



For Immediate Release

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Silkroad Becomes a Producer of Play For The Vote

The recently launched campaign to mobilize musicians across the U.S. and to increase voter turnout in a positive way is the brainchild of Silkroad artist Mike Block

Boston, MA — Silkroad announced today its role as a Producer of [Play For The Vote](#), the groundbreaking national campaign founded by cellist, composer, and Silkroad artist Mike Block. Play For The Vote will bring musicians to perform at polling sites across the country on Election Day with the goal of increasing voter turnout by providing a more positive voting experience.

"Election Day is shaping up to be pretty stressful for many people, while musicians are struggling to share music in a meaningful way during the pandemic," stated Play For The Vote Founder and Director Mike Block. "November 3 is the perfect opportunity for the musicians of this country to join together to spread the unifying power of shared musical experiences on an unprecedented level."

As a Producer of Play For The Vote, the Silkroad organization is supporting the initiative by activating its nationwide network of performers and encouraging them to sign up. Silkroad musicians are being provided a modest stipend for their time commitment on November 3.

"The upcoming election is on top of our minds and we want to do everything in our power to encourage voting, as well as to support our musicians during this challenging time," said Silkroad's Executive Director, Kathy Fletcher. "We are proud to join Mike's wonderful initiative, which so closely aligns with our longstanding purpose as a social-impact arts organization."

The Silkroad artists who are currently signed up to participate in Play For The Vote on November 3 include: cellist/composer Mike Block and violinist/composer Shaw-Pong Liu (Boston, MA); violinist/violist Mario Gotoh, percussionist Shane Shanahan, and musician/composer Kaoru Watanabe (Brooklyn, NY); and bassist Shawn Conley (Houston, TX). More Silkroad artists are anticipated to join in the next few days.

All musicians are welcome to sign up for a performance slot through the [Play For The Vote website](#). Upon doing so, they will be asked for their location and availability on November 3.

Play For The Vote's custom software will then match each participating musician with a polling place and time assignment to maximize coverage. The deadline to sign up is November 1.

"I'm calling on musicians across the country to join me in signing up to perform at a nearby polling location so that we can make voting a more positive experience for the whole country," added Block.

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 radical cultural collaboration, for the exchange of ideas and tradition alongside commerce and innovation. And in an innovative 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. This initial gathering of artists was rooted in a simple, initial question: "What happens when strangers meet?" And thus, Silkroad was born, as 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, Silkroad creates music that engages difference, sparking radical cultural collaboration and passion-driven learning for a more hopeful and inclusive world. Silkroad artists seek and practice this mission in many forms, creating and presenting new music, teacher and musician training workshops, social impact initiatives, and serving as the home for the Grammy Award-winning Silkroad Ensemble. Silkroad has recorded seven albums including *Sing Me Home*, which won the 2016 Grammy for Best World Music Album and was developed and recorded alongside the documentary feature, *The Music of Strangers*, from Oscar-winning director Morgan Neville.

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

About Mike Block

Acclaimed by *The New York Times* for his "vital rich-hued solo playing," Mike Block is a pioneering multi-style cellist, composer, and educator living in Boston. Using a cello strap of his own design, called the Block Strap, Mike is one of the first wave of cellists to stand and move while performing. He is an active recording artist of original material, folk music, and cross-cultural collaborations. Mike is Director of Silkroad's Global Musician Workshop, the Mike Block String Camp, and is an associate professor at the Berklee College of Music.

To learn more about Play For The Vote, please visit playforthevote.com, @playforthevote on Facebook and Instagram, and @play_vote on Twitter.

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