



**For Immediate Release**

**October 19, 2021**

## **Silkroad Joins Forces with The FreshGrass Foundation**

*FreshGrass represents the first pillar partner to support The American Railroad in the areas of education, music, and concept development*

Boston, MA — [Silkroad](#) announced today its newly-launched collaboration with [The FreshGrass Foundation](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving, supporting, and celebrating innovative grassroots music. As the first pillar partner of Silkroad's *The American Railroad*, FreshGrass will advise on program and fund development, contribute to artistic components, and provide space and resources to further the creation of the full body of work.

"We are thrilled to welcome The FreshGrass Foundation on this journey to understand our country's history and celebrate the diversity that has created American identity," said Silkroad's Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens. "This partnership will allow us to grow the scope and impact of *The American Railroad* in significant ways. We're grateful for this much-needed support."

In this exciting new era for Silkroad, the social-impact arts organization set out to engage an exceptional group of educational, musical, and creative pillar partners who will become key players in the development of its latest and most ambitious programmatic undertaking to date. These partners will form a close, collaborative relationship with Silkroad for a period of three years and share in its mission to illuminate America's musical traditions through *The American Railroad*. FreshGrass was eager to get involved given its shared values and artistic priorities.

"FreshGrass is delighted to partner with Silkroad," shared the Foundation's Founder, President, and Director Chris Wadsworth. "The two organizations' missions are totally aligned and there is no limit to where we can take this collaboration. We can't wait to get started."

Under this partnership, The FreshGrass Foundation will present Silkroad performances and curated events at the FreshGrass Festivals in North Adams, MA and Bentonville, AR; co-commission new works in areas of shared creative interest; sponsor Silkroad artists in residence for one to two weeks per year; amplify Silkroad's reach through its music journal, *No Depression*, and the 24-hour streaming service *Folk Alley*; and host fundraising events.

Silkroad's *The American Railroad* will illuminate the impact of African American, Chinese, Irish, and Native American communities on the creation of the Transcontinental Railroad. These and other immigrant populations played a fundamental role in one of the most important

technological and economic achievements of the 19th century, yet their contributions have been erased from history. These stories line the tracks of *The American Railroad*, which will uncover them to tell a more truthful and complete origin story of the multifaceted American identity.

### **About Silkroad**

Yo-Yo Ma conceived Silkroad in 1998, recognizing the historical Silk Road as a model for radical cultural collaboration—for the exchange of ideas, tradition, and innovation across borders. In an innovative 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](http://silkroad.org) and [@silkroadproject](https://www.instagram.com/silkroadproject) on social media.

### **About The FreshGrass Foundation**

The FreshGrass Foundation is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to creating and celebrating innovative grassroots music. It is our belief that the simple acts of making and sharing authentic creations are among the most effective ways to spread joy and love, to improve lives and communities, and to make a profoundly positive impact on the world. To achieve our mission, we produce FreshGrass Festivals in North Adams, MA and Bentonville, AR; we offer a variety of grants, commissions, and awards to musicians and writers for new works; we produce and publish No Depression, the quarterly journal of roots music; we produce, publish and stream Folk Alley, the 24-hour online listening for roots music; we are a founding partner of Artists At Work, a program that provides living wages for living artists; we administer the Steve Martin Banjo Prize, a prestigious award founded by Steve Martin (actor/comedian) that recognizes an individual or group for outstanding accomplishment in banjo; and we operate and manage Studio 9 in North Adams, MA, a state-of-the-art recording studio and venue.

Through a cutting-edge, multidisciplinary and collaborative approach, FreshGrass continually strives to help promote new artists and create new art through each of its entities.

To learn more, please visit [freshgrassfoundation.org](http://freshgrassfoundation.org) and [@freshgrassfoundationofficial](https://www.instagram.com/freshgrassfoundationofficial) on social media.

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