Silkroad Announces 2021 Global Musician Workshop
In Partnership with New England Conservatory

The week-long training program will be offered virtually for the first time and feature a two-day Online Performance Festival open to the general public.

Special guests include Angélique Kidjo, Black Violin, Jake Shimabukuro, and Speech, as well as members of the Silkroad Ensemble and Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens.

Boston, MA — Silkroad and New England Conservatory announced today the 2021 Global Musician Workshop (GMW), which will be held virtually for the first time due to the ongoing pandemic from August 8-14. GMW is directed by cellist and Silkroad artist Mike Block and features renowned faculty, including members of the Silkroad Ensemble and their colleagues, representing various cultures, traditions, and musical styles. Participants will engage in a variety of classes and group sessions designed to help them develop as versatile performers and well-rounded cultural citizens. The 2021 GMW also includes an Online Performance Festival on August 13 and 14, showcasing participants, faculty, alumni, and special guests. Performances will be broadcast for free on Silkroad’s Facebook and YouTube.

“No matter what music you already love and no matter what music you already know, I guarantee you it’s the result of centuries of global influence and exchange. And that’s what we’re trying to pack into one life-changing week,” said GMW Director Mike Block. “We really hope that you can join us for this transformative experience—learning, playing, and discussing music from across the world, with musicians also from across the world.”

A pillar educational initiative of Silkroad, GMW launched in 2015 as a professional development program for amateur and professional musicians over the age of 18 and for educators from all musical backgrounds—classical, jazz, folk, or traditional styles. The program is modeled after the tenets guiding the Silkroad Ensemble: fostering a community of globally minded musicians who learn from one another’s traditions and incorporate them into their artistic voices. To date, GMW has welcomed hundreds of participants with applications from nearly 40 countries.

This year’s virtual format presents an extraordinary opportunity for access and wider reach. Classes will be facilitated via Zoom webinar and streamed from New England Conservatory’s campus in Boston using low-latency software SoundJack for real-time collaboration. Registration is currently open and applications will be accepted through the program’s start date. Silkroad supports systemic allyship with historically marginalized people—including BIPOC, women, and LGBTQ+—and strongly encourages applications for financial assistance from people with these identities or who are members of other marginalized communities.
deadline to apply for financial assistance is Wednesday, June 30. The 2021 GMW application, as well as up-to-date program details, can be found at silkroad.org/gmw.

Silkroad’s 2021 Global Musician Workshop
Hosted in Partnership with New England Conservatory
August 8-14 from 1-5 p.m. ET via Zoom webinar (not open to the public)

Director Mike Block and faculty artists, including musicians from the Silkroad Ensemble and their colleagues, lead a week-long professional development program that includes group workshops, play-along jam sessions, panel discussions, unique topic-based elective classes, and more—all representing a wide range of backgrounds and traditions from around the world.

2021 GMW Faculty
- Kinan Azmeh, Clarinet/Composition
- Mike Block, GMW Director/Multi-Style cello
- Maeve Gilchrist, Celtic Harp & Voice
- Balla Kouyaté, Malian Balafon
- Hankus Netsky, Klezmer Multi-Instrumentalist
- Marcus Printup, American Jazz Trumpet
- Edward Pérez, Bass & Latin Rhythms
- Kala Ramnath, Indian Hindustani Violin
- Shane Shanahan, Multi-Style Percussion
- Wu Man, Chinese Pipa

2021 GMW Online Performance Festival
Streamed from New England Conservatory
August 13 and 14 at 8 p.m. ET via Facebook and YouTube (open to the public)

Culminating a full week of music training and professional development, this festival features performances of a broad array of styles and instruments from around the world played by a diverse group of GMW participants, faculty, alumni, and guest artists including singer-songwriter and Silkroad’s Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens, Beninese-American singer-songwriter Angélique Kidjo, hip hop duo Black Violin, composer and ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro, and musician and rapper Speech.

2021 GMW Funding Credits
Support for GMW is provided, in part, by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Alice L. Walton Foundation, the Barr Foundation, and Hyosung Corporation. Silkroad gratefully acknowledges 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 New England Conservatory
New England Conservatory (NEC) is recognized internationally as a leader among music schools, educating and training musicians of all ages from around the world for over 150 years. With 800 music students representing more than 40 countries in the College, and 2,000 youth and adults who study in the Preparatory and Continuing Education divisions, NEC cultivates a diverse, dynamic community for students, providing them with performance opportunities and high-caliber training with internationally-esteemd artist-teachers and scholars. NEC’s alumni, faculty and students touch nearly every aspect of musical life in the region; NEC is a major engine of the vital activity that makes Boston a musical and cultural capital.

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

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