SILK ROAD

A Far Cry and musicians from the Silk Road Ensemble

Jordan Hall Friday, May 26, 2017







Kayhan Kalhor (b. 1963)

Gallop of A Thousand Horses

Zhao Jiping (b. 1945)

Sacred Cloud Music

Kinan Azmeh (b. 1976)

Ibn Arabi Postlude

Béla Bartok (1881-1945)

Romanian Folk Dances (arr. Arthur Willner)

Jocul cu bâta, "Stick Dance"

Brâul, "Sash Dance"

Pe loc, "In One Spot"

Buciumeana, "Dance from Buscum"

Poarga româneasca, "Romanian Polka"

Mâruntel I & II, "Fast Dance"

Kojiro Umezaki (b. 1968)

For Zero

Vijay Iyer (b. 1971)

City of Sand (Speculative Dunhuang)

World Premiere (AFC/Silkroad Commission)

Part 1: Frontier

Part 2: The Road

Part 3: Cave 17

Part 4: Gathering

Part 5: Entrustment

INTERMISSION

SILK ROAD



Sandeep Das (b. 1971) **Tarang (arr. Jesse Irons)**

JPP and Marin/Marin (arr. Karl Doty and Erik Higgins)
Hale Bopp (JPP)
Regnvalsen, "Rain Waltz" (Mikael Marin)
Speedy Slam (JPP)
Kloopolska—Polska efter Olof
Andersson—Polska efter Magnus
Olsson (Marin/Marin)

Kinan Azmeh Improvisation

Taraf de Haïdouks Turceasca (arr. Osvaldo Golijov & Ljova)



A Far Cry would like to thank The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its generous support of the Vijay Iyer commission and our partnership with the Silk Road Ensemble.

A FAR CRY / SEASON 10





A FAR CRY

VIOLIN

Alex Fortes

Jae Cosmos Lee

. .

Jesse Irons

Liesl Schoenberger

Doty

Megumi Stohs Lewis

Miki-Sophia Cloud

Omar Chen Guey

Robyn Bollinger

Sharon Cohen +

VIOLA

Ashleigh Gordon *

Frank Shaw +

Jason Fisher

Sarah Darling

CELLO

Blaise Déjardin +

Loewi Lin

Michael Unterman

BASS

Erik Higgins

Karl Doty

SILK ROAD ENSEMBLE

CLARINET

Kinan Azmeh

TABLA

Sandeep Das

PERCUSSION

Haruka Fujii

Joseph Gramley

PIPA

Wu Man



^{*}Guest Crier

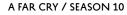
⁺ Crier Emeritus





A FAR CRY stands at the forefront of an exciting new generation in classical music. According to The New York Times, the self-conducted orchestra "brims with personality or, better, personalities, many and varied." A Far Cry was founded in 2007 by a tightly-knit collective of 17 young professional musicians, and since the beginning has fostered those personalities. A Far Cry has developed an innovative process where decisions are made collectively and leadership rotates among the "Criers." For each piece, a group of principals is elected by the members, and these five musicians guide the rehearsal process and shape the interpretation. Since each program includes multiple works, this multiplicity of leaders adds tremendous musical variety to the concerts.

A Far Cry's omnivorous approach has led the group to collaborations with artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Jake Shimabukuro, Urbanity Dance, and Roomful of Teeth. By expanding the boundaries of orchestral repertoire and experimenting with the ways music is prepared, performed, and experienced, A Far Cry has been embraced throughout the world with hundreds of performances coast to coast and across the globe, and a powerful presence on the Internet. In October 2014, A Far Cry launched its in-house label, Crier Records, with the album Dreams and Prayers, which received critical acclaim and a GRAMMY nomination.









The second release, Law of Mosaics, followed in November 2014 and has also garnered much critical attention, including many 2014 Top-10 lists, notably from The New Yorker music critic Alex Ross and WQXR's Q2 Music, which named A Far Cry as one of the "Imagination-Grabbing, Trailblazing Artists of 2014."

The eighteen Criers are proud to call Boston home, and maintain strong roots in the city, rehearsing at their storefront music center in Jamaica Plain and fulfilling the role of Chamber Orchestra in Residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Collaborating with local students through an educational partnership with the New England Conservatory, A Far Cry aims to pass on the spirit of collaboratively-empowered music to the next generation.

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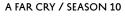
Inspired by the exchange of ideas and traditions along the historical Silk Road, cellist Yo-Yo Ma established Silkroad in 1998 to explore how the arts can advance global understanding. Silkroad works to connect the world through the arts, presenting musical performances and learning programs, and fostering radical cultural collaboration around the world.

Since 2000, the **SILK ROAD ENSEMBLE** has been at the core of Silkroad's work. Representing a global array of cultures, the Ensemble models new forms of cultural exchange through performances, workshops, and residencies. The artists of the Ensemble draw on the rich tapestry of traditions from around the world that make up our many-layered contemporary identities, weaving together the foreign and familiar to create a new musical language.

The Ensemble has recorded six albums. Its new Grammy Award-winning album, *Sing Me Home*, was developed and recorded alongside the documentary feature The Music of Strangers: *Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble* from Oscar-winning director Morgan Neville—on HBO now.











This is your shovel. The music is your earth. Dig in.

KAYHAN KALHOR (B. 1963) :: GALLOP OF A THOUSAND HORSES

Born in 1963 in Iran, Kayhan is of Kurdish descent. He began studying music at the age of seven, and is considered a master of the kamancheh, a bowed Persian spike fiddle. *Gallop of a Thousand Horses* is based on the folk melodies of the Turkmen people, who live in northeastern Iran, Turkmenistan, and parts of several other nations. The nomadic Turkmen are deeply connected to their horses, and this piece suggests the wild freedom of a large herd crossing the plains. The rhythms of the tombak (Persian drum) are complemented by the sense of motion provided by the kamancheh and other strings. *Gallop of a Thousand Horses* was recorded by the Silk Road Ensemble and Yo-Yo Ma on *Silk Road Journeys: Beyond the Horizon* (Sony Classical 2005).

ZHAO JIPING (B. 1945) :: SACRED CLOUD MUSIC

Born in Xi'an, China, Zhao Jiping is perhaps best known for his award-winning film scores to *Farewell My Concubine, Ju Dou*, and *Raise the Red Lantern*. His work Sacred Cloud Music is built around one of the earliest extant pieces of Chinese music, Qingyun Yue ("Auspicious Cloud Music"), dating to 640AD. Originally written for guqin, a seven-stringed Chinese zither, Qinyun Yue was transnotated from two later manuscripts by ethnomusicologist Rembrandt Wolpert and interpreted for pipa (Chinese lute) by Wu Man.







KINAN AZMEH (B. 1976) :: IBN ARABI POSTLUDE

Ibn Arabi Postlude was adapted for the Silk Road Ensemble by Syrian composer and clarinetist Kinan Azmeh and comes from his orchestral work The Ibn Arabi Suite (commissioned by the Osnabrück Symphony Orchestra). The work was inspired by the writings of Ibn Arabi, an Arab Muslim mystic and Su philosopher who traveled from Andalusia to Damascus in the 13th century seeking knowledge. Kinan was struck by Ibn Arabi's philosophy that love and free thinking are as sacred as any religious beliefs. About the music, which is in a 15/8 meter, he says, "The piece blurs the lines between the composed and the improvised and can be described as an obsessive ritualistic dance in the maqam, or melodic form, known as Kurd."

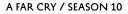
BÉLA BARTÓK (1881-1945) :: ROMANIAN FOLK DANCES (ARR. ARTHUR WILLNER)

One of the greatest contributions Bartók made to the music world, besides his own array of works, was the magnitude of field recordings of traditional folk music he gathered, collected, and organized over the course of his life. His discovery of their tonal world also was reflected in the scope of his output: "the outcome of these studies was of decisive influence upon my work because it freed me from the tyrannical rule of the major and minor keys. The greater part of the collected treasure, and the more valuable part, was in the old ecclesiastical or old Greek modes, or based on more primitive (pentatonic) scales, and the melodies were full of the freest and most varied rhythmic phrases and changes of tempi. It became clear to me that the old modes, which had been forgotten in our music, had lost nothing of their vigor. Their new employment made new rhythmic combinations possible."

Realizing that much of the folk music that had found its way into the Romantic music of Liszt, for example, had little to do with the original songs, Bartók set out to write simple accompaniments, altering the original tunes as little as possible. Thus, rather than dismantling them and repurposing the parts, he simply provided frames in which to showcase the content.









KOJIRO UMEZAKI (B. 1968) :: FOR ZERO

What seems most central to this piece is that it follows a process of accumulation and subsequent reversal. The opening descending dyads, followed by a repeating bass line over which the melody eventually enters, all feed into an electronically sustained accumulation of sound. Then, a pivot. The process reverses in a slightly different context, each new note subtracting itself from the amassed sonic material until none remains. Alongside working on this piece I was reading Charles Seife's wonderful *Zero: The Biography of a Dangerous Idea* in which embracing zero as its own entity and an equal partner to infinity, among many other attributes, was an attractive thought to reflect upon. This work was commissioned by and written for Joseph Gramley. (Kojiro Umezaki)

VIJAY IYER (B. 1971) :: CITY OF SAND (AFC/SILKROAD COMMISSION)

The two-millennium-old Central Asian interzone that appears to us in and around the town of Dunhuang sheds light on our current moment as much as it tells us about the past. A splendid assemblage of painted murals found in several hundred hand-carved cave temples nearby – the so-called Mogao ("Peerless") Grottoes, built up over nine centuries – reveal to us a deliriously hybrid Buddhism informed by Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, early Islam, Taoism, Confucianism, and Manichaeism. In these caves we see evidence of an organic globalism emerging in Dunhuang from the movements and interactions of Chinese, Indian, Central Asian, North African, and Middle Eastern peoples along the Silk Road. Dunhuang itself was known in earlier eras as *Shazhou*, from the Arabo-Persian *Saju*, which means "City of Sand.

Theater director Peter Sellars brought this improvised cultural aggregate to my attention, through his project on the Vimalakirti Sutra, a Mahayana scripture that is depicted in some of the murals in Cave 17. In this text, the titular protagonist, a layman, performs miracles for a gathering audience of bodhisattvas, monks, and disciples, and offers insights on a number of central Buddhist tenets, most famously the "voidness" of all worldly phenomena, which he expresses in a "lion's roar" of silence.

The experiences we associate with the Silk Road -- migration, discovery, encounter, interaction -- all depend on improvisation:

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SILK ROAD







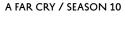
our capacity to sense, decide, and act in relation to each other. Composing this piece was a puzzle for me at first; it was not immediately obvious how to merge different musical sensibilities and sonic languages. Eventually, through speculating about Dunhuang's deep past, I realized that just as in these caves, and just as in culture as a whole, individual and collective improvisation would help us make the most of our shared presence. I thank the wonderful performers of A Far Cry and Silk Road Ensemble for rising to this occasion. (Vijay Iyer)

SANDEEP DAS (B. 1971) :: TARANG (ARR. JESSE IRONS)

Tarang is based on the exchange of improvised and extemporaneous solos between non-Western percussion instruments and Western strings. As Sandeep explains: "I imagined that the merchants or early travelers of the Silk Road may have interacted at first very simply – for example, through rhythm. When I composed this piece, I wanted to bring common elements of rhythm from the Silk Road countries such as a six-beat cycle (*Dadra*) and 16-beat cycle (*Teen Taal*)." The strings provide a drone and melodic lines to support these rhythmic weavings.

JPP :: HALE BOPP AND SPEEDY SLAM (ARR. KARL DOTY)

In the heart of Finland, in the region of Central Ostrobothnia, is the small county of Kaustinen, a municipality that has become known as the nation's fiddling capital. It is home not only to the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival, the largest in Scandinavia, but also to the Finnish fiddling group Järvelän Pikkupelimannit, more commonly known as JPP. In English this name translates to "Little Fiddlers of Järvelä," Järvelä being both a village in Kaustinen and a family from that village that employs a fiddling tradition dating back to the 19th century. Founded in 1982, JPP is comprised of fiddlers Arto Järvelä, Mauno Järvelä, Matti Mäkelä, and Tommi Pyykönen, bassist Antti Järvelä, and harmonium player Timo Alakotila. (Karl Doty)









MARIN/MARIN :: REGNVALSEN AND POLSKA MEDLEY (ARR. ERIK HIGGINS)

I came across the Swedish fiddling duo of Mia and Mikael Marin in the summer of 2013 on the recommendation of a friend who had just attended one of Mia's fiddling workshops. I was instantly taken with their music, both their original compositions as well as wonderful arrangements of traditional Swedish Polskas, a whirling dance with a combination of light (short) and heavy (long) steps. Their album Skuggspel quickly became one of my favorites and I started to imagine these tunes on a larger scale for string orchestra. My deepest gratitude goes out to Mia Marin for her graciousness and enthusiasm for these new arrangements. (Erik Higgins)

TARAF DE HAÏDOUKS :: TURCEASCA (ARR. OSVALDO GOLIJOV & LJOVA)

Throughout musical history, the transcription of folk melodies has been an abundant source of compositional material. *Turceasca*, the signature piece of the Romanian gypsy band *Taraf de Haïdouks* (the Band of Brigands), is based on a traditional Turkish song and reflects the richness and complexity of a truly international collaborative work. In 1991, Taraf de Haïdouks, Roma musicians from a small village in southwest Bucharest, performed outside their country for the first time. Their music drew such interest that filmmaker Tony Gatlif featured them in his documentary film about the music of the Roma, *Latcho Drom*. Composer Osvaldo Golijov, whose broad, eclectic musical training (including Western classical, Jewish liturgical, klezmer and Argentinian tango) made him an ideal translator, worked with the band to arrange Turceasca for the Kronos Quartet as well as subsequent arrangements for the Silk Road Ensemble and A Far Cry.

Program notes written by Kathryn Bacasmot, Nicholas Cords, Karl Doty, Erik Higgins, Isabelle Hunter, Vijay Iyer, and Kojiro Umezaki.

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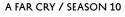
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"Arts are about opening up to possibility. Possibility links to hope. We all need hope."

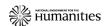
- Kojiro Umezaki, Silk Road Ensemble

We are grateful to our friends and partners who believe that by embracing our differences, we enrich our humanity.









SHKROAD









COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP & EDUCATION WITH A FAR CRY

One of our goals at A Far Cry is to teach young musicians how to imagine and develop different ways of performing and functioning as a entrepreneurial ensemble. We intend to empower the next generation of musicians to think critically and listen to each other "in the music," and we foster many relationships with community partners and educational institutions across the United States.

Project STEP

We are incredibly lucky to be participating in a year-long residency with Project STEP, a comprehensive string training program for children from underrepresented communities. This residency includes weekly coachings and mentoring sessions from Criers, plus concert previews and masterclasses for the entire Project STEP community.











New England Conservatory Entrepreneurial Musicianship Fellowship

Open exclusively to NEC string students, this fellowship offers the opportunity to gain a 360 degree view of the A Far Cry chamber orchestra, including all aspects of administration, rehearsal and performance. The AFC Fellows not only have the opportunity to rehearse and perform one subscription concert with the ensemble, they also attend meetings, work directly with A Far Cry's Executive Director, and participate in one or more of the organization's musician-run committees.

Educational Residencies

A Far Cry works with student ensembles, colleges and universities across the country, teaching seminars on entrepreneurship and arts administration and leading composition and chamber music coaching sessions. This season, we've partnered with Baldwin Wallace University, Virginia Tech, the University of Michigan and the Metropolitan Youth Symphony.







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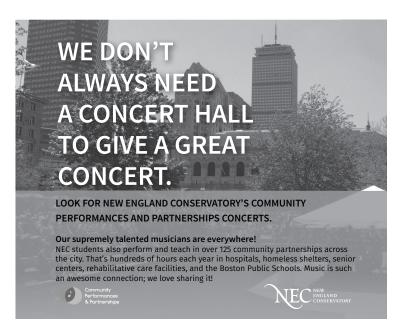
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Nineteenth Season (2017-18) Concerts First Church in Cambridge, Congregational

October 14

Ma maistresse: Songs, masses & a motet for My Lady (Ockeghem@600, Concert 6)

December 22 & 23

Christmas in Medieval England

February 3

Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks

March 3

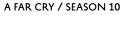
Missa Fors seulement & other music based on songs (Ockeghem@600, Concert 7)

April 14

The Iberian Songbook: Spanish songs & dances, 1450-1600

www.blueheron.org











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