

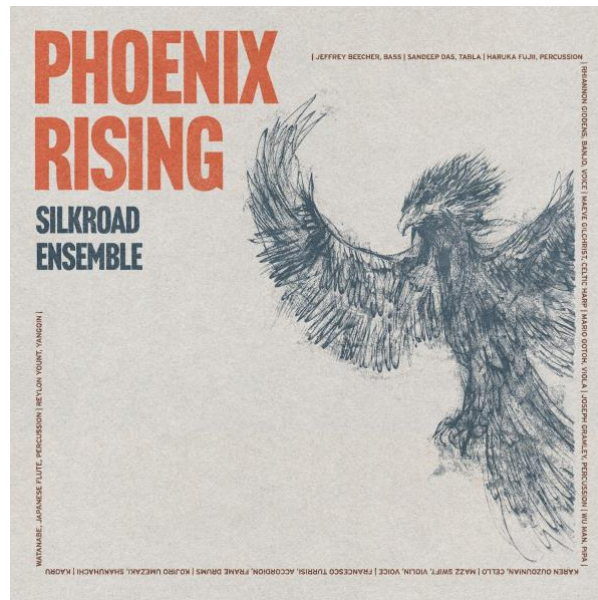


For Immediate Release

October 19, 2023

## Silkroad Ensemble to Release *Phoenix Rising* EP on November 3

*Live Recording of the Eponymous Program Performed at Tanglewood in 2022*



*Single “Biko” with Rhiannon Giddens is out today*  
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Boston, MA — **Silkroad** announces the release of *Phoenix Rising* from the **Silkroad Ensemble**, which will be **available on November 3, 2023**. The EP comprises four works—all composed or arranged by Silkroad artists—performed live at Tanglewood on July 28, 2022 as part of the Ensemble’s [Phoenix Rising](#) tour. Colin Jacobsen’s arrangement of Peter Gabriel’s 1980 anti-apartheid protest song “**Biko**,” with **Rhiannon Giddens** and **Mazz Swift** on vocals and including **Yo-Yo Ma** on cello, is **out today** (October 19, 2023) as a single. The full EP is being released two days before Silkroad’s debut tour of [American Railroad](#) in the D.C. area and across California.

*Phoenix Rising* marked Silkroad’s first tour with Giddens as Artistic Director, ushering in a new era for the trailblazing Ensemble. Taking the phoenix as a symbol of rebirth and celebration, the program offered re-imaginings of past Silkroad compositions and arrangements, and also unveiled new commissions by Silkroad artists. Of the project’s origins, Giddens said: “As we prepare to emerge from multiple pandemics that have caused devastating loss, we vision a

peaceful and just future while still honoring the central tenets of our past; we offer to you *Phoenix Rising*: a collective grieving song and clarion call, uniting audiences through varied cultural experiences and challenging each of us to reflect on, celebrate, and activate our unique talents to effect change.”

The EP opens with Giddens’s own arrangement of the traditional folk song “O, Death,” a nod to her North Carolina roots, with particular inspiration drawn from folklorist Bessie Jones. Giddens writes in her artist statement about the arrangement, “These traditional songs have a way of getting to the bones of humanity, showing the stark contrast of life and death, and I thought it might do the same in a new setting with Silkroad.”

Following is Sandeep Das’s arrangement of Rabindranath Tagore’s song “Ekla Cholo Re,” created in tribute to the many Indian lives lost to COVID—including some of the country’s most treasured musicians and artists. Tagore was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for Literature and “Ekla Cholo Re” in particular served as a refrain for India’s independence movement.

Kaoru Watanabe’s new work for the program—and this EP—is “Ho-Oh,” named after a phoenix from various Asian mythologies. The Ho-Oh is ubiquitous throughout Japan, including in Gagaku, Japanese court music originally imported from China and Korea in the 8th century. Watanabe writes, “One of the ideas behind this piece is to reunite Gagaku with its distant relatives and see what emerges.” The work acknowledges the many talented musicians of Silkroad, each bringing their own musical traditions from around the world, coming together to create new connections and throughlines.

The EP closes with “Biko,” commissioned by Silkroad for the *Phoenix Rising* tour. The original song by Peter Gabriel was a eulogy for the Black South African anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko, who died in police custody in 1977.

The Silkroad Ensemble has recorded 10 albums to date including *Sing Me Home*, which won the 2016 Grammy Award for Best World Music Album and was developed alongside the documentary feature *The Music of Strangers* from Academy Award-winning director Morgan Neville. *Phoenix Rising* will be the Ensemble’s first EP release.

**Listen to the Silkroad Ensemble’s “Biko” with Rhiannon Giddens, from the forthcoming EP: [hyperfollow.com/bikosilkroad](https://hyperfollow.com/bikosilkroad)**

**Pre-order the Silkroad Ensemble’s *Phoenix Rising* EP: [stores.portmerch.com/silkroadensemble](https://stores.portmerch.com/silkroadensemble)**

***Phoenix Rising* EP Track Listing:**

1. “O, Death” – Traditional, arr. Rhiannon Giddens
2. “Ekla Cholo Re” – Composed by Rabindranath Tagore/arr. Sandeep Das, assisted by Bailey O’Donnell
3. “Ho-Oh” – Kaoru Watanabe
4. “Biko” – Peter Gabriel, arr. Colin Jacobsen

**Featuring:**

Jeffrey Beecher, bass  
Sandeep Das, tabla  
Haruka Fujii, marimba/caxixi/djembe  
Rhiannon Giddens, banjo/vocals  
Maeve Gilchrist, Celtic harp  
Mario Gotoh, viola  
Joseph Gramley, bass drum/snare drum/cymbals/shime-daiko  
Yo-Yo Ma, cello  
Wu Man, pipa  
Karen Ouzounian, cello  
Mazz Swift, violin/vocals  
Kojiro Umezaki, shakuhachi  
Kaoru Watanabe, Japanese flutes/percussion  
Reylon Yount, yangqin  
Guest artist: Francesco Turrisi, accordion/frame drums

**Production Credits:**

*Phoenix Rising* was recorded live at Seiji Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood in Lenox, MA. Jody Elff is the recording engineer, editor, and mixing engineer. The mastering engineers are Greg Calbi and Steve Fallone at Sterling Sound - Edgewater, NJ.

**Funding Credits:**

Alice L. Walton Foundation  
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Mass Cultural Council  
Mellon Foundation  
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**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 Boston-based non-profit organization working to make a positive impact across borders through the arts.

Today, under the leadership of Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens and Executive Director Ben Hartley, 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 on social media.

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