



SILKROAD

Silkroad Ensemble: Uplifted Voices

Featuring Wu Man, Pura Fé, and Nathalie Joachim

FEATURING ARTISTS

Pura Fé, Lap-steel Slide Guitar, Voice

Haruka Fujii, Percussion

Maeve Gilchrist, Celtic Harp, Voice

Nathalie Joachim, Flute, Voice

Wu Man, Pipa

Karen Ouzounian, Cello

ABOUT SILKROAD

Yo-Yo Ma conceived Silkroad in 1998, recognizing the historical Silk Road as a model for radical cultural collaboration—for the exchange of ideas, tradition, and innovation across borders. In an innovative experiment, he brought together musicians from the lands of the Silk Road to co-create a musical language founded in difference, thus creating the foundation of Silkroad: both a touring ensemble comprised of world-class musicians from all over the globe and a social-impact organization working to make a positive impact across borders through the arts. Today, under the leadership of Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens, Silkroad leads social impact initiatives and educational programming alongside the creation of new music by the Grammy Award-winning Silkroad Ensemble. For more information, [please visit Silkroad.org](https://www.silkroad.org).

PROGRAM

Adjustments to the program will be announced from the stage.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

As a social-impact organization and home to a Grammy Award-winning musical ensemble, Silkroad works to inspire collaboration in innovative ways that add more equity and justice into the world through the power of the arts. Today, under the leadership of Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens, Silkroad reaches new heights through a commitment to new music, a re-sparked mission towards cultural collaboration, and a reinvigorated focus to high-quality arts education that both reflects its mission and the times in which we live.

In *Uplifted Voices*, Silkroad shines a light on previously under-recognized voices from across the globe to change our perspective of the history and migration of music. Through a stunning collaboration of global instrumentation and strings, Silkroad's newest project champions women and non-binary members of the Silkroad Ensemble alongside special guest Tuscarora/Taíno musician Pura Fé to tell a musical journey that connects the music of indigenous North America to the World. Drawing inspiration from the folk and ancestral music of Japan, China, Armenia, Ireland and the Hebrides, and native populations across North America, *Uplifted Voices* brings together this collection of distinctive and powerful musical origins within a contemporary musical tapestry.

Tamping Song – Haruka Fujii

While doing research for Silkroad's upcoming project American Railroad, I was surprised to discover that after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Japanese immigrants became one of the dominant workforces; by 1906, over 13,000 Japanese immigrants were working for the railroads. Later, under pressure, Japan would stop labor immigration to the United States via the Gentleman's Agreement of 1908.

During this research I also discovered a recording of the "Tamping Song" — a railroad worker's song released on Columbia Records Japan in 1963. Using an inspirational melody from this song, my work weaves the ambition, dreams, and hopes of the immigrant workers on the front lines of the railroad construction in the US with the sentiment for their homeland.

Indigenous World and Mind – Pura Fé

Two Chinese Paintings (2015 - 2023) – Wu Man, realized by Danny Clay

- I. Ancient Echo
- II. Silk and Bamboo

"Two Chinese Paintings" is a two-movement suite which, taken with Glimpses of Muqam Chebiyat, resembles a set of portraits of traditional cultures from around China. In Chinese traditional music, instrumental pieces often have poetic titles to express their content and style. I decided to continue this tradition with this collection. The inspiration for these suites came from styles of Chinese traditional music familiar to me – a pipa scale from the 9th century and the Silk-and-Bamboo music (or teahouse music) from my hometown of Hangzhou.

"Ancient Echo", the first movement of "Two Chinese Paintings", is based on a scale found among the oldest tunes for pipa. The second movement, "Silk and Bamboo", is a variation on the tune "Joyful Song" (Huanle) from the collection of Silk-and-Bamboo.

This piece was composed for 50 For The Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire. Tonight's version is specially arranged for Silkroads's Uplifted Voice tour. I feel quite grateful to be able to bring these old styles of traditional music into the repertoire of the Silkroad Ensemble. I hope that audiences will come to better understand the richness and diversity of music from China through these stories. I'd like to thank my Silkroad colleagues for their trust and encouragement, for giving me this opportunity to share my musical experiences with audiences.

Der Zor – Karen Ouzounian

Oh, Armenian - dying for your religion's sake. This is the recurring line in the song "Der Zor Chollerende", a song sung in Turkish by the victims of the Armenian Genocide while on the forced marches into the Syrian desert of Der Zor. In 1915 and 1916, hundreds of thousands of Armenians were marched to their deaths in Der Zor by the Ottoman Turkish government. I discovered the song a few months ago in the Library of Congress's catalogue of recordings of Armenian folk musicians in Fresno, California. A lone, male voice in 1939. The recording is grainy and a dog barks in the distance. Thirty years ago, I first heard about Der Zor when I was a child in Armenian elementary school in Canada. There the children heard that the desert was filled with our ancestors' bones.

Today I am haunted by this song, and I visit Der Zor in my imagination. I wanted this piece to mirror my discovery of this music and it begins distantly, as an old recording. An unexpected vocal chord brings us into the present, and melodies are passed around and elaborated on by the musicians: the contemporary world remembering, teaching and sharing the stories of the past.

The song is sung in Turkish—the principal language of my great-grandmother and previous generations but a language I do not speak myself. After being driven from their homes, families like mine moved to Syria and Lebanon, and then further on to France, Canada and the U.S. Armenian became our home language. There is an irony that the act of trying to eliminate the Armenian people led to a newfound sense of strength and cultural unity around the world, with Armenians across the diaspora from Iran to California sharing culture, history, and songs like this one.

Kanpe Anba Soley – Nathalie Joachim

*Pandan m kanpe anba solèy la
Mpanse a jan nou te soufri
Tèt nou te bese, kouvri ak swe
Nou te priye
Pou lwa yo vin sove
Bèl po nwa nou anba solèy*

*As I stand beneath the sun
I think of how much we suffered
Our heads were bowed, covered with sweat
And we prayed
For the spirits to come save
Our beautiful Black skin beneath the sun*

*Pandan m kanpe anba solèy la
M panse a jan nou te soufri
Tèt nou te bese, kouvri ak swe
Nou te priye
Pou lwa yo vin sove
Bèl po nwa nou anba solèy*

*As I stand beneath the sun
I think of how much we suffered
Our heads were bowed, covered with sweat
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For the spirits to come save
Our beautiful Black skin beneath the su*

Untitled Duo – Maeve Gilchrist & Wu Man

Lullaby – Nasim Khorassani

*Lullaby for the innocent children martyrs of Iran who gave their lives on the way to freedom
Rest in peace, my dear children.
We will never forget you!
The sun will rise...*

Canoe Song – Pura Fé

Kouti Yo – Nathalie Joachim

*Pa manyen kouti yo
Yo koud blese a
Pa manyen kouti yo
Yo koud blese a
Men blese a fon
Men blese a fon*

*Don't touch the stitches
They sewed up the wound
Don't touch the stitches
They sewed up the wound
But the wound is deep
But the wound is deep*

*Menm si li sanble geri
Menm si ou preske pa ka wè l
Pa manyen kouti yo*

*Even if it looks healed
Even if you almost can't see it
Don't touch the stitches*

*Pa manyen kouti yo
Yo koud blese a
Pa manyen kouti yo
Yo koud blese a
Men blese a fon*

*Don't touch the stitches
They sewed up the wound
Don't touch the stitches
They sewed up the wound
But the wound is deep*

*Pa manyen kouti yo
Yo koud blese a
Men blese a fon
Men blese a fon*

*Don't touch the stitches
They sewed up the wound
But the wound is deep
But the wound is deep*

Far Down Far – Maeve Gilchrist *

Francis O’Neill was an Irish-born member of the Chicago Police Force who rose to Superintendent between 1873 and 1905. Chief O’Neill is also credited as having the single most influence on the evolution of Irish Music in the twentieth century due to his collection of Irish folk tunes and songs. Among his many published works is O’Neill’s Music of Ireland, a collection of over 1,850 pieces of music. An Irish immigrant living in the US during the peak wave of migration, employed by the relatively new and deeply disorganized concept of a Police Force while also living a life deeply connected to the music of his homeland; his collection of tunes seemed a natural place to find a seed from which this composition grew. I was drawn towards a jig called “The Far Down Farmer”. During my research into the Irish involvement in the building of the American Transcontinental Railroad, I read about the tension that existed on occasion between Catholic and Protestant workers. The Catholic workers, often from a more economically depressed background, were sometimes referred to as ‘Far Downers’.

I took this simple, two-part jig, and deconstructed the vocabulary, using the motifs and intervals as if I were building a train, laying the tracks and allowing the melody to build up momentum and speed as it gets slung between our respective instruments. I hope that this composition pays tribute to the roots of the tune and the back-breaking work of the workers on both sides of the religious and cultural divide while allowing the melody to fly in the hands of women who would likely never have been given a fiddle or a flute, let alone a hammer to build with!

Mahkjchi – Pura Fé

ENCORE

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Pura Fé

Lap-steel Slide Guitar, Voice

Pura Fé (Tuscarora/Taino) is an Indigenous activist, singer-songwriter, and storyteller known for her distinct, soulful vocals and for breathing life into several musical genres. Her work as a musician has brought her around the world to do work at festivals, benefits, in classrooms, online, and in the studio. As a Native activist and cultural leader, she has done work to combat the erasure of native culture, restore traditions, build community, fight corporate takeover of native land, and give a voice to those facing social injustice.

As the founding member of the internationally renowned Native Women's a cappella trio Ulali, Pura Fé helped to create a movement throughout Indian Country, which not only empowered Native Women's hand drum and harmony, but also built a bridge for Native music into the mainstream music scene. Pura Fé's solo career has produced six studio albums with her Native Blues and lap-steel slide guitar work. While touring Europe with Music Maker Blues Review under Dixie Frog and Nueva Onda French labels, she won Grand Prix du Disque from L'Académie Charles Cros (French Grammy) for Best World Album in 2006 for Tuscarora Nation Blues, and a Native American Music Award (NAMMY) for Best Female Artist for Follow Your Heart's Desire in the same year. Pura Fé and Ulali appeared in and consulted for the Rezolution Pictures Documentary RUMBLE: The Indians That Rocked The World, which won first place at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival. Pura Fé commented on her experience with the documentary, "This gave me a chance to reenact a piece of the historical birth of blues music that no one considers or hears about". Incumbent United States Poet Laureate, Joy Harjo once said, "We are systematically being written out of everything." To have a platform to help bring awareness to the mainstream was crucial to Pura Fé and Ulali. Today, Pura Fé lives in Canada and is writing a film for Rezolution Pictures. She is also working with First Nations dance and theater troops while recording a new album.

Haruka Fujii

Percussion

Multi-percussionist [Haruka Fujii](#) has won international acclaim for her interpretation of contemporary music, having commissioned and performed numerous premiere works from luminary living composers. She has appeared as a soloist with major orchestras including the Munich Philharmonic, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Nationale de Lyon, and the NHK Symphony Orchestra. She performs with her mother Mustuko and sister Rika—both percussionists—as the Utari Duo and Fujii Trio. Her first solo recording, *Ingredients*, was released in 2013 by New Focus Recordings.

Maeve Gilchrist

Celtic Harp, Voice

Edinburgh born harpist and composer [Maeve Gilchrist](#) has been credited as an innovator on her native instrument and taken the Celtic (lever) Harp to new levels of performance and visibility. Currently based in Hudson Valley, NY, Maeve tours internationally as a solo artist and maintains a variety of projects including duo with the percussive-dancer Nic Gareiss, an electronics-based collaboration with Nashville-based bass player and producer, Viktor Krauss, as a member of the grammy-nominated Silkroad Ensemble, and as part of the multidisciplinary quartet Edges of Light. She has performed and recorded with such luminaries as Darol Anger, Yo-Yo Ma, Frankie Gavin, Esperanza Spalding, Kathy Mattea, and Solas. As a composer, Maeve straddles the worlds of folk and classical with pieces including her original concerto for symphony orchestra and harp (a co-commission with Luke Benton), a three-movement Samuel Beckett-inspired piece for harp, string quartet and sound samples which was premiered at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival in the spring of 2018 and a number of other pieces for harp ensembles, strings and small-ensembles. She is a regular visiting artist at the Berklee College of Music and has had a number of instructional books published by Hal Leonard and 80 days

publishing. Maeve has released a number of albums to her name on the Adventure Music Record Label as well as being a featured soloist on the Dreamworks blockbuster movie soundtrack, *How to Tame Your Dragon: The Hidden World*. Her most recent independently-released album, *The Harpweaver* was described by the Irish Times as “buoyant, sprightly and utterly beguiling...a snapshot of a musician at the top of her game”.

Nathalie Joachim

Flute, Voice

Nathalie Joachim is a GRAMMY-nominated performer and composer. The Haitian-American artist is hailed for being “a fresh and invigorating cross-cultural voice”. (The Nation). Her creative practice centers an authentic commitment to storytelling and human connectivity while advocating for social change and cultural awareness, gaining her the reputation of being “powerful and unpretentious.” (The New York Times) Ms. Joachim is Assistant Professor of Composition at Princeton University and is regularly commissioned to write for orchestra, instrumental and vocal ensembles, dance, and interdisciplinary theater. This season’s highlights include new works for Carnegie Hall, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Grant Park Music Festival, and Spoleto Festival USA. Her landmark project, *Fanm d’Ayiti*, an evening-length work for flute, voice, string quartet and electronics, celebrates and explores her personal Haitian heritage and received a GRAMMY nomination for Best World Music Album. Joachim’s highly anticipated sophomore album, *Ki moun ou ye* - an intimate examination of ancestral connection and self - was co-released by Nonesuch Records and New Amsterdam Records in February 2024. Joachim is a United States Artist Fellow and co-founder of the critically acclaimed duo Flutronix. She is an alumnus of The Juilliard School and The New School.

Wu Man

Pipa

Pipa virtuoso and composer Wu Man is an ambassador of Chinese music, creating a new role for her lute-like instrument in both traditional and contemporary music. Brought up in the Pudong school of pipa playing, Wu Man became the first person to receive a master’s degree in pipa performance from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. She is a frequent collaborator with the Kronos Quartet and Shanghai Quartet, and has performed in recital and as soloist with major orchestras around the world, regularly premiering new works. Wu Man has appeared on more than 40 albums, including a Grammy winner with the Silkroad Ensemble (“Best World Music Album”) and five additional Grammy nominees. She was named Musical America’s 2013 Instrumentalist of the Year, but the best measure of her achievement is that her instrument, which dates back 2000 years, is no longer an exotic curiosity.

Karen Ouzounian

Cello

Praised for her “radiant” and “expressive” performances (The New York Times), cellist Karen Ouzounian is a winner of the S&R Foundation's 2016 Washington Award and at home in diverse musical settings. She is a founding member of the Aizuri Quartet, which was awarded the Grand Prize at the 2018 M-Prize

Chamber Arts Competition, First Prize at the 2017 Osaka International Chamber Music Competition in Japan, and was the String Quartet-in-Residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for its 2017-18 season. Its debut album, *Blueprinting*, was released by New Amsterdam Records in 2018. Her commitment to adventurous repertoire and the collaborative process has led to her membership in the Grammy-nominated chamber orchestra A Far Cry, and the critically-acclaimed new music collective counter)induction. She has performed internationally with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and The Knights, as soloist with the Orlando Philharmonic and Philharmonic Orchestra of Santiago, on tour with Musicians from Marlboro, and in recital at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts. Born to Armenian parents in Toronto, Karen holds master's and bachelor's degrees from The Juilliard School, where she was a student of Timothy Eddy.