

# ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



SILKROAD

*our mission:*

Silkroad creates music that engages difference, sparking radical cultural collaboration and passion-driven learning

**for a more hopeful and inclusive world**

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# A YEAR OF CHANGE

## A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**S**ilkroad's 2019-2020 season was one of incredible change and transition. Moving into our 20th year as an organization, Silkroad has continued to mature and evolve, bringing with it a continued passion for the arts as a conduit for a more hopeful and inclusive world.

This year marked the transfer of executive leadership from the hands of Eduardo Braniff into my own. I was honored to join the Silkroad family as its new Executive

Director in November 2019. As in my most recent position as the Director of Creative Leadership Initiatives and Senior Advisor to Turnaround Arts at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, I am thrilled to bring my passion of creating more justice and equity in the world through the arts.

While the year graced us with amazing successes – such as the breathtaking premiere and tour of Osvaldo Golijov's *Falling Out of Time*, as well as continued rich, educational partnerships with College of the Holy Cross and Boston Conservatory at Berklee – it also brought forth the globally devastating COVID-19 pandemic, which forced Silkroad to continually adapt to an ever shifting landscape. This, alongside America's long-awaited racial reckoning, has upended the world and reminded us of why we do what

we do: to build bridges, not walls; to celebrate our differences; and to advocate for a more hopeful and connected world.

With a renewed sense of purpose amongst these challenging times, Silkroad is looking towards a bright future with new artistic leadership, new social impact initiatives, new and strengthened partnerships, and new groundbreaking projects. We are embarking on an exciting, ambitious journey – one that will celebrate the beauty of our differences, transcend borders, and remind us of the limitless potential we have when we work together.

- **Kathy Fletcher**, *Executive Director*



# CELEBRATING 20 YEARS



*Click on the video above to see highlights from Silkroad's 20-year history or visit [bit.ly/silkroad-20th-anniversary](https://bit.ly/silkroad-20th-anniversary)*

# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020



**14**

NEW PIECES  
WERE CREATED &  
COMMISSIONED

**1,025**

PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN  
SILKROAD WORKSHOPS &  
CLASSES



**7,650**

PEOPLE ATTENDED  
SILKROAD PERFORMANCES



# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020

## 14.1 million

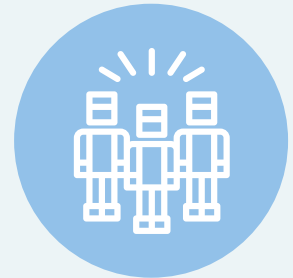
PEOPLE REACHED  
ACROSS DIGITAL  
PLATFORMS



## 3

UNIVERSITY  
PARTNERSHIPS

A NEW EXECUTIVE  
LEADERSHIP TEAM



*creating music:*

## **The creation of new music is central to Silkroad's mission.**

Through a unique musical language founded in difference and cross-cultural collaboration, Silkroad celebrates the stories, cultures, and sounds of communities across the globe.

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# CREATING MUSIC

## OVERVIEW

29

**Silkroad  
Artists**

8

**Guest  
Artists**

14

**New  
Pieces**





# CREATING MUSIC

## OVERVIEW

18 instruments representing traditions from around the world



# CREATING MUSIC

FALLING OUT OF TIME

## Silkroad premiered and toured a brand new evening-length work by Osvaldo Golijov, Falling Out of Time.

Inspired by Israeli writer David Grossman's eponymous novel, the music tells the story of a bereaved mother and father grieving the unbearable loss of their son. Featuring thirteen artists and drawing from ballads of Central Asia and the early Delta Blues, the result is music that immerses listeners into "a realm where loss is not merely an absence, but a life force of its own."





## CREATING MUSIC

### FALLING OUT OF TIME

Over **2,950** audience members attended seven performances of Falling Out of Time across **6** U.S. states.

The tour included two recording sessions at the Barns at Wolf Trap in Virginia for an upcoming album to be released in Fall of 2020.

*“There is  
breath  
there  
is breath  
inside the pain  
there is  
breath.”*

— David Grossman, Falling Out of Time (2014)

# CREATING MUSIC

## SILKROAD SEEDS

### Silkroad launched the pilot phase of Silkroad Seeds:

a program which aims to fuel the creativity of Silkroad's community of artists through individual project-based commissions.

6 artists were commissioned to design new initiatives, projects, and pieces.

---



## CREATING MUSIC

### EMERGENCE

Silkroad workshopped a brand new commission, Emergence, at Harvard's ArtLab.

Written by Danny Mekonnen, the project illuminates the work of pianist, harpist, singer, and composer Alice Coltrane Turiyasangitananda.

The five-day development culminated in a public facing work-in-progress performance that brought together **70** people from the Harvard and local Allston, MA community.





# DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020

Silkroad extended its global community online, engaging more people than ever:

**14.1 million**

PEOPLE REACHED  
ACROSS DIGITAL  
PLATFORMS



**1.28 million**

ENGAGEMENTS ACROSS  
ALL DIGITAL MEDIA

# DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

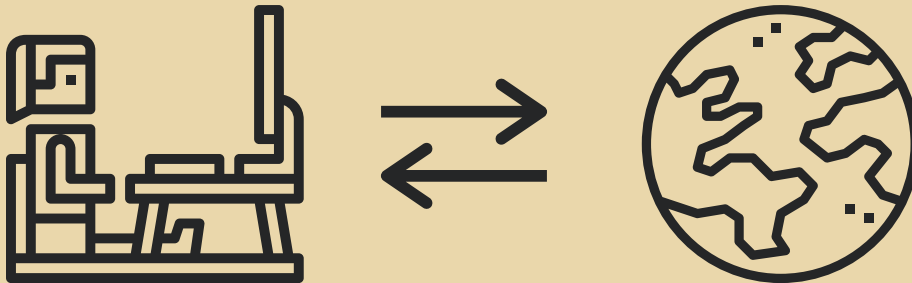
JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020

127,000 & 248,000

WEBSITE VISITORS

PAGEVIEWS

from over 10 countries



# ATASHGAH



*Click on the video above to watch Silkroad's performance of "Atashgah" composed by Silkroad violinist and composer Colin Jacobsen or visit [bit.ly/atashgah](https://bit.ly/atashgah)*

*passion-driven learning:*

## **Silkroad uses the power of the arts to fuel passions and inspire new pathways for education.**

Silkroad artists lead artistic workshops, guided discussions, professional development opportunities, and collaborative residency programs.

---

# PASSION-DRIVEN LEARNING

BOSTON CONSERVATORY AT BERKLEE

Silkroad partnered with Boston Conservatory at Berklee to present two programs:

- A multi-day intensive on improvisation and culturally-informed musicianship
- The Silkroad Creativity Lab: a semester-long course, now in its second year, which focused on artistic citizenship, musical identity, self-expression, improvisation, and art as a tool for connection





# PASSION-DRIVEN LEARNING

COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS



Silkroad artists joined College of the Holy Cross to present a variety of workshops, performances, and community engagement events.

Led by Silkroad percussionists, the spring residency included a glimpse into the creative process behind a new commission, *And the Walls Became the World Around Us*, by Edward Pérez.

Over **200** students attended workshops and performances.

Edward Pérez's *And the Walls Became the World Around Us* is a new work inspired by the popular children's book *Where the Wild Things Are*.



# PASSION-DRIVEN LEARNING

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

## Silkroad celebrated its partnership with Harvard University with its annual concert.

This year, Silkroad expanded to two performances, bringing together students from the Lame Deer and Standing Rock Native Reservations to perform in a collaborative concert with Yo-Yo Ma and other Silkroad artists.

Together, the students created a new work telling the native tale of how the Cheyenne people were first introduced to the flute.



# 300+

people attended the free  
back-to-back performances

---

*covid-19 impact:*

## **The impact of a global pandemic cannot be understated.**

Many of the projects within the industry of music were greatly affected, and ours at Silkroad were no exception. This challenged us, however, to reevaluate, reconstruct, and innovate fresh ways to reach our core audience. Using technology to great advantage, it was also a grand opportunity to further our mission by making intimate connections on a global scale.

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# COVID-19 IMPACT

## SILKROAD'S RESPONSE

In light of COVID-19's devastating impact, Silkroad developed a five-year long plan to respond, recover, and rebuild from the pandemic.



This 20th fiscal year marks the beginning of our Response phase, moving programming online, limiting our resources, and making difficult decisions to cut costs.

This preparation will help us move into our Recovery phase in 2021 to build an even stronger and more robust Silkroad.

# COVID-19 IMPACT

## SILKROAD HOME SESSIONS

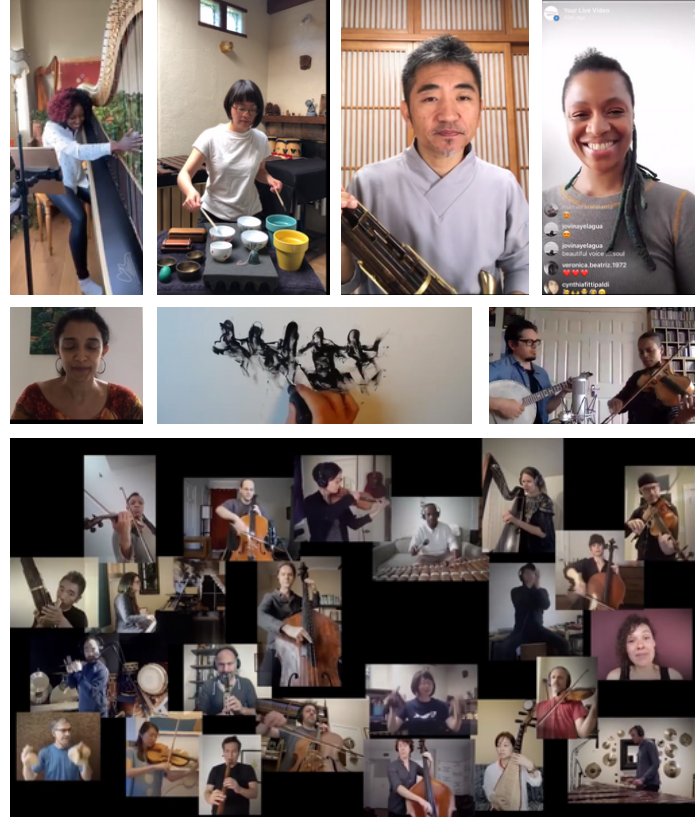
### The shift to online programming birthed Silkroad's Home Sessions:

a four-month-long series of short, intimate performances by the artists and friends of Silkroad, sharing songs of comfort from their own homes to our audience around the world during this very uncertain time.

# 36

**ARTISTS PARTICIPATED**

including Yo-Yo Ma and Rhiannon Giddens





# #SONGSOFCOMFORT

Inspired by Yo-Yo Ma's #songssofcomfort, Silkroad Home Sessions adopted this hashtag to spread music for peace, joy, and healing.

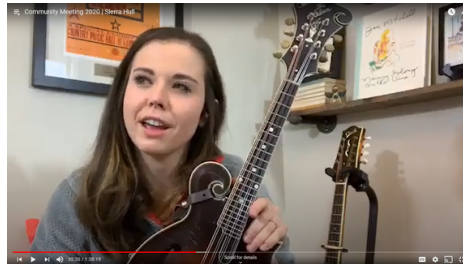


*Click on the video above to watch Yo-Yo Ma's Home Session or visit [bit.ly/yym-home-session](https://bit.ly/yym-home-session)*

Since Silkroad's Global Musician Workshop (GMW) couldn't be held in-person this year, we instead curated **10** virtual GMW Community Meetings.

Each meeting was hosted by one of our 10 GMW faculty, sharing performances, discussion, and a live Q&A for free across Silkroad's Facebook platform.

The GMW Community Meetings reached over 150,000 people all over the globe.



## COVID-19 IMPACT

### ARTIST RESPONSE PROJECTS



As Silkroad's direct response to the pandemic, an Emergency Fund was initiated to support Silkroad and its artists.

This fund facilitated the commissioning of **13** Silkroad artists to create new musical works and develop engaging community outreach.

**6** new pieces were composed by duos of Silkroad Artists, working collaboratively across distance to creatively respond to the pandemic.

The Emergency Fund also supported a service project, *1 Car, 3 Musicians, 5 Boroughs*, which brought songs of comfort and joy to five boroughs across New York City.

# 1 CAR, 3 MUSICIANS, 5 BOROUGHS



*Click on the video above to learn about Hadi Eldebek's Artist Response Project or visit [bit.ly/1car-3musicians-5boroughs](https://bit.ly/1car-3musicians-5boroughs)*

# OUR TEAM

## MEET THE SILKROAD TEAM

### Staff & Key Contractors:

**Kathy Fletcher**, Executive Director (as of 11/2019)

**Eduardo Braniff**, Executive Director (through 10/2019)

**Nicholas Cords**, Co-Artistic Director

**Shane Shanahan**, Co-Artistic Director

**Anthony Barbir**, Deputy Director

**Jennifer Klahn**, Director of Development

**Jessica Shuttleworth**, Director of Marketing

**Jacqueline Worley**, Director of Finance

**Lori Taylor**, Director of Learning

**Liz Keller-Tripp**, Director of Artistic Programs

**Shea Mavros**, Acting Director of Learning

**Adam Gurczak**, Artistic Programs Administrator

**Hannah Dardashti**, Associate

### Board of Directors:

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**Kathy Fletcher**, ex officio

**LaVon Kellner**

**Diann Kim**

**Nicholas Ma**

**Paul Stebbins**

## FINANCIALS & SUPPORTERS

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD FULL AUDITED STATEMENTS](#)

### Sponsors:

The Silk Road Project, Inc. (dba Silkroad) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization supported by individuals, foundations, and corporations. We are deeply grateful to the institutional partners whose generous support enables us to promote innovation, learning, and cross-cultural understanding around the world.

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## Connecting the World's Neighborhoods

Silkroad gratefully acknowledges the generous individuals, corporations, and foundations that share our vision of a world transformed through the arts. The following list recognizes donations received between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020.

### **\$1,000,000+**

Hyosung Corporation

### **\$750,000 - \$999,999**

Alice L. Walton Foundation

### **\$500,000 - \$749,999**

The Barr Foundation

### **\$250,000 - \$499,999**

Small Business Association

### **\$100,000 - \$249,999**

Lori and Ted Samuels

### **\$50,000 - \$99,999**

Harvard University

Daniel and Annette Nowiszewski

LaVon Kellner and Tom Roush

### **\$25,000 - \$49,999**

Anonymous

National Endowment for the Arts

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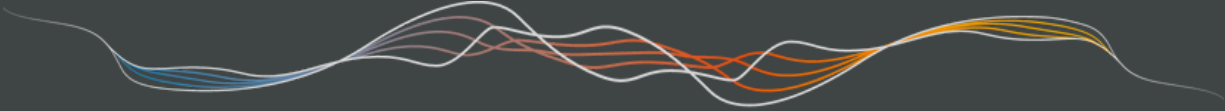
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