



For Immediate Release

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Silkroad Announces Its First Residency at Spelman College



Silkroad artists Rhiannon Giddens and Mazz Swift will visit campus this spring to lead conversations, workshops, and performances with Spelman faculty and students

Boston, MA — Today, [Silkroad](#) announced its first educational residency at [Spelman College](#), a historically Black liberal arts college located in Atlanta, Georgia. The three-part residency includes artist intensives and creative workshops led by Artistic Director **Rhiannon Giddens** on **March 15 and 16**, and a celebration event and performance featuring Silkroad artist **Mazz Swift** on **April 11**. Details about events as part of the residency can be found on Spelman's [website](#).

“All of us at Silkroad are thrilled to be forging this new partnership with Spelman College and to contribute to students’ educational journey through exploration and exposure to diverse musics and cultures. This experience will be just as enriching for us as we hope it will be for them,” said Grammy Award-winning musician and Silkroad’s Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens.

Silkroad’s residency at Spelman consists of in-person sessions over two consecutive days (March 15 and 16) and a special performance to celebrate outgoing Spelman President Mary Schmidt Campbell (April 11). During the first part of the residency, Giddens will lead a series of artist intensives designed for students majoring in music. These will focus on improvisation, composition, coaching, and storytelling, drawing from her background as an artist-activist and historian. Giddens will also engage the Spelman community through creative workshops on music-making and storytelling, which will be open to the general Spelman community.

For the final part of the residency, violinist/vocalist/composer Mazz Swift—a member of the Silkroad Ensemble—will visit the College in mid-April to participate in a performance honoring Spelman President Mary Schmidt Campbell, who is retiring at the end of this academic year. Swift will collaborate with Spelman faculty and students as part of this campus-wide celebration.

“We look forward to welcoming Silkroad artists Rhiannon Giddens and Mazz Swift to Spelman’s campus this spring,” stated Dr. Campbell. “This invaluable experience will deepen our students’ cultural collaboration and exchange of ideas, traditions, and innovation in music and the arts and underscores the College’s commitment to Arts@Spelman.”

Through this inaugural residency, Silkroad artists aim to guide Spelman students in expanding their creativity, developing an artistic process, and using the arts as a vehicle for storytelling. They also hope to inspire students and community members to engage with traditions from other cultures, build the courage to express themselves, and bring passion to their work.

A second residency, featuring a larger group of Silkroad artists, is slated for fall 2022.

Funding Credits

Support for this residency is generously provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, who Spelman College and Silkroad gratefully acknowledge for their generous support of activities that promote innovation, education, and cross-cultural understanding through the arts.

About Silkroad

Yo-Yo Ma conceived Silkroad in 1998, recognizing the historical Silk Road as a model for cultural collaboration—for the exchange of ideas, tradition, and innovation across borders. In a groundbreaking 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.

To learn more, please visit silkroad.org and @silkroadproject on social media.

About Spelman College

Founded in 1881, Spelman College is a leading liberal arts college widely recognized as the global leader in the education of women of African descent. Located in Atlanta, the College’s picturesque campus is home to 2,100 students. Spelman is the country’s leading producer of Black women who complete Ph.D.s in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The College’s status is confirmed by U.S. News & World Report, which ranked Spelman No. 54 among all liberal arts colleges, No. 24 for undergraduate teaching, No. 4 for social mobility among liberal arts colleges, and No. 1 for the 15th year among historically Black colleges and universities. The Wall Street Journal ranked the College No. 3, nationally, in terms of student satisfaction. Recent initiatives include a designation by the Department of Defense as a Center of Excellence for Minority Women in STEM, a Gender and Sexuality Studies Institute, the first endowed queer studies chair at an HBCU, and a program to increase the number of Black

women Ph.D.s in economics. New majors have been added, including documentary filmmaking and photography, and collaborations have been established with MIT's Media Lab, the Broad Institute and the Army Research Lab for artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Outstanding alumnae include Children's Defense Fund founder [Marian Wright Edelman](#), Walgreens Boots Alliance CEO [Rosalind Brewer](#), political leader [Stacey Abrams](#), former Acting Surgeon General and Spelman's first alumna president [Audrey Forbes Manley](#), actress and producer [Latanya Richardson Jackson](#), global bioinformatics geneticist [Janina Jeff](#) and authors [Pearl Cleage](#) and [Tayari Jones](#).

To learn more, please visit spelman.edu and @spelmancollege on social media.

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