these routes, which resulted in the first global exchange of scientific and cultural traditions, the “Internet of antiquity.” The Silk Road Project takes inspiration from this age-old tradition of cross-cultural exchange.



# Some Silk Road Instruments



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## **Kamancheh, Iran, Azerbaijan**

The kamancheh is a small fiddle with a long conical neck, a round wooden body covered in animal skin, and a spike protruding from the base. The instrument rests on the player's knee or on the ground and is swiveled on the spike to meet the bow as it is played. Traditionally played in the improvised Islamic music known as mugham, the kamancheh's warm, elegant sound is reminiscent of the human voice, making it conducive to solo-virtuoso or small-ensemble playing. With early written references dating to the 12th century C.E., the kamancheh has been featured in courtly, folk, religious, and secular settings for centuries.

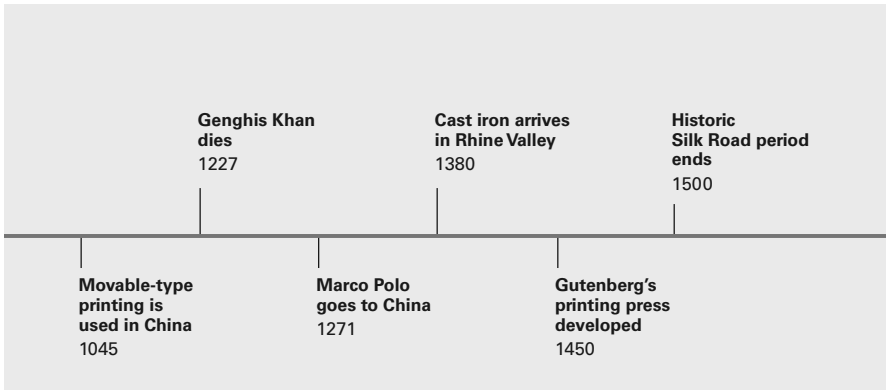


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## **Tar, Middle East, Caucasus**

One of the principal Iranian and Azerbaijani instruments, the tar is a long-necked double-heart shaped lute made from mulberry wood and covered in lambskin. The instrument has six steel and copper strings and a long, flat fingerboard with up to 28 adjustable frets. Once thought to cure ailments and soothe the mind into a philosophical mood, the tar has deeply influenced trends in Persian music over the last few centuries. To play, the strings are plucked with a brass plectrum (pick).

## *A Millennium and More Along the Fabled Silk Road*





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### **Shakuhachi, Japan**

The shakuhachi is made from the base of a bamboo stalk with holes drilled into the center and the sides. The instrument is played by blowing air across the beveled edge at the top end while covering and uncovering the holes with fingertips. The shakuhachi has been used in Japanese Zen Buddhist meditation since the 15th century. The sounds produced by the instrument range from soft whispers to strong piercing tones. They are intended to reflect sounds in nature, such as birdcalls, wind, and water. Today the shakuhachi is also often played in jazz, orchestral, and popular music ensembles.



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### **Sheng, China**

The sheng is a mouth organ made of metal, wood, or a gourd with a blowpipe and at least 17 bamboo or metal pipes extending from the top of the bowl. The elegant symmetrical arrangement of the pipes represents the folded wings of the mythical phoenix. Inside the bowl, each pipe has a hole covered by a metal tongue that interrupts the air current to produce a strikingly clear, metallic sound. Western harmonicas, reed organs, and concertinas use the same basic acoustical principles.



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### **Pipa, China**

The pipa is a short-necked wooden lute. The head of the instrument is often carved with a bat's head, because the word for "bat" in Chinese sounds similar to the word for "luck." The strings were traditionally made of twisted silk, but are now typically synthetic. The pluck-playing technique is characterized by spectacular finger dexterity and virtuosic effects, including rolls and percussive slaps. Pipa repertoire includes extensive tone poems vividly describing famous battles and other exciting stories.



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### **Tabla, India**

The tabla is a pair of small drums. The treble drum is called the tabla or dahina ("right" in Hindi) and sits on the floor in front of the player. The bass kettledrum is called the bayan ("left" in Hindi). It is made of clay or copper and sits to the left of the dahina. The player hits the center of the skin on the top of each drum with his fingers while pressing down to alter the pitch of the sound. A virtuoso player may produce so many different sounds and inflections that the instrument seems to speak. In India, the process of learning to play the tabla begins when a master adopts a six- or seven-year-old child as his student. The student will study with the master every day for a decade or longer.

# A View from the Silk Road



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Throughout my travels and performances around the world, I have been intrigued by the complex interconnections among arts, cultures, and ideas that have been influential for centuries. How did an eighth-century Japanese biwa, a pear-shaped stringed instrument, come to be decorated with Persian and Central Asian designs? How did ancient Roman glass influence objects made in China, Korea, and Japan?

In 1998, we formed the Silk Road Project to explore connections from ancient times to the present. These links form pieces of a puzzle that combine to reveal a coherent picture of who we are, what our place is in the world, and why we do what we do.

The Project's work consists of careful investigations, joining beloved traditions with new knowledge and innovation. Live performance, constant learning, trust, and inventive collaboration lie at the core of our work together. Our educational partnerships have served to broaden and strengthen our commitment to passion-driven learning. We are guided by the belief that all of us are equipped with different intelligences and that we best receive and share knowledge in multidisciplinary, multi-sensate ways.

During the past ten years, the Silk Road Ensemble's experiences have led us to new discoveries and new ways of thinking as we share in a culture of collaboration. The creation of trust is a key ingredient, a safety net in an environment where risk-taking and innovation are encouraged.

As we celebrate our 10th anniversary, I am tremendously grateful for the opportunity to undertake this work, for the abiding friendships and far-reaching partnerships that have developed, and for the warm reception we have received from people all over the globe. In our world of increasing awareness and interdependence, music can act as a magnet to draw people together. I look forward to the Silk Road Project's second decade, in which by knowing subjects deeply and sharing ideas broadly we will continue to strive to serve a community that seeks a broader, empathetic understanding of the peoples and cultures of our globalized world.

**Yo-Yo Ma**  
**Artistic Director**