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SILKROAD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Kathy Fletcher, Former National Director of Turnaround Arts
under First Lady Michelle Obama,
Appointed to Executive Director at Silkroad**



Kathy Fletcher (center) with Smokey Robinson (left) and children in Regla, outside of Havana. Fletcher played a critical role in organizing the first official cultural exchange between the U.S. and Cuba in half a century.

November 5, 2019, Boston, MA — Silkroad, the global-reaching music nonprofit founded by cellist Yo-Yo Ma, has appointed Kathy Fletcher as Executive Director. The announcement comes as Silkroad — home of the Grammy Award-winning Silkroad Ensemble — enters its third decade of collaborative music-making and mission-driven programming to help build a more hopeful and inclusive society.

“I am so excited that Silkroad has reached the position today to attract such extraordinary talent as Kathy,” said Silkroad Board President Golnar Khosrowshahi (CEO, Reservoir Media). “As a board, we couldn’t be more thrilled to welcome Kathy and empower her to lead Silkroad into its next chapter.”

Fletcher was most recently the Director of Creative Leadership Initiatives at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and will continue on as a senior advisor. Fletcher has an extensive track record of managing high-impact programs that leverage the arts to deepen humans’ capacity for unfeigned connection and empathy. Rooted in a passion for social justice, Fletcher brings valuable fundraising, communications, and management experience in private, non-profit, and government settings.

“I could not be more honored to join Silkroad,” said Fletcher, “which for two decades has led the way in overcoming barriers of all kinds through music and culture. I’ve already worked closely and happily with Silkroad artists through Turnaround Arts, so joining the Silkroad family feels very much like I’m coming home.”

As Co-Founder of Turnaround Arts under First Lady Michelle Obama — a program that believes high-quality and integrated arts education can address the toughest educational challenges in our country — Fletcher led its expansion from a pilot project in eight schools to an exemplary program in over 80 schools. Under her leadership, Turnaround Arts transitioned from the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities to the Kennedy Center. In 2015, the Silkroad Ensemble formally joined the distinguished roster of Turnaround Artists under Fletcher’s leadership, which led to Silkroad’s ongoing partnership with [Lame Deer Junior/Senior High School](#) in Lame Deer, Montana.

“Twenty years ago, a few of us had a crazy idea, and it grew into this wonderful artistic family,” said Silkroad Founder Yo-Yo Ma. “The values of peace, collaboration, and connection that Silkroad stands for have never been more important; I can’t wait to see the new ways that Kathy and Silkroad will find to inspire us to find truth, build trust, and work in service of one another.”

Arts Consulting Group guided Silkroad through the executive director search process.

About Silkroad

Yo-Yo Ma conceived Silkroad in 1998 as a reminder that even as rapid globalization resulted in division, it brought extraordinary possibilities for working together. Seeking to understand this dynamic, he began to learn about the historical Silk Road, recognizing in it a model for productive cultural collaboration, for the exchange of ideas and traditions alongside commerce and innovation. And in a radical experiment, he brought together musicians from the lands of the Silk Road to co-create a new artistic idiom, a musical language founded in difference, a metaphor for the benefits of a more connected world.

The Grammy award-winning Silkroad Ensemble has been at the core of Silkroad’s work to build a more hopeful and inclusive world since 2000. These artists represent dozens of nationalities and artistic traditions, from Spain and Japan to Syria and the United States. Today, Silkroad artists seek and practice cultural collaboration in many forms, creating and presenting new music, teacher and musician training workshops, and residency programs in schools, museums, and communities.

Silkroad has recorded seven albums. *Sing Me Home*, which won the 2016 Grammy for Best World Music Album was developed and recorded alongside the documentary feature *The Music of Strangers*, from Oscar-winning director Morgan Neville.

To learn more about Silkroad, please visit silkroad.org.

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