

The Silkroad Ensemble

presents

Oswaldo Golijov

Falling Out of Time

based on a book by David Grossman

I

Interlude

II

III

performed without intermission

The Silkroad Ensemble

Shawn Conley, bass

Nicholas Cords, viola

Nora Fischer, vocals

Jeremy Flower, electronics, guitar

Johnny Gandelsman, violin

Kayhan Kalhor, kamancheh

Karen Ouzounian, cello

Shane Shanahan, percussion

Mazz Swift, violin

Wu Man, pipa

Wu Tong, vocals, sheng, suona

with guests

Dan Brantigan, trumpet

Biella Da Costa, vocals

The Silkroad Ensemble is grateful to the members of the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, for their partnership in the development of this work. Silkroad's commission of Falling Out of Time is made possible thanks in part to support from the Alice L. Walton Foundation and the Barr Foundation.

ABOUT THE SILKROAD ENSEMBLE

Yo-Yo Ma conceived **The Silkroad Ensemble** 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.

The Silkroad Ensemble 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.

The Silkroad Ensemble gratefully acknowledges the support of individuals, foundations, and corporations, including the Barr Foundation, Hyosung Corporation, and Alice L. Walton Foundation.

To learn more about Silkroad, please visit silkroad.org and @silkroadproject on social media.

Production Staff

Cristin Canterbury Bagnall, *executive producer for "Falling Out of Time"*

Jody Elff, *sound designer*

Nick Houfek, *lighting designer*

Ashley Martin, *stage manager*

Sebastian Schinkel, *monitor engineer*

Tour Management

Mary Pat Buerkle, *Senior Vice President and Manager, Artists & Attractions, Opus 3 Artists*

Silkroad Staff

Nicholas Cords, *Co-Artistic Director*

Kathy Fletcher, *Executive Director*

Adam Gurczak, *Artistic Programs Administrator*

Liz Keller-Tripp, *Producer & Artistic Programs Director*

Jennifer Klahn, *Acting Director of Development*

Shea Mavros, *Acting Director of Learning*

Shane Shanahan, *Co-Artistic Director*

Jessica Shuttleworth, *Director of Marketing*

Lori Taylor, *Learning Advisor*

Jennifer Tester, *Bookkeeper*

Jacqueline Worley, *Director of Finance*

Exclusive management:

Opus 3 Artists LLC

470 Park Ave South

A Letter from the Artistic Directors

Falling Out of Time comes face to face with a raw and vulnerable state of grief through Osvaldo Golijov's exquisite and nuanced interpretation of David Grossman's book by the same name. Somewhere between a song cycle and chamber opera, the music is characteristic of Osvaldo's omnivorous style. For *Falling Out of Time*, Osvaldo drew inspiration from the early Delta Blues and epic ballads of Central Asia—two traditions which have relentlessly explored grief through a musical lens. This cosmopolitan approach to the creative process has led to an extraordinary bond between Osvaldo and The Silkroad Ensemble. Together, we've defined a shared space between composer and performers that expands the boundaries of Silkroad's musical language even further.

From inception, creating new music from a broad range of artistic perspectives has been central to Silkroad's purpose. As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, we're renewing our investment in the creative heart of the organization by exploring a wide range of traditions, human experiences, and social issues through an ambitious array of new commissions. This work is rooted in the belief that through music we can build new capacity for connection, curiosity, and understanding for a better world.

The subject matter of *Falling Out of Time* is fundamental to being human. Addressing grief is essential for us to engage in difficult conversations that have affected humankind across cultures and generations. *How do you face an unspeakable emotion like grief? How can music express both a deeply personal and profoundly shared experience?* As we begin tonight's performance, we invite you to listen for these and other unanswerable questions opening up new possibilities and unexpected conversations. Grief is a journey towards breathing again, and *Falling Out of Time* is a space for us to experience that process with a collective, melodic breath forward.

Nicholas Cords & Shane Shanahan

Co-Artistic Directors, The Silkroad Ensemble

SYNOPSIS

I

We hear a heart murmur. We see the centaur: half-writer, half-desk. He tells us that the only way he has to understand what happened to him is by re-creating it as a story (“It’s like a murmur/inside my head/and never stops/a rustle, dead leaves/and there is someone/treading on them”). We see a man, and his wife. The man can’t bear staying at home and decides he has to go “there, to him.” His wife despairs (“there’s no ‘there’”). The heartbeat becomes a clock ticking. The man cannot accept that time goes on after what happened to them (“It’s impossible/that we/that the sun/the clocks/the moon/the couples...the blood in our veins”). The clock stops. The man and the woman sing of the night when messengers came to tell them about their son (“And they/mercifully/quietly/stood there and/gave us/the breath/of death”). The man leaves the house and walks in ever widening circles until reaching the hills outside the town (“Here I fall/I do not fall”). The woman who stayed at home now leaves and climbs to the town’s belfry, from where she watches the procession walking towards a barren hill (“Atop a belfry/I walk alone now/in circles...While he/on the hilltops/facing me/days, nights/orbits/his own circle.”) The walking man conjures up his son: he urges him to enter his own body so the son can live the rest of his unlived life (“Quick, my child/my eyelids tremble!/Quick/devour/be deep/be sad...Quick, my child/Dawn is rising!”).

Interlude

The centaur tells how some of the townsfolk who are also bereaved see the walking man, leave their homes, and follow him: a midwife, her husband the cobbler, a woman in a net, an old math teacher.

II

We hear a cry piercing the skies. There is no answer, only a faint echo. The walking man hovers between here and there (“Walking my mind away”). The music turns into a mantra from which the centaur emerges, asking questions of the walkers who are mourners (“When you meet them/if you meet them/what will you tell them?”). The walking man continues (“Perhaps this walk itself/is both the riddle and its answer”). The woman atop the belfry sees her husband far away and blesses him (Go now/be like him/conceive him/yet be your death, too...and there, my love/will come peace – for him/for you”). One of the walkers meditates upon a fly caught in a web, the unfathomable web of life. Giant drums interrupt. The man hollers a string of questions to his son (“Where?/Where are you, my son?/And who are you there?/And how are you there?”). The stars mock his questions.

III

A cry pierces the skies. There is no answer. Only a faint echo. We hear the voice of a boy (“there is breath/there is breath/inside the pain/there is/breath”).

PROGRAM NOTES

Falling Out of Time

Notes by Leah Hager Cohen

You—

Where are you?

What are you?

And how are you there?

And who are you there?

— David Grossman, *Falling Out of Time* (2014)

Falling Out of Time is a journey to nowhere—or more accurately, a journey to no where. For the dead are no longer in time or place, and those who love them and would follow them must seek a route beyond linear boundaries. This is a kind of madness, and a kind of truth.

The seed of this musical project was sown at a 2002 encounter between Osvaldo Golijov and Yitzhak Frankenthal, founder of The Parents Circle, an organization of Israelis and Palestinians who have lost family members to the ongoing conflict. Mr. Frankenthal shared the story of a bereaved father who could not reconcile himself to leaving his dead son and reentering the world of time. For many days he remained at his son's side, at night sleeping upon the grave. Narrating with his actions a story of madness and truth.

The seed found soil 12 years later, when Osvaldo read David Grossman's brilliant, almost unbearable novel about a man who walks, a father who describes with his feet impossible, ever-widening circles, driven to go to his dead son.

The notion of losing one's child conjures, in Osvaldo's words, the utmost pain imaginable, a supernova of pain. Is it madness to try to translate such experience into words, into music? Perhaps. A supernova is very big. But as one of the characters says, there is "Great, definitive death" – boundless, eternal, immortal—and then there is "Your single, little death, / inside it."

In a sense, it is the "single, little death" that both David Grossman and Osvaldo take for their starting points. They enter the fathomless through the particular, the palpable, the present. One foot placed in front of the other. One heartbeat at a time. *Ka-thunk. Ka-thunk.* We are very much in time—music is nothing if not an organization of time—and in motion. The father is joined by other townsfolk, each having lost a child; each railing against circumstance; each compelled on a relentless walk of resistance at once mad and true. The heartbeat and the walking, the walking and the heartbeat. The body's humble metronomes—the very movements that separate the living from the dead—allow the journey.

We find a crucial counterpoint to these rhythms in the questions that erupt from the walkers. Osvaldo, for whom the novel is "a book of questions," has distilled from it three, which we hear again and again. At times a cry to pierce the sky, at times an echo swollen with tenderness: *Where are you?*

Who are you there? How are you there? To ask, a form of madness. To refrain from asking, another.

And the questions themselves contain echoes of the sorely missed children—indeed, of all children: their lovely doggedness, their lively insistence on asking the unanswerable. We all go in circles, children with their hunger to know *why? where? who? how?* and grownups who in suffering find we have not lost the appetite: “teach me – as I not long ago / taught you – / the world and all its secrets.” All of us circling, circling, until in time we come to perceive that perhaps the “walk itself is both / the answer and the question.”

“Great, definitive death” touches us all, yet grief is always isolating. Each “single, little death” inflicts its separate suffering, a unique exile. Even parents mourning the same child do not share the same grief.

A coda to the story about the bereaved father who could not bear to leave his son’s grave: when Mr. Frankenthal heard about this man, he went to the cemetery. And remained there. Day and night he kept company with this man, until he was able to rise back up and reenter the world and time.

Perhaps more than an act of making art, the joining of Osvaldo’s musical voice to David Grossman’s literary one is an act of accompaniment. And by collaborating with The Silkroad Ensemble in the creation of this piece, Osvaldo widens the circle of accompaniment. Accompaniment is not a cure for grief. But it may be the opposite of madness.

Sitting shiva, the Jewish custom of gathering around the bereaved for seven days after a death, is a ritualized form of accompaniment. *Falling Out of Time*, with its ever-expanding circles of community—from the townsfolk in the novel to the musicians bringing it to the stage—might be thought of as a walking shiva, an act of accompaniment that remains, like the breath of the living, in motion.

*There is
breath
there
is breath
inside the pain
there is breath*

— David Grossman, *Falling Out of Time* (2014)

THE SILKROAD ENSEMBLE ARTISTS

As a trumpet player and composer, **Dan Brantigan** offers a unique sound and textural perspective to a diverse range of musical projects and films. He has performed around the world with notable artists including Osvaldo Golijov, David Byrne, Macy Gray, Bonobo, Sarah Brightman, Doyle Bramhall II, Kaki King, DJ Krush, and as a featured soloist in multiple Ken Burns documentary series. His composition and sound design work have received accolades from the Bourges Institute and the ASA and can be heard regularly in feature and documentary films.

Honolulu-born bassist **Shawn Conley** won a position with the Honolulu Symphony while in high school and went on to earn degrees in Music Performance from Rice University. Conley won the 2009 International Society of Bassists Jazz Competition, was a semifinalist in the Thelonious Monk Jazz Competition, and received a Wagoner Fellowship. He has performed with Sting, Peter Gabriel, and Emanuel Ax, among many others. He teaches at the Hawaii Contrabass Festival and regularly performs with The Hot Club of Detroit, The NOW Ensemble, and The Knights.

Violist **Nicholas Cords** has devoted his career to the advocacy of music drawn from a strikingly broad historic and geographic spectrum. Cords serves as one of Silkroad's inaugural co-artistic directors. He is also a founding member of the string quartet Brooklyn Rider and a member of The Knights. Cords performs internationally as an acclaimed soloist and guest chamber musician. His recent solo recording, *Recursions*, features music ranging from Biber to his own compositions. A prize-winning violist in his student days at the Juilliard School and the Curtis Institute, he currently teaches viola and chamber music at New England Conservatory in Boston.

Biella Da Costa is one of Venezuela's most acclaimed and versatile vocalists. She was awarded the "Premio Nacional del Artista" on two occasions. Da Costa has shared the stage with international artists such as Eric Clapton, Ray Charles and others. She has appeared in prestigious jazz festivals and venues throughout Europe, North America, Russia and Australia. Since November 2000 she has been performing Osvaldo Golijov's *La Pasión Según San Marcos*, *Ayre*, and *Oceana*. She has numerous recordings to her credit, *El Sueño* with Casablanca, *Solo Jazz*, *Jazz & Blues*, and *Biella Da Costa en Navidad*, and now she is releasing a new work. Da Costa is also featured on *Monk in The Sun*, a tribute to Thelonious Monk released in the U.S. In 2009 she recorded Osvaldo Golijov's *La Pasión Según San Marcos* at the Carré Theatre in Holland. She has performed at Carnegie Hall, Boston Symphony, Sydney Opera House, and many other theatres around the world.

Jody Elff is a Grammy Award-winning audio engineer and sound designer. For 25 years he has worked with some of the world's most adventurous artists in the pursuit of the ideal representation of their sonic intention in music performances and recordings. His fine art sound works have been presented in galleries, museums and public spaces internationally. His commercial work includes sound design and implementation for live television and corporate events, as well as architectural spaces.

Nora Fischer is challenging the way we listen to the voice. The Amsterdam-based singer is renowned for her adventurous approach to live performance and her innovative projects fusing classical and contemporary repertoire. This can range from traditional concert programmes to genre-defying collaborations—such as her debut album *HUSH*, which was released on Deutsche Grammophon in April 2018. Using her voice as a versatile instrument, Fischer's repertoire ranges from Monteverdi to the many compositions that have been written for her in the present day. Her "affinity with experimental classical styles and sharp dramatic instincts" (*The New York Times*) have led to many collaborations with leading contemporary composers, including Louis Andriessen, Osvaldo Golijov, David Lang, and Michel van der Aa. Fischer's unique approach has taken her around the globe, from the Philharmonie de Paris and Walt Disney Concert Hall to the Lowlands Pop Festival or a mysterious forest at the Oerol Theatre Festival.

Jeremy Flower is a multi-instrumentalist and composer of acoustic and electronic music. His work with electronics has landed him on stage as a guest artist with orchestras and chamber groups all over the world as well as with world-renowned electronic producers in experimental, ambient and minimal techno genres. Flower has been commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for their Music NOW series, James Sommerville and the Hamilton Philharmonic for their new music festival What Next?, and Carnegie Hall's Weill Institute. He writes music for the Mediated Matter Group from MIT's Media Lab and is part of David Krakauer's Ancestral Groove project, which explores the heritage of traditional Jewish music through the lens of the modern experience fusing Klezmer with hip-hop, jazz, and house music. He has also collaborated extensively with Argentine-American composer Osvaldo Golijov. Currently Flower is working on a couple children, a second recorded song cycle to follow 2016's *The Real Me*, and building modular synthesizers.

The son of a musical family from Moscow, by way of Israel, violinist, composer, and producer **Johnny Gandelsman** combines his classical training with a restless desire to reach beyond the concert hall in exploring contemporary music. As a concert soloist and a founding member of the quartet Brooklyn Rider, Gandelsman has premiered dozens of new works and has released albums by The Knights, The Silkroad Ensemble, Brooklyn Rider, and others on his label, In a Circle Records.

Nicholas Houfek is a NYC based Lighting Designer working in music, dance, and theater. His work in music and theater include: Patti Smith (Tribeca Film Festival/Beacon Theater,) International Contemporary Ensemble, Maya Beiser, Ojai Music Festival, Family Play (Collaboration Town/The New Ohio), The Capables, (Gym at Judson), The Highwayman (ARSNOVA, Dickson Place) and The 39 Steps (Olney Theatre Center). Houfek has worked with the Martha Graham Dance Company, Cedar Lake Contemporary Dance, and William Isaac's Kymera Dance. As Lighting Supervisor: Parsons Dance Company, Límon, Martha Graham Dance Company, and Jonah Bokaer. Co-Lighting Designs include: Li'l Buck and Yo-Yo Ma at (le) Poisson Rouge, and Natalie Merchant Tours.

Kayhan Kalhor is an internationally acclaimed virtuoso on the kamancheh. A native of Iran, born in the Kurdish city of Kermanshah, he was a musical prodigy who travelled in Iran to perform and explore the music of its many regions. Internationally, he has appeared as soloist with a variety of symphony orchestras and ensembles. Kalhor is co-founder of the renowned ensembles Dastan; Ghazal: Persian & Indian Improvisations; and Masters of Persian Music. Kalhor's compositions are prominent in Silkroad's repertoire, and his recordings have received four Grammy Award nominations.

Ashley R. Martin is a proud Silkroad artist since April 2018, joining the group through the US Northeast, Florida, West Coast, and Asia tours. Martin is a freelance music touring stage and production manager, event show caller, and AEA union stage manager. Based in California, she enjoys spending her year jumping between the music, corporate, and theatre worlds.

Praised for her "radiant" and "expressive" performances (*The New York Times*), cellist **Karen Ouzounian** is a winner of the S&R Foundation's Washington Award and at home in diverse musical settings. She is a founding member of the Aizuri Quartet, which was awarded the Grand Prize at the 2018 M-Prize Chamber Arts Competition, and First Prize at the 2017 Osaka International Chamber Music Competition in Japan. Its debut album *Blueprinting* was released by New Amsterdam Records in fall 2018. Her commitment to adventurous repertoire and the collaborative process has led to her membership in the Grammy-nominated chamber orchestra A Far Cry, and the critically-acclaimed new music collective counter)induction. Born to Armenian parents in Toronto, Ouzounian holds Master of Music and Bachelor of Music degrees from The Juilliard School, where she was a student of Timothy Eddy.

Percussionist, composer, and arranger **Shane Shanahan** has combined his studies of drumming traditions from around the world with his background in jazz, rock, and Western art music to create a unique, highly sought after style. He is one of Silkroad's inaugural co-artistic directors, and has performed with Bobby McFerrin,

James Taylor, Aretha Franklin, Philip Glass, Alison Krauss, Chaka Khan, and Deep Purple, among others, and has appeared at the White House, playing for President and First Lady Obama. He frequently hosts workshops and clinics at the world's leading universities and museums and collaborates actively with the dance, theater, and yoga communities in the New York area, including several stints on Broadway.

Critically acclaimed violin/vox/freestyle composition artist **Mazz Swift** engages audiences with her signature weaving of composition and improvisation called MazzMuse. Several of her compositions for atypical chamber ensemble have been heard on NPR. Swift has performed and taught workshops on free improvisation on six continents, most notably traveling to Suriname, Mozambique, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Cameroon, Senegal, Albania and Siberia as cultural ambassador at the invitation of the United States Department of State. She is a teaching artist with Carnegie Hall's "Future Music" and "Lullaby" programs, where she coaches an ensemble of talented teens from every corner of NYC, writes lullabies with incarcerated mothers and mothers-to-be, and leads professional development sessions for professional symphony orchestra members and their students. Swift sits on the artistic board for the Jersey City-based chamber music collective, Con Vivo, and is a proud performing member of that organization. She is currently working on a solo CD: *Solo MazzMuse*.

Pipa virtuoso and composer **Wu Man** is an ambassador of Chinese music, creating a new role for her lute-like instrument in both traditional and contemporary music. Brought up in the Pudong school of pipa playing, Wu Man became the first person to receive a master's degree in pipa performance from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. She is a frequent collaborator with the Kronos Quartet and Shanghai Quartet, and has performed in recital and as soloist with major orchestras around the world, regularly premiering new works. Wu Man has recorded more than 40 albums, five of which have been nominated for Grammy Awards. She was named Musical America's 2013 Instrumentalist of the Year, but the best measure of her achievement is that her instrument, which dates back 2000 years, is no longer an exotic curiosity.

Born into a musical family, **Wu Tong** graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music in 1994 and has appeared as soloist with the New York Philharmonic, London Sinfonietta, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. He is the founding vocalist of Lunhui (Again), the first rock band ever to appear on Chinese television. In 2008 he made his operatic debut in *The Bonesetter's Daughter* (San Francisco Opera) and wrote the film score to Wong Kar-Wai's *Ashes of Time Redux*. A nominee for Best Crossover Album at Taiwan's 2011 Golden Melody Awards, he was named 2012 Musician of the Year by New York's China Institute. In 2013, he premiered Zhao Lin's *Duo*, a double concerto written for him and Yo-Yo Ma.