

 MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

# Layla and Majnun

*Performed by*  
Mark Morris Dance Group

**Mark Morris**  
*Artistic Director*

*and*  
The Silk Road Ensemble  
*with*  
Alim Qasimov / *mugham vocals*  
Fargana Qasimova / *mugham vocals*

Thursday Evening, October 13, 2016 at 7:30  
Friday Evening, October 14, 2016 at 8:00  
Saturday Evening, October 15, 2016 at 8:00  
Power Center  
Ann Arbor

*Layla and Majnun* is presented in partnership with Michigan Opera Theatre, Detroit.

Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Performances of the 138th Annual Season  
26th Annual Dance Series

*Layla and Majnun* is a production of Mark Morris Dance Group/Cal Performances, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, California, in association with University Musical Society of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Meany Center for the Performing Arts, Seattle, Washington; Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Chicago, Illinois; Hopkins Center for the Arts, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC; Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois; Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York, New York; Melbourne Festival, Victoria, Australia; and Sadler's Wells, London, England.

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This week's supporting sponsors are Frank Legacki and Alicia Torres and Dennis and Ellie Serras.

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*Layla and Majnun* is made possible, in part, through the MMDG New Works Fund with support from the Friends of MMDG, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, the Howard Gilman Foundation, Ellsworth Kelly Foundation, Elizabeth Liebman, a special grant from The Henry Luce Foundation, PARC Foundation, Poss Family Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Trust for Mutual Understanding.

Funding has also been provided by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

*Layla and Majnun* appears by arrangement with Double M Arts & Events, LLC.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

## MUSIC

Medley of Azerbaijani Music: *Bayati Shiraz*

*Layla and Majnun* by Uzeyir Hajibeyli (1885–1948), arranged by Alim Qasimov,  
Johnny Gandelsman, Colin Jacobsen

Sung in Azerbaijani with English titles

## CAST

Fargana Qasimova, *mugham vocals*

Alim Qasimov, *mugham vocals*

Miralam Miralamov, *mugham vocals*

Kamila Nabiyeva, *mugham vocals*

*The Silk Road Ensemble* / Shawn Conley, *bass*; Joseph Gramley, *percussion*;

Rauf Islamov, *kamancheh*; Andrea Lee, *cello*; Max Mandel, *viola*;

Jessie Montgomery, *violin*; Zaki Valiyev, *tar*; Georgy Valtchev, *violin*;

Jin Yang, *pipa*; Evan Ziporyn, *clarinet*

*Mark Morris Dance Group* / Sam Black, Durell R. Comedy, Rita Donahue,

Domingo Estrada, Jr., Lesley Garrison, Lauren Grant, Brian Lawson, Aaron Loux,

Laurel Lynch, Stacy Martorana, Dallas McMurray, Brandon Randolph,

Nicole Sabella, Billy Smith, Noah Vinson, Michelle Yard

## CREATIVE TEAM

*Choreography and Direction* / Mark Morris

*Scenic and Costume Design* / Howard Hodgkin

*Lighting Design* / James F. Ingalls

*Set Realization* / Johan Henckens

*Costume Realization* / Maile Okamura

*This evening's performance is approximately 70 minutes in duration and will be performed without intermission.*



Following Thursday evening's performance, please feel free to remain in your seats and join us for a post-performance discussion with members of the company.

## PROGRAM

### **Medley of Azerbaijani Music: *Bayati Shiraz***

*Mugham Vocals* / Kamila Nabiyeva

*Mugham Vocals* / Miralam Miralamov

*Kamancheh* / Rauf Islamov

*Tar* / Zaki Valiyev

All pieces in this medley are based on the melodic patterns of *Bayati Shiraz*, which is one of the major *mughams* of Azerbaijani music. The composition proceeds from the melancholic and sad to the upbeat and playful; such development is highly typical for Azerbaijani traditional music. The medley opens with a famous Azerbaijani folk song “I have watered the street,” which is about a girl who is waiting for her beloved and wishing that they never be separated. The second part of this composition features the actual *mugham Bayati Shiraz*, where both singers and instrumentalists demonstrate their ability to improvise. The song “You have been apart from me” is the closing part of the medley. Alibaba Mammadov (b. 1929), the renowned Azerbaijani *mugham* singer, composed this piece following all the rules and stylistic features of the traditional *tasnifs*. A *tasnif* is a romance-like lyrical song that is usually performed within *mugham* compositions. This medley, therefore, features three genres of traditional and folk music of Azerbaijan — *mugham*, folk song, and *tasnif*.

## **PROGRAM (CONTINUED)**

### **Layla and Majnun**

*Layla* / Fargana Qasimova, *mugham vocals*

*Majnun* / Alim Qasimov, *mugham vocals*

*Musicians* / Zaki Valiyev, *tar*; Rauf Islamov, *kamancheh*; Evan Ziporyn, *clarinet*;  
Jin Yang, *pipa*; Joseph Gramley, *percussion*; Georgy Valtchev, *violin*;  
Jessie Montgomery, *violin*; Max Mandel, *viola*; Andrea Lee, *cello*;  
Shawn Conley, *bass*

### **Act I: Love and Separation**

*Layla* / Stacy Martorana

*Majnun* / Dallas McMurray

Sam Black, Rita Donahue, Lesley Garrison, Lauren Grant, Brian Lawson,  
Aaron Loux, Laurel Lynch, Billy Smith, Noah Vinson, Michelle Yard

### **Act II: The Parents' Disapproval**

*Layla* / Nicole Sabella

*Majnun* / Domingo Estrada Jr.

*Layla's Parents* / Lauren Grant, Noah Vinson

*Majnun's Parents* / Michelle Yard, Billy Smith

Sam Black, Lesley Garrison, Brian Lawson, Stacy Martorana, Dallas McMurray,  
Brandon Randolph

### **Act III: Sorrow and Despair**

*Layla* / Laurel Lynch

*Majnun* / Aaron Loux

Rita Donahue, Domingo Estrada, Jr., Lauren Grant, Brian Lawson, Stacy Martorana,  
Dallas McMurray, Nicole Sabella, Billy Smith, Noah Vinson, Michelle Yard

### **Act IV: Layla's Unwanted Wedding**

*Layla* / Lesley Garrison

*Majnun* / Sam Black

*The Husband* / Durell R. Comedy

*Layla's Parents* / Lauren Grant, Noah Vinson

Rita Donahue, Domingo Estrada Jr., Aaron Loux, Nicole Sabella, Billy Smith,  
Michelle Yard

### **Act V: The Lovers' Demise**

*Layla* / Stacy Martorana, Nicole Sabella, Laurel Lynch, Lesley Garrison

*Majnun* / Dallas McMurray, Domingo Estrada Jr., Aaron Loux, Sam Black

*Layla's Parents* / Lauren Grant, Noah Vinson

*Majnun's Parents* / Michelle Yard, Billy Smith

## THE IDEALIZATION OF LOVE

by Wali Ahmadi, Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Berkeley

From my early youth I have been intrigued by the love story of Majnun and Layla (or Laili, in most Persian renderings), two young lovers from Bedouin Arabia. I remember very well that, during long, cold winter nights in Kabul, in the 1970s, my mother would tell us the remarkable story of these two lovers, their intense, splendid romance, and their endless plights leading to their heartrending deaths. It was then that I learned of an epic Indian movie based on the story that purportedly brought the audience to tears.

Years later, as a student of literature, I read the Persian romance of *Laili and Majnun* by Nezami Ganjawi (1140–1209 CE) and then came across several reworkings of this amazing romance. The story clearly draws from brief, disjointed oral anecdotes reported in earlier Arabic sources. It was Nezami who superbly worked through the scant materials in his possession, developed a more complex plot, intensified the characterization, and composed a much more multilayered story, in the *masnawi* (rhyming couplet) form, to be incorporated, along with four other long narratives, into his monumental quintet (*Khamsa*).

In brief, Qays ibn al-Mulawwah of the Banu 'Amir tribe falls in love with his classmate Layla bint Sa'd. As the two grow older, the intensity of their love increases. Although Layla, too, is truly smitten by love, it is Qays who publicly and unreservedly pronounces his obsessive passion in elegiac lyrics, thus earning the epithet Majnun (literally,

“possessed” or “mad”). Majnun’s incessant poetic expression of Layla’s beauty and his astonishingly outrageous public conduct alarm Layla’s parents. Concerned about their daughter’s reputation as well as the honor and standing of the tribe, her parents ensure that the lovers are kept apart. When Qays’ father asks for Layla’s hand in marriage to his beloved (but universally seen as deranged) son, Layla’s family flatly refuses the proposal, a response that seems harsh but, in the light of Majnun’s scandalous conduct, not necessarily unreasonable. As Majnun continues wandering aimlessly through the desert, bonding with wild beasts, living an ascetic life, and composing verses about his obsession with Layla, his father lures him into visiting the holiest of Muslim sites, the Ka’ba, in the hope of curing him of his obsessive love. There, Majnun pleads to Allah to make him “a hundred-fold” more “possessed” in his love for Layla.

In the meantime, Layla’s father gives her in marriage, against her will, to an affluent but shallow man named Ibn Salam. The marriage never consummates as Layla insists on preserving her chastity. She remains faithful to her true love, Majnun, until Ibn Salam dies of rejection, disillusionment, and grief.

A number of times, Majnun is offered the chance to visit his beloved, to speak with her in person. Towards the end of the story, when Layla, through the intermediation of a young, faithful devotee of Majnun, appears to him, he

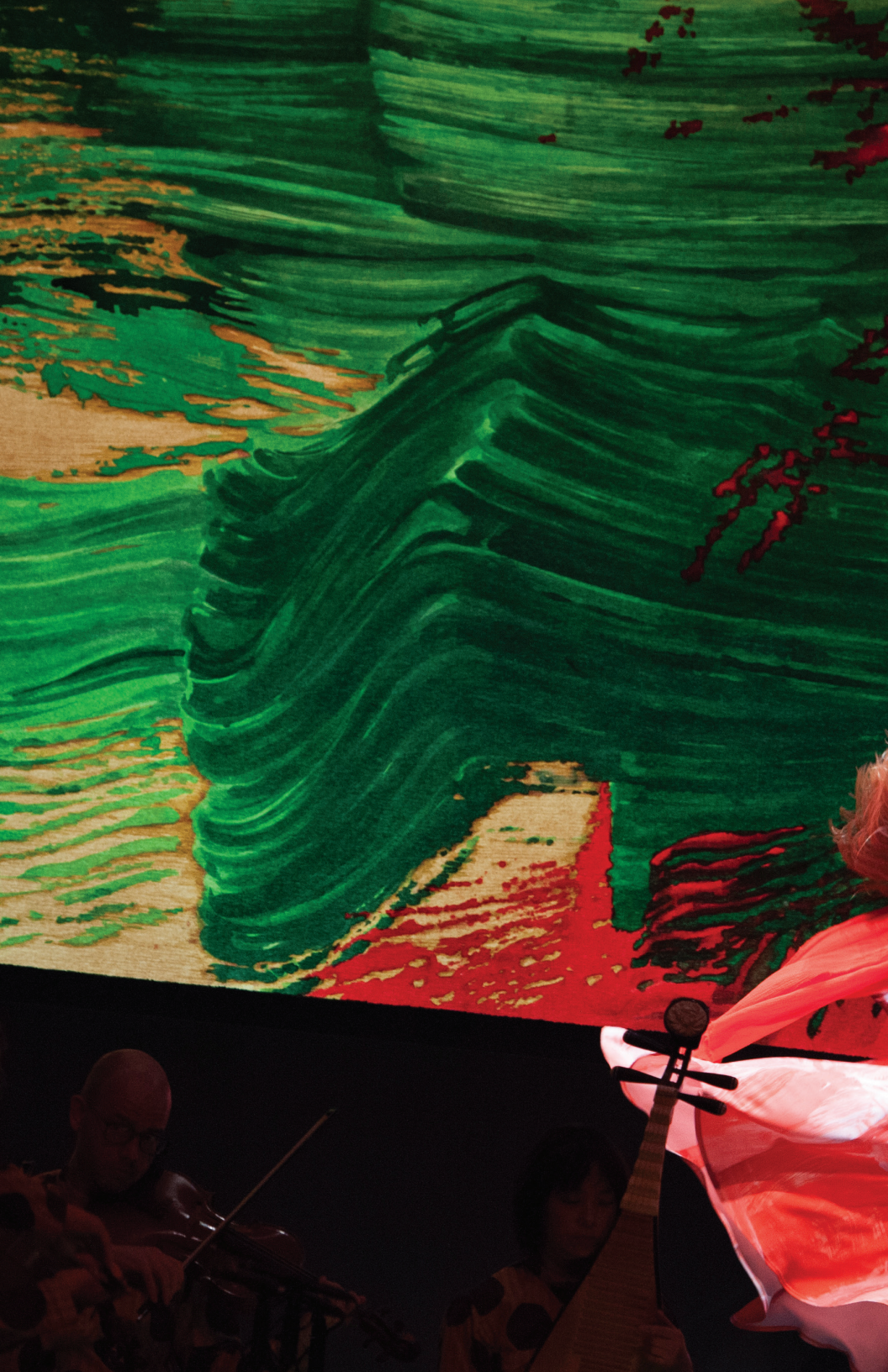
still refuses to have physical (or sexual) contact with her. Majnun strives to realize “perfect love” in Layla, a love that transcends sensual contact with the beloved, a love that is free from selfish intentions, lust, and earthly desires. Precisely for this reason, many commentators have interpreted Nezami’s *Laili and Majnun* as a Sufi (Islamic mystical) allegorical narrative, where the lover seeks ultimate union with, as well as annihilation in, the Beloved (i.e. the Divine or the Truth). Majnun’s harsh life in the desert, then, has been compared to the ascetic life of Muslim mystics who rejected earthly pleasures and renounced worldly affinities. Accordingly, his excessive devotion to Layla represents his unique and steadfast devotion to Ideal Love, the Divine — which explains why, in spite of his incessant yearning for his beloved Layla, he is incapable of physical intimacy with her. It is with the idealized image of the beloved — in the person of Layla — that Majnun is infatuated. When Layla falls mortally ill and passes away, Majnun, too, loses his one and only purpose in life, his sole means towards the realization of True Love. When he learns about the death of his beloved, he at once seeks her gravesite. Weeping and moaning, he presses himself against her gravestone and breathes his final gasps, and dies. The lovers ultimately unite, but only in death.

Nezami’s romance of *Laili and Majnun* is a multilayered, complex text, which makes it open to contrasting, and perhaps contradictory, readings. While a Sufi (mystical) reading of it

is plausible, one can justifiably read it as a conventional, yet immensely rich and enthralling love story. Despite the abundance of mystical motifs and metaphors, the profane dimensions of the poem cannot be overlooked.

Nezami’s unparalleled narrative proved considerably influential during the subsequent centuries. While allusions and references to Layla and Majnun can be readily found in *divans* (collections) of poets before Nezami’s time, his version led several noted poets, in a host of languages, to compose original texts modeled after Nezami’s work. In Persian alone, one should mention Amir Khusraw Dehlawi’s masterpiece *Majnun and Laili* (completed c. 1299) and ‘Abd al-Rahman Jami’s *Laili and Majnun* (composed c. 1485). Other notable renderings of the story are by Maktabi Shirazi, Hafezi, and, more notably, Fuzuli. The latter became considerably influential in Ottoman Turkey. The romance of Layla and Majnun has been made into several popular films and movies in Hindi, Turkish, Arabic, and Persian.

*Wali Ahmadi is an associate professor of Persian literature at the University of California, Berkeley. His publications include Modern Persian Literature in Afghanistan: Anomalous Visions of History and Form (2008) and Converging Zones: Persian Literary Tradition and the Writing of History (2012). He is currently working on the cultural politics of modern Persian poetics and aesthetics.*





## INTO THE DIVINE: THE MUSIC OF LAYLA AND MAJNUN

by Aida Huseynova, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music

At the age of 23, the composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli (1885–1948) put Azerbaijan — and himself — on the map of music history with his *Leyli and Majnun*. This opera was the first piece of composed music created in Azerbaijan, premiering in 1908 in Baku (then part of the Russian Empire, now the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan). Azerbaijanis have revered their first national composer and his work ever since. For decades, every season at the Azerbaijan State Opera and Ballet Theater has opened with *Leyli and Majnun*. Each Azerbaijani singer appreciates the honor and responsibility of participating in these productions, and audiences throughout the country enjoy broadcasts of the performances.

Nearly a century after the Baku premiere, Hajibeyli's opera found a new life half a world away thanks to the Silk Road Ensemble under the artistic direction of Yo-Yo Ma. In 2007, the group created a chamber arrangement of Hajibeyli's work that was entitled *Layla and Majnun*, following the pronunciation of the heroine's name in Arabic culture, in which this ancient legend had originated. From 2007 to 2009, the arrangement was a highlight of the ensemble's repertoire, delighting large audiences around the world.

The rich multicultural potential of Hajibeyli's opera perfectly resonates with Silkroad, the cultural organization Yo-Yo Ma founded to house the Silk Road Ensemble. Silkroad envisions music as a global phenomenon, with

musical forms, genres, and styles serving as bridges across time and between cultures. Azerbaijani opera offers many possibilities for such musical and cultural synthesis. In *Leyli and Majnun*, Hajibeyli combined Western opera with two artistic treasures of Central Asia and the Middle East: the story of Layla and Majnun and the genre of *mugham*.

The ill-fated lovers Layla and Majnun are often compared to Romeo and Juliet, although their story in oral tradition predates Shakespeare's play by more than a thousand years. Layla and Majnun have been celebrated in tales by Turks, Arabs, Persians, Indians, Pakistanis, and Afghans. Known in many poetic renditions, their story also has inspired works of visual art, literature, cinema, and music. It is not accidental that Hajibeyli chose the poetic setting of the Azerbaijani poet and philosopher Muhammad Fuzuli (1483–1556). Written in the Azerbaijani language, Fuzuli's work is one of the most famous versions of this ancient legend.

Musical interpretations of the legend of Layla and Majnun appear in diverse genres and national traditions, attesting to the tale's enduring popularity. Hajibeyli's opera — the first piece of composed music to set this ancient story — was based on *mugham*, the quintessential genre of traditional Azerbaijani music. *Mugham* is a branch of the large *maqam* tradition cultivated in the Middle East and Central Asia. An improvised modal music, *mugham* historically has

been performed by a *mugham* trio that consists of a singer playing *gaval* (frame drum) and two instrumentalists playing *tar* (lute) and *kamancheh* (spike fiddle). *Mugham* remains a precious part of the traditional music heritage of Azerbaijan. Since the early 20th century, *mugham* also has become the main source of creative inspiration and experimentation for Azerbaijani composers. In 1977, Azerbaijani *mugham* was one of the 27 musical selections put in Voyagers I and II. Sent beyond our solar system, these American spacecraft carried this music as a testament to the emotional life of human beings. In 2003, UNESCO recognized Azerbaijani *mugham* as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Throughout its long history, the *mugham* genre has attracted many outstanding performers in Azerbaijan. Among them is Alim Qasimov, who occupies a unique and honorable place in Azerbaijan's national music history. Qasimov is revered as a National Treasure of Azerbaijan, and he also has enjoyed substantial acclaim abroad. In 1999, Qasimov won the International IMC-UNESCO Music Prize — a highly respected award that previously had been bestowed on Dmitri Shostakovich, Leonard Bernstein, Olivier Messiaen, Daniel Barenboim, Munir Bashir, and Ravi Shankar, among others. Qasimov possesses an in-depth knowledge of *mugham*. At the same time, he is renowned for his innovative approach to tradition and his openness to experimentation. This is why it is no surprise that Qasimov initiated the idea of a new embodiment of Hajibeyli's old "*mugham* opera."

Qasimov shared his vision with members of the Silk Road Ensemble and received a positive response. He was intimately familiar with Hajibeyli's *Leyli and Majnun*, as he had been involved in its productions in the Azerbaijan State Opera and Ballet Theater in the 1980s. For his Silk Road work, Qasimov selected the portions of Hajibeyli's score that focus on Majnun's solo and duet scenes with Layla, the heroine, whose role was performed by Fargana Qasimova, Qasimov's daughter and student, now a highly reputed *mugham* singer on her own. Qasimov also included choral and ensemble episodes, along with instrumental interludes. Based on these selections, Silk Road Ensemble members Johnny Gandelsman and Colin Jacobsen, both violinists, created a score.

In the interpretation of the Silk Road Ensemble, the story of Layla and Majnun is presented in a condensed version: the three-and-a-half-hour-long opera is compressed into an hour-long chamber piece. Hajibeyli's five acts are rearranged into six parts. These changes have resulted in a reordering and even an omission of many operatic episodes. Ultimately, the Silk Road Ensemble's alterations highlight the story's time-honored messages. The legend of Layla and Majnun has a strong Sufi component, with the love between a man and a woman being seen as a reflection of love for God. The death resulting from separation from one's beloved is a supreme fulfillment, as it takes the individual into the divine. In Hajibeyli's opera, this idea was conveyed through the chorus "Night of Separation," which opens and concludes the work.

These episodes can be compared to the Chorus in Greek tragedies, which comments on events before they occur in the narrative. Reconstituting the Chorus as a cello solo, both at the beginning and at the end of the piece, is one of the new arrangement's most insightful interpretations: the lonely melody of the cello sounds as the voice of eternity.

The new arrangement of Hajibeyli's opera has created a different balance between Western and Eastern traits. In Hajibeyli's opera, these two components mostly are kept separate: the symphony orchestra plays all episodes of composed music and remains silent during the *mughams*. Only the *tar* and *kamancheh* accompany singers during *mugham* episodes. In the new version, however, the role of the ensemble — with *tar* and *kamancheh* included — is crucial throughout the entire piece, and both the improvised and written parts of the composition are firmly integrated.

*Layla and Majnun* is a constantly changing and developing project. Every performance is unique, and it is impossible to take a snapshot of this work. Yo-Yo Ma called this a "part of the thrill" and described the project as "perhaps the finest example of group intelligence at work" (*New York Times*, March 1, 2009). A reviewer of a performance by the Silk Road Ensemble noted, "*Layla and Majnun* was the apex of the program. Classical music making rarely achieves this combination of spontaneity and superb craftsmanship" (*Washington Post*, March 14, 2009).

Indeed, this composition is a result of collective effort and is imbued with the spirit of improvisation. Hajibeyli

was aware of the large cultural span of his project, in terms of its musical and literary contents. However, Hajibeyli limited the cultural, aesthetic, and stylistic scope of the opera to the context of his native culture. In so doing, he reflected the social and cultural expectations of early 20th-century Azerbaijan as well as his own professional experience (or rather, its absence, as *Leyli and Majnun* was Hajibeyli's first work). The Silk Road Ensemble has expanded the cultural reach of Azerbaijani opera deep into the Middle East and Central Asia. No less importantly, they have increased the Western elements in Hajibeyli's score, creating a work of global East-West significance. The new musical arrangement of *Layla and Majnun* is a respectful and highly artistic transformation of Hajibeyli's "*mugham*" opera, now shaped by creative energies coming from diverse cultural, stylistic, and temporal sources.

*Aida Huseynova has a PhD in musicology and teaches at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Her publications include Music of Azerbaijan: From Mugham to Opera (Indiana University Press, 2016). Huseynova also serves as a research advisor for Silkroad under the artistic direction of Yo-Yo Ma. Her numerous awards include an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant (2016) and a Fulbright scholarship (2007–08).*



What's it like to spend the summer with Mark Morris Dance Group? See behind-the-scenes photos at [ums.org](http://ums.org).

## LAYLA AND MAJNUN: LIBRETTO

Libretto by Uzeyir Hajibeyli (based on the poem by Muhammad Fuzuli)

Translation by Aida Huseynova and Isabelle Hunter

### 1. LOVE AND SEPARATION

*Majnun:*

My soul is on fire because we are apart

I want to join my beloved

My heart is heavy because I am alone

I want to see my beloved

I feel like a nightingale that cries in pain,  
trapped in a cage

I want a flower garden.

*Layla:*

My heart has been breaking since I was overcome by love

What kind of sorrow is this?

I do not have the strength to describe the sorrow in my heart

I cannot bear being apart from you

*Majnun:*

Seeing your face — as lovely as the sun — has made me weak

I cannot be still

My only wish is to perish in the world of love

I thank God that my wish is granted

I have no more desire

*Layla:*

My true love knows my heart is breaking

He knows what sadness lives in my heart

There is no need for me to explain my grief

He knows every sliver of sorrow in my heart

*Majnun:* Yes, I know

*Layla:* Yes, he knows

*Majnun:* Yes, I know

*Layla and Majnun:*

Your movements tantalize me  
Your smile — like a flower — makes me weep  
Your sweet scent renders me motionless  
Your tousled hair drives me mad

## **2. THE PARENTS' DISAPPROVAL**

*Both:*

You fell in love, desperately in love  
And your love is mixed with sadness and grief

*Majnun:*

Father and Mother — my soul, my spirit  
Father and Mother — my heart  
How could I know that falling in love with Layla  
would turn out this way?  
What could I say, what could I do?  
I cannot control this love  
I'm powerless — I have no strength  
I can only worship this one idol  
until the very end of my life

*Layla:*

Mother, Father — it's not my fault that I went to school  
I've never done anything to disobey you  
I swear this was not my intention  
I just wanted to be a carefree schoolgirl  
Don't say any more  
Have mercy and stop tormenting me

*Majnun:*

Father, Mother, my love will drive me mad.

## **3. SORROW AND DESPAIR**

*Majnun:*

Dear God, let me be at peace with my troubles  
Let me feel the despair of my love  
Have mercy on me in my grief  
Let me feel even more despair for my love

*Layla:*

Your eyes are closed, your heart is broken  
Your mind tortured, and your legs are bound  
You are burning from head to toe  
And your heart smolders

*Majnun:*

I yearn to feel this sorrow as long as I live  
I need this sorrow because this sorrow needs me  
I will not surrender  
I will not be called unfaithful

*Layla:*

I am as faithful as you are  
Maybe even more so  
You are on fire only at night  
While I am on fire night and day

*Both:*

Like Fuzuli, I am inspired. Please, God, let me be.

#### **4. LAYLA'S UNWANTED WEDDING**

*Majnun:*

Why are you in the garden with a stranger  
Enjoying yourself, bestowing favors on him?  
How could you break your word?  
Did you forget about our vows? How cruel!

*Layla:*

No, no, my soul mate, please listen to me  
If this were up to me I would never want anyone but you  
Fate has dealt me a cruel blow  
I don't know how this happened

*Majnun:*

What did I do to make you turn away from me?  
How could you choose a stranger to share your grief and happiness?  
Is this what you call love?  
You are cruel! You broke our vows!

*Layla:*

God, what torture! What agony!

I was burning with love for you. Now I know the torture of being apart.

*Majnun:*

So this is your loyalty, Layla?

Can someone who is unfaithful be loved?

## **5. THE LOVERS' DEMISE**

*Layla:*

The wheel of fate has not turned the way I wanted

It has not cured the pain of separation

My beloved gave me so much pain

My heart is filled with suffering that has no remedy

My beloved promised to love me forever,

But he forgot about his vows and about our love.

*Majnun:*

True love means sacrificing one's life for his beloved

A soul that has not been given to a beloved is a wasted soul

Lovers want to be together

But separation brings them joy forever.



## ARTISTS

**Mark Morris** was born on August 29, 1956, in Seattle, Washington, where he studied with Verla Flowers and Perry Brunson. In the early years of his career, he performed with the companies of Lar Lubovitch, Hannah Kahn, Laura Dean, Eliot Feld, and the Koleda Balkan Dance Ensemble. He formed the Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG) in 1980, and has since created close to 150 works for the company. From 1988 to 1991, he was director of dance at Brussels' Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, the national opera house of Belgium. In 1990, he founded the White Oak Dance Project with Mikhail Baryshnikov. Much in demand as a ballet choreographer, Mr. Morris has created 20 ballets since 1986 and his work has been performed by companies worldwide, including San Francisco Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, and the Royal New Zealand Ballet. Noted for his musicality, Mr. Morris has been described as "undeviating in his devotion to music" (*The New Yorker*). He began conducting performances for MMDG in 2006 and has since conducted at Tanglewood Music Center, Lincoln Center, and BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music). He served as music director for the 2013 Ojai Music Festival. He also works extensively in opera, directing, and choreographing productions for the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, English National Opera, and The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, among others. He was named a Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation in 1991 and has received 11 honorary doctorates to date. He has taught at the University of Washington, Princeton University, and Tanglewood Music Center. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society, and has served as

an Advisory Board Member for the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. Mr. Morris has received the Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award for the Elevation of Music in Society, the Benjamin Franklin Laureate Prize for Creativity, the International Society for the Performing Arts' Distinguished Artist Award, Cal Performances Award of Distinction in the Performing Arts, the Orchestra of St. Luke's Gift of Music Award, and the 2016 Doris Duke Artist Award. In 2015, Mark Morris was inducted into the Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney Hall of Fame at the National Museum of Dance in Saratoga Springs, New York. Mr. Morris opened the Mark Morris Dance Center in Brooklyn, New York in 2001 to provide a home for his company, rehearsal space for the dance community, outreach programs for children and seniors, and a school offering dance classes to students of all ages and abilities.

The **Mark Morris Dance Group** (MMDG) was formed in 1980 and gave its first performance that year in New York City. The company's touring schedule steadily expanded to include cities in the US and around the world, and in 1986 it made its first national television program for the PBS series *Dance in America*. In 1988, MMDG was invited to become the national dance company of Belgium, and spent three years in residence at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels. The Dance Group returned to the US in 1991 as one of the world's leading dance companies. Based in Brooklyn, New York, MMDG maintains strong ties to presenters in several cities around the world, most notably to its

West Coast home, Cal Performances in Berkeley, California, and its Midwest home, the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. MMDG also appears regularly in New York, Boston, Seattle, and Fairfax. In New York, the company has performed at New York City Center's Fall for Dance Festival, regularly performs at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts' Mostly Mozart and White Light Festivals, and collaborates yearly with Brooklyn Academy of Music on performances and master classes. From the company's many London seasons, it has received two Laurence Olivier Awards and a Critics' Circle Dance Award for "Best Foreign Dance Company." Reflecting Morris' commitment to live music, MMDG has featured live musicians in every performance since the formation of the MMDG Music Ensemble in 1996. MMDG regularly collaborates with renowned musicians, including cellist Yo-Yo Ma, pianist Emanuel Ax, mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, and jazz trio The Bad Plus, as well as leading orchestras and opera companies including the Metropolitan Opera, English National Opera, and the London Symphony Orchestra. MMDG frequently works with distinguished artists and designers, including painters Howard Hodgkin and Robert Bordo, set designers Adrienne Lobel and Allen Moyer, costume designers Martin Pakledinaz and Isaac Mizrahi, and many others. MMDG's film and television projects include *Dido and Aeneas*, *The Hard Nut*, *Falling Down Stairs*, two documentaries for the UK's *South Bank Show*, and PBS' *Live from Lincoln Center*. In 2015 Mr. Morris' signature work *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* had its national television premiere on PBS' *Great Performances*. While on tour, MMDG partners with local cultural institutions

and community organizations to present Access/MMDG, a program of arts and humanities-based activities for people of all ages and abilities.

The Mark Morris Dance Group has enjoyed a long relationship with Meany Center for the Performing Arts. Since 1987, the Dance Group has returned 18 times to perform on the Meany Hall stage, which includes four world premieres.

Inspired by the exchange of ideas and traditions along the historical Silk Road, cellist Yo-Yo Ma established Silkroad in 1998 to explore how the arts can advance global understanding. Since 2000, the musicians of the **Silk Road Ensemble** have led Silkroad's work to connect the world through the arts, focusing in three areas: musical performances, learning programs, and cultural entrepreneurship. Representing dozens of nationalities and musical traditions, the musicians of the Ensemble model new forms of cultural exchange through performances, workshops, and residencies. *The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble*, a documentary by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Morgan Neville (*20 Feet From Stardom*), premiered at the Toronto Film Festival in September 2015 and was released in theaters June 2016. Learn more at [silkroadproject.org](http://silkroadproject.org).

**Howard Hodgkin** (*set and costume design*) was born in London in 1932 and evacuated during the war to the US, where he lived on Long Island from 1940 to 1943. He studied at the Camberwell School of Art and the Bath Academy of Art, Corsham. In 1984 he represented Britain at the Venice Biennale and won the Turner Prize the following year. He was knighted in 1992 and made a Companion of Honour in 2003. An exhibition of his *Paintings*

1975–1995, organized by the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, opened in 1995 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and toured to museums in Fort Worth and Düsseldorf, and to London’s Hayward Gallery. A retrospective opened at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, in spring 2006. It traveled to London’s Tate Britain and then to the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid. Mr. Hodgkin first worked in the theater in 1981, when he designed the set and costumes for Richard Alston’s *Night Music* with the Ballet Rambert. They later collaborated on *Pulcinella*, which was filmed by the BBC and released on DVD. For the Mark Morris Dance Group, Mr. Hodgkin designed the sets for *Rhymes with Silver* (1997), *Kolam* (2002), and *Mozart Dances* (2006). He is represented by Gagosian Gallery and has shown with them in New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Rome, and London. He has been passionate about India and Indian art for most of his life. Toronto’s Aga Khan Museum exhibited Mr. Hodgkin’s own paintings *Inspired by India* along with Indian miniatures from his collection in 2015. *After All*, an exhibition of his new prints, opens the new Alan Cristea Gallery in Pall Mall, London in October 2016. Future plans include new paintings at Gagosian Gallery, Hong Kong in January, and a retrospective of his portraits, (1949–2016) at the National Portrait Gallery, London in March 2017.

**James F. Ingalls** (*lighting design*) has designed several pieces for Mark Morris including *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Metropolitan Opera); *King Arthur* (English National Opera); *Sylvia*, *Sandpaper Ballet*, *Maelstrom*, and *Pacific* (San Francisco Ballet); *Platée* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and New York City Opera); *Mozart Dances*, *Romeo and Juliet: On Motifs of Shakespeare*, *L’Allegro*,

*il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, and *Dido and Aeneas* (MMDG). Recent designs for dance include *The Nutcracker* (Pacific Northwest Ballet/Seattle); Twyla Tharp’s 50th Anniversary Tour (US and NY State Theatre); *The Sleeping Beauty*, choreographed by Alexei Ratmanský (Teatro alla Scala Ballet and ABT); *Celts*, choreographed by Lila York (Boston Ballet); and *Sea Lark* and *Death and the Maiden* (Paul Taylor Dance Company). Recent theater work includes *Desdemona*, directed by Peter Sellars (UCLA/CAP, Melbourne and Sydney Festivals) and *Druid Shakespeare*, directed by Garry Hynes (Galway, Irish tour, and Lincoln Center Festival). He often collaborates with Melanie Rios Glaser and The Wooden Floor dancers in Santa Ana, California.

**Maile Okamura** (*costume realization*) studied primarily with Lynda Yourth at the American Ballet School in San Diego, California. She was a member of Boston Ballet II and Ballet Arizona before moving to New York to study modern dance. Ms. Okamura has performed with MMDG since 1998. She has also had the pleasure of working with choreographers Neta Pulvermacher, Zvi Gotheiner, Gerald Casel, and John Heginbotham, with whom she frequently collaborates as dancer and costume designer. Ms. Okamura has also designed costumes for three Mark Morris works to date: *Words* and *A Forest* for MMDG and *The Letter V* for Houston Ballet. Ms. Okamura and her husband, Colin Jacobsen, are the proud parents of Mimi Hanako, born in 2015.

**Johan Henckens** (*set realization*) became the technical director of the Mark Morris Dance Group in 1989, during the company’s three-year residency at the Koninklijke Muntscouwburg in Brussels, Belgium.

**Johnny Gandelsman** (*musical arrangement*) is the son of a musical family from Moscow, by way of Israel, whose musical voice reflects the artistic collaborations he has been a part of since moving to the US in 1995. Through his work with such artists as Yo-Yo Ma, Bono, Osvaldo Golijov, David Byrne, Bela Fleck, Kayhan Kalhor, Suzanne Vega, James Levine, Mark Morris, Alim Qasimov and Fargana Qasimova, Nigel Kennedy, and Martin Hayes, Mr. Gandelsman has been able to integrate a wide range of creative sensibilities into his own point of view. Combining his classical training with a desire to reach beyond the boundaries of the concert hall, and a voracious interest in the music of our times, he developed a unique style amongst today's violinists, one that according to the *Boston Globe* possesses "a balletic lightness of touch and a sense of whimsy and imagination." A passionate advocate for new music, Mr. Gandelsman has premiered dozens of works written for Brooklyn Rider and Silk Road Ensemble. In 2012–13, he premiered works by Lev "Ljova" Zhurbin, Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky, Vijay Iyer, Bela Fleck, Daniel Cords, Ruben Kodheli, Dana Lyn, Gabriel Kahane, Colin Jacobsen, Shara Worden, John Zorn, Christina Courtin, Ethan Iverson, Padma Newsome, Gregory Saunier, Evan Ziporyn, Bill Frisell, and Nik Bartsch, as well as a violin concerto by Gonzalo Grau, commissioned for him by Community Music Works.

**Colin Jacobsen** (*musical arrangement*) is "one of the most interesting figures on the classical music scene" (*Washington Post*). A founding member of two game-changing, audience-expanding ensembles — the string quartet Brooklyn Rider and orchestra The Knights — he is also a touring member of Yo-Yo Ma's venerated Silk Road

Ensemble and an Avery Fisher Career Grant-winning violinist. Mr. Jacobsen's work as a composer developed as a natural outgrowth of his chamber and orchestral collaborations. Jointly inspired by encounters with leading exponents of non-western traditions and by his own classical heritage, his most recent compositions for Brooklyn Rider include *Three Miniatures* — "vivacious, deftly drawn sketches" (*New York Times*) — which were written for the reopening of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Islamic art galleries. Mr. Jacobsen collaborated with Iran's Siamak Aghaei to write a Persian folk-inflected composition, *Ascending Bird*, which he performed as soloist with the YouTube Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House in a concert that was streamed live to millions of viewers worldwide. His work for dance and theater includes *Chalk and Soot*, a collaboration with Dance Heginbotham, and music for Compagnia de' Colombari's theatrical production of Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself*.

**Alim Qasimov** (*mugham vocals*) is a prominent mugham singer named a "Living National Treasure" of Azerbaijan. He has been passionate about mugham since his early childhood, but did not pursue a career in music until the age of 19, after various jobs as an agricultural worker and driver. Mr. Qasimov studied at the Asaf Zeynalli Music College (1978–1982) and the Azerbaijan University of Arts (1982–1989). His teacher was well-known mugham singer Aghakhan Abdullayev. Mr. Qasimov perceives and presents mugham not only as an ancient art and a part of Azerbaijan's musical and cultural heritage but also as a constantly developing tradition. His performing style is unique, combining deep knowledge of centuries-old rules of mugham with challenging

innovations, willingly juxtaposing mugham with other music styles, such as jazz and contemporary composition. Mr. Qasimov was awarded the International IMC-UNESCO Music Prize in 1999 in recognition of his musical contributions to world peace. Past winners of this prize include Yehudi Menuhin, Ravi Shankar, Olivier Messiaen, and Daniel Barenboim. Mr. Qasimov's numerous awards also include the title of the People's Artist of Azerbaijan, the highest artistic rank in the country. On his 50th birthday in 2007, the President of Azerbaijan awarded him the Medal of Glory.

**Fargana Qasimova** (*mugham vocals*), Alim Qasimov's daughter and protégée, is an accomplished mugham singer. Her father has been the major influence in her life and career. Ms. Qasimova grew up with sounds of mugham and verses from the classical poetry of Azerbaijan and from the age of four, often performed along with her father at home and first joined him on tour at the age of 16. She studied mugham at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory (1996–2000) and performs frequently with Mr. Qasimov both in Azerbaijan and internationally and has earned recognition as a master of mugham. In 1999, *Love's Deep Ocean*, a CD featuring Mr. Qasimov and Ms. Qasimova, was released by Network Medien in Frankfurt, Germany. In 2002 at the Women's Voices Festival in Belgium, Ms. Qasimova made her first appearance as a soloist.

**Matthew Rose** (*rehearsal director*) began his dance training in Midland, Michigan, with Linda Z. Smith at the age of 17. After receiving his BFA in dance from the University of Michigan in 1992, he moved to New York City. He was a soloist with the Martha Graham Dance Company

from 1993–1996, and in 1997 began working with MMDG. After several years of performing full-time with MMDG, he began assisting Mr. Morris with the creation of new works. He has been the company's rehearsal director since 2006.

**Colin Fowler** (*music director*) began his musical study at the age of five in Kansas City and went on to study at the prestigious Interlochen Arts Academy. He continued his education at The Juilliard School, where he received his BM in 2003 and his MM in 2005. While at Juilliard, he studied piano with Abbey Simon, organ with Gerre Hancock and Paul Jacobs, harpsichord with Lionel Party, and conducting with James dePriest and Judith Clurman. A versatile musician and conductor, Mr. Fowler works in many areas of the music scene in New York City. He is a veteran of numerous Broadway shows, most recently performing in the Tony Award-winning musical *Jersey Boys*. A seasoned church musician, Mr. Fowler is currently the organist at Marble Collegiate Church on Fifth Avenue and also leads services and concerts at Park Avenue Synagogue, where he has served as music director since 2012. As a classical soloist and collaborative artist, he has performed and recorded with many world-renowned musicians and ensembles, including Deborah Voigt and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He began to collaborate with MMDG in 2005 and has since then performed over 40 pieces with the company on almost every keyboard instrument possible, including the harmonium and toy piano, and has conducted performances of *Mozart Dances*, *Acis and Galatea*, and *The Hard Nut*. Hailed by the *New York Times* as "invaluable" and "central to Morris' music," he was appointed music director in 2013.

**Sam Black** is originally from Berkeley, California, where he began studying tap at the age of nine with Katie Maltsberger. He received his BFA in dance from SUNY Purchase, and currently teaches MMDG master classes and Dance for PD®. He first appeared with MMDG in 2005 and became a company member in 2007.

**Durell R. Comedy**, a native of Prince Georges County, Maryland, began dancing at the age of six with Spirit Wings Dance Company. He graduated from the Visual & Performing Arts program of Suitland High School in 2004 and magna cum laude from George Mason University, receiving his BFA in dance performance in 2008. Since then, he's worked and performed with The Metropolitan Opera, Troy Powell, and Kyle Abraham, among others. Mr. Comedy was a member of the Limón Dance Company from 2009–2015, performing principal and soloist roles. He has also appeared as a soloist dancer in Baltimore Opera Company's *Aida* and worked with Washington National Opera from 2013–14 as a principal dancer and dance captain. He was a former fellowship student at the Ailey School and a 2014 adjunct faculty member at George Mason University's School of Dance. Mr. Comedy began working as an apprentice with MMDG in 2015 and became a company member in 2016.

**Shawn Conley** (bass) was born in Honolulu and won a position with the Honolulu Symphony while in high school and went on to earn degrees in music performance from Rice University. Mr. Conley won the 2009 International Society of Bassists Jazz Competition, was a semi-finalist in the Thelonious Monk Jazz Competition, and received a Wagoner Fellowship. He has performed with Sting, Peter Gabriel, Yo-Yo Ma, 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.

**Rita Donahue** was born and raised in Fairfax, Virginia, and attended George Mason University. She graduated magna cum laude in 2002, receiving a BA in English and a BFA in dance. Ms. Donahue danced with bopi's black sheep/dances by kraig patterson and joined MMDG in 2003.

**Domingo Estrada, Jr.**, a native of Victoria, Texas, studied martial arts and earned his black belt in 1994. He danced ballet folklórico through his church for 11 years. Mr. Estrada earned his BFA in ballet and modern dance from Texas Christian University and had the honor of working with the late Fernando Bujones. During his undergraduate studies he attended the American Dance Festival where he had the privilege of performing *Skylight*, a classic work by choreographer Laura Dean. He debuted with MMDG in 2007 and became a company member in 2009. Mr. Estrada would like to thank God, his family, and all who support his passion.

**Lesley Garrison** grew up in Swansea, Illinois, and received her early dance training at the Center of Creative Arts in St. Louis, Missouri, and the Interlochen Arts Academy. She studied at the Rotterdamse Dansacademie in The Netherlands and holds a BFA from Purchase College. She first performed with MMDG in 2007 and became a company member in 2011. Ms. Garrison teaches at The School at the Mark Morris Dance Center and for the Dance for PD® program.

**Joseph Gramley** (*percussion*) is a multi-instrumentalist and composer. The Oregon native is also Silkroad's associate artistic director. During more than 16 years with Silkroad, he has collaborated with renowned musicians from India, Iran, China, Japan, Korea, and central Asia. He has performed internationally as a soloist and with major symphony orchestras. His first solo record, *American Deconstruction*, a rendition of five milestone works in the modern multi-percussion canon, was released in 2000 and reissued in 2006. A second solo recording, *Global Percussion*, was released in 2005. Mr. Gramley is associate professor of music and director of percussion studies at his undergraduate alma mater, the University of Michigan. Prior to his teaching career, he performed extensively in New York with chamber groups and symphony orchestras and has directed the Summer Seminar at Juilliard for 16 years. Now, he frequently tours with The Knights as well as with organist Clive Diskill-Smith in the duo Organized Rhythm. Their CD *Beaming Music* was released in 2008.

**Lauren Grant** has danced with MMDG since 1996, appearing in nearly 60 of Mark Morris' works. She is on the faculty at The School at the Mark Morris Dance Center, leads master classes around the globe, sets Mr. Morris' work at universities, and frequently leads classes for the company. Ms. Grant received a 2015 New York Dance and Performance Award ("Bessie") for her sustained achievement in performance with Mark Morris and in recognition of her "invigorating spontaneity, expansive phrasing, and robust musicality." She has been featured in *Time Out New York*, *Dance Magazine*, the book *Meet the Dancers*, appeared in PBS's *Great Performances*, *Live From Lincoln Center*, and ITV's *The South Bank Show* and was a subject for

the photographer Annie Leibovitz. Before joining MMDG, Ms. Grant moved to New York City from her hometown of Highland Park, Illinois, and earned a BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She is currently pursuing her MFA at Montclair State University. She and her husband David Leventhal (former MMDG dancer and current Dance for PD® Program Director) are proud parents of son Zev, born in 2012.

**Rauf Islamov** (*kamancheh*) was born in Baku, Azerbaijan and studied kemancheh at the Asaf Zeynalli Music College, the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, and received his master's from the Azerbaijan State Art University. He has toured widely with the Alim Qasimov Ensemble.

**Brian Lawson** began his dance training in Toronto at Canadian Children's Dance Theatre. There he worked with choreographers such as David Earle, Carol Anderson, and Michael Trent. Mr. Lawson spent a year studying at the Rotterdamse Dansacademie in The Netherlands and graduated summa cum laude in 2010 from Purchase College, where he was also granted the President's Award for his contributions to the dance program. Mr. Lawson has had the pleasure of performing with Pam Tanowitz Dance, Dance Heginbotham, and Nelly van Bommel's NØA Dance, among others. He joined MMDG as an apprentice in 2011 and became a company member in 2013.

**Andrea Lee** (*cello*) has been praised for her "elegant solo work" (*New York Times*) and "sublime" playing (*Times Union*). She enjoys a busy freelance and teaching career in New York City. She is a founding member of the critically-acclaimed indie-classical band Build and makes frequent appearances with such

ensembles as A Far Cry, The Knights, ECCO, Talea Ensemble, and ICE. She has participated in festivals in the US and Europe, including Taos School of Music, Spoleto Festival USA, IMS Prussia Cove, Holland Music Sessions, and Banff, and collaborated in performance with members of the Borromeo, Jupiter, and Miami Quartets. She holds a BA in history with distinction from Yale University and graduate degrees in cello performance from New England Conservatory and Mannes College. A devoted teacher, she maintains a private studio and serves on the faculty of the New York Philharmonic School Partnership Program.

**Aaron Loux** grew up in Seattle, Washington, and began dancing at the Creative Dance Center as a member of Kaleidoscope, a youth modern dance company. He began his classical training at the Cornish College Preparatory Dance Program and received his BFA from The Juilliard School in 2009. He danced at The Metropolitan Opera and with Arc Dance Company before joining MMDG in 2010.

**Laurel Lynch** began her dance training at Petaluma School of Ballet in California. She moved to New York to attend The Juilliard School where she performed works by Robert Battle, Margie Gillis, José Limón, and Ohad Naharin. After graduation Ms. Lynch danced for Dušan Tynek Dance Theatre, Sue Bernhard Danceworks, and Pat Catterson. She joined MMDG as an apprentice in 2006 and became a company member in 2007. She gives many thanks to Gene and Becky.

**Max Mandel** (*viola*) is one of the most acclaimed and active chamber musicians of his generation. Comfortable in many styles and genres, the Canadian violist's current group affiliations in addition to

the Silk Road Ensemble include the FLUX Quartet, The Knights, Metropolitan Museum Artists in Concert, Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players, Smithsonian Chamber Players, Caramoor Virtuosi, Blarvuster, ClassNotes, and I Furiosi Baroque Ensemble. Early formative experiences include founding the Metro String Quartet, and forging his dedication to chamber music through collaboration with his colleagues and teachers, such as Lorand Fenyves at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, and the Banff Center for the Arts. Mr. Mandel has been guest principal of The Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Camerata Bern (Switzerland), Camerata Nordica (Sweden), and The Canadian Opera Company Orchestra. He is also a frequent guest of Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra.

**Stacy Martorana** began her dance training in Baltimore, Maryland at the Peabody Conservatory. In 2006 she graduated from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts with a BFA in contemporary dance. She has danced with the Amy Marshall Dance Company, the Neta Dance Company, Helen Simoneau Danse, Kazuko Hirabayashi Dance Theater, Daniel Gwirtzman Dance Company, and Rashaun Mitchell. From 2009–2011 she was a member of the Repertory Understudy Group for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. She joined MMDG in 2012.

**Dallas McMurray**, from El Cerrito, California, began dancing at age four, studying jazz, tap, and acrobatics with Katie Maltsberger and ballet with Yukiko Sakakura. He received a BFA in dance from the California Institute of the Arts. Mr. McMurray performed with the Limón Dance Company in addition to works by Jiří Kylián, Alonzo King, Robert Moses, and Colin Connor. He performed with MMDG

as an apprentice in 2006 and became a company member in 2007.

**Jessie Montgomery** (*violin*) is a New York native violinist, composer, and music educator, performing regularly among New York's classical and new music scenes. She is currently a member of the highly acclaimed Catalyst Quartet, raved by the *New York Times* as "invariably energetic and finely burnished...playing with earthy vigor." She was a co-founding member of PUBLIQuartet, an ensemble made up of composers and arrangers, featuring their own music as well as that of emerging and established composers. She was also a member of the Providence String Quartet from 2004–2009, quartet-in-residence of Community MusicWorks. Ensemble experiences have led to collaborations with the Orion String Quartet, the Miro String Quartet, and The Knights. Ms. Montgomery has also collaborated with several avant-garde artists such as clarinetist Don Byron, Butch Morris, and William Parker.

**Brandon Randolph** began his training with the School of Carolina Ballet Theater in Greenville, South Carolina, under the direction of Hernan Justo. At age 14, he was accepted into the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, where he studied with Stanislav Issaev and Bobby Barnett. Mr. Randolph received his BFA in dance from Purchase College in 2012. There he had the opportunity to perform with Dance Heginbotham as well as repertory by Stephen Petronio, Lar Lubovitch, Paul Taylor, and George Balanchine. Mr. Randolph began working with MMDG in 2013 and became a company member in 2014.

**Nicole Sabella** is originally from Clearwater, Florida, where she studied at the Academy of Ballet Arts and the Pinellas County Center for the Arts at Gibbs High School under Suzanne B. Pomerantzeff. In 2009, She graduated from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, earning her BFA in modern dance performance and the "Outstanding Performance in Modern Dance" Award. She was a performer with Zane Booker's Smoke, Lilies, and Jade Arts Initiative. Ms. Sabella first performed with MMDG in 2013 and became a company member in 2015.

**Billy Smith** grew up in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and attended George Mason University under a full academic and dance talent scholarship. He graduated magna cum laude in 2007 and received achievement awards in performance, choreography, and academic endeavors. While at George Mason he performed the works of Mark Morris, Paul Taylor, Lar Lubovitch, Doug Varone, Daniel Ezralow, Larry Keigwin, Susan Marshall, and Susan Shields. Mr. Smith's own piece, *3-Way Stop*, was selected to open the 2006 American College Dance Festival Gala at Ohio State University and his original choreography for a production of *Bye Bye Birdie* garnered much critical praise. An actor as well, his regional theater credits include *Tulsa in Gypsy*, *Mistoffelees in CATS*, and *Dream Curly in Oklahoma!*. Mr. Smith danced with Parsons Dance from 2007–2010. He joined MMDG as a company member in 2010.

**Zaki Valiyev** (*tar*) was born in Ganja, Azerbaijan. He studied at the Ganja Music College and received a bachelor's degree at the Azerbaijan National Conservatory. He is a member of the Alim Qasimov Ensemble, with whom he has toured extensively.

**Georgy Valtchev** (*violin*) has appeared as soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician throughout the US, Europe, and Asia. Originally from Plovdiv, Bulgaria, he came to the US in 1992 as a scholarship student of Dorothy Delay and Masao Kawasaki at The Juilliard School, where he ultimately earned his bachelor's and master's degrees. He has been heard as soloist with orchestras in Bangor, Baton Rouge, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Miami, New York, New Jersey, in his native Bulgaria, and throughout Japan. Since 2011, Mr. Valtchev has been a guest concertmaster of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. As a chamber musician he has appeared in New York's Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and 92nd Street Y; the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC; Chicago's Cultural Center; the Royal Carre Theatre in Amsterdam; the Barbican Centre in London; and the Guangzhou Opera House in China. He has been featured in international music festivals such as Mostly Mozart at Lincoln Center, Beethoven Festival at Bard College, Sofia Music Weeks, Varna Summer and Appolonia in Bulgaria, and Bastad Chamber Music Festival in Sweden. Mr. Valtchev is a founding member of Bulgarian Concert Evenings in New York.

**Noah Vinson** is originally from Springfield, Illinois, and received his BA in dance from Columbia College Chicago. He was named one of *Dance Magazine's* "Dancer on the Rise" in 2009 and assisted Mark Morris in the creation of his most recent work for Houston Ballet, *The Letter V*, which premiered in May 2015. He began dancing with MMDG in 2002 and became a company member in 2004.

**Jin Yang** (*pipa*) is a renowned pipa virtuoso. She maintains an extensive performance schedule throughout Asia, Europe, North

America, Africa, and the Middle East, bringing a mixture of musical styles and cultures to the stage. Combining her love for the millennium-old tradition of Chinese music with an innovative spirit of exploration, she builds on a vast amalgam of musical history from both Asian and Western traditions to create a musical experience that transcends boundaries. She is equally comfortable whether performing solo concerts, chamber music, or concertos, and frequently appears in jazz and improvisatory settings as well. From the Golden Hall in Vienna to the Barbican Centre in London; from New York's Carnegie Hall to Tokyo's New National Theatre; from the community Hall in Shropshire, United Kingdom that bears her name to the Lucerne Culture and Congress Hall in Switzerland; from Jerusalem Concert Hall in Israel to the Beijing Concert Hall in China, audiences have experienced her distinct mix of virtuosity, lyricism, tradition, and innovation.

**Michelle Yard** was born in Brooklyn, New York. She began her professional dance training at the NYC High School of the Performing Arts and continued her studies as a scholarship student at Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. She graduated with a BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Ms. Yard teaches Pilates as well as master classes for Access/MMDG programs. She joined MMDG in 1997 and would like to thank her mom.

**Evan Ziporyn** (*clarinet*) has composed for the Silk Road Ensemble, the American Composers Orchestra, Brooklyn Rider, So Percussion, Maya Beiser, Wu Man, Sentieri Selvaggi, and Bang on a Can. He studied at Eastman, Yale, and UC Berkeley with Joseph Schwantner, Martin Bresnick, and Gerard Grisey. He is inaugural director of MIT's new Center for Art, Science, and Technology, where he has taught since

1990. His work is informed by his over 30-year involvement with traditional gamelan. He received a Fulbright in 1987, founded Gamelan Galak Tika in 1993, and has composed a series of groundbreaking compositions for gamelan and western instruments. Awards include a USA Artist Fellowship, the Goddard Lieberman Prize from the American Academy, Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellowship, the MIT Gyorgy Kepes Prize, and commissions from Carnegie Hall, Kronos Quartet, Rockefeller Multi-Arts Program, and Meet the Composer. He co-founded the Bang on a Can All-Stars in 1992, performing with the group for 20 years. He has also recorded with Paul Simon, Steve Reich Ensemble (sharing in their 1998 Grammy Award), and Matthew Shipp, and he currently performs with Iva Bittova and Gyan Riley as the Eviyan Trio.

*View artist photos and more information at [LaylaandMajnun.org](http://LaylaandMajnun.org).*

## UMS ARCHIVES

This week's performances mark the **Mark Morris Dance Group's** 15th, 16th, and 17th performances under UMS auspices. The Dance Group made its UMS debut in March 1993 in a repertory program at the Power Center, and most recently appeared with UMS at the Power Center in September 2011. **The Silk Road Ensemble** makes its fourth, fifth, and sixth UMS appearances this week, following its UMS debut in March 2009 at Hill Auditorium. The Ensemble's most recent appearance in March 2013 at Hill Auditorium included their receipt of the UMS Distinguished Artist Award alongside Yo-Yo Ma. **Alim Qasimov** and **Fargana Qasimova** make their third UMS appearances this evening, following their UMS debuts in October 2007 as part of *Spiritual Sounds of Central Asia* at the Michigan Theater. They most recently appeared at UMS in a concert performance of *Layla and Majnun* with the Silk Road Ensemble at Hill Auditorium in March 2009.

## **PRODUCTION CREDITS**

*Assistant to Howard Hodgkin / Andy Barker*

*Consultant / Aida Huseynova*

*Production Assistant / Bunny Hourt*

Backdrop painted by Scenic Arts Studios. Special thanks to Joe Forbes, Susan Jackson, and Richard Prouse. Stools built by Matthew Eggleton. Costumes built by Eric Winterling, Inc. Costume fabrics digitally printed by Dyenamix, Inc.

## **SILKROAD STAFF**

*Artistic Director and Founder / Yo-Yo Ma*

*Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director / Laura Freid*

*Director of Artistic and Learning Programs / Cristin Canterbury Bagnall*

*Associate Artistic Director / Joseph Gramley*

*Artistic Administrator / Liz Keller-Tripp*

*Communications Manager / Ben Mandelkern*

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*Digital Media and Events Specialist / Jessica Shuttleworth*

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*Education Specialist / Lori Taylor*

## **MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP STAFF**

*Artistic Director / Mark Morris*

*Executive Director / Nancy Umanoff*

## **PRODUCTION**

*Technical Director / Johan Henckens*

*Rehearsal Director / Matthew Rose*

*Music Director / Colin Fowler*

*Lighting Supervisor / Nick Kolin*

*Sound Supervisor / Rory Murphy*

*Costume Coordinator / Stephanie Sleeper*

*Wardrobe Supervisor / Maria Garcia*

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*Finance Manager / Rebecca Hunt*

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*Company Manager / Jen Rossi*

*Management Associate / Geoff Chang*

*Management Assistant / Julia Weber*

*Interns / Marlie Delisfort, Marianny Loveras*

## **DEVELOPMENT**

*Director of Development / Michelle Amador*

*Manager of Institutional Giving / Sophie Mintz*

*Institutional Giving Officer / Tyler Mercer*

*Development Associate / Kristen Gajdica*

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*Director of Marketing / Karyn LeSuer*

*Marketing & Digital Media Manager / Cortney Cleveland*

*Marketing Assistant / Jack Gillard*

*Interns / Julie Dietel, Amanda Pham*

## EDUCATION

*Director of Education / Sarah Marcus*  
*School Director / Kelsey Allison*  
*Education Programs Manager / Jennifer Dayton*  
*School Administrator / Rachel Merry*  
*Outreach Director / Eva Nichols*  
*Dance for PD® Program Director / David Leventhal*  
*Dance for PD® Programs and Engagement Manager/ Maria Portman Kelly*  
*Intern / Elliott Keller*

## DANCE CENTER OPERATIONS

*Operations Manager / Elise Gaugert*  
*Facilities Manager / Mark Sacks*  
*Rentals and Office Manager / Erica Marnell*  
*Retail Store Manager / Janice Gerlach*  
*Front Desk Manager / Jillian Greenberg*  
*Front Desk Assistants / Tyrone Bevans, Alyssa Filoramo, Tiffany McCue, Jessica Pearson*  
*Maintenance / Jose Fuentes, Andy Rivera, Justin Sierra, Arturo Velazquez*

*Booking Representation / Michael Mushalla (Double M Arts & Events)*  
*Media and General Consultation Services / William Murray (Better Attitude, Inc.)*  
*Legal Counsel / Mark Selinger (McDermott, Will & Emery)*  
*Development Consultant / Dunch Arts, LLC*  
*Accountant / O'Connor Davies Munns & Dobbins, LLP*  
*Orthopaedist / David S. Weiss, M.D. (NYU Langone Medical Center)*  
*Physical Therapist / Marshall Hagins, PT, PhD*  
*Hilot Therapist / Jeffrey Cohen*

Thanks to Maxine Morris.

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The Mark Morris Dance Group is a member of Dance/USA and the Downtown Brooklyn Arts Alliance.

*Layla and Majnun* ©2016 Discaled, Inc.

*Layla and Majnun* titles, Aida Huseynova ©2016

The Silk Road Ensemble arrangement of *Layla and Majnun* was made possible in part by the generous support of the Qatar Museums Authority, with additional support from the Academie Musicale de Villecroze and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information on *Layla and Majnun*, visit [LaylaandMajnun.org](http://LaylaandMajnun.org)

For more information on Mark Morris Dance Group, please visit their website at [www.mmdg.org](http://www.mmdg.org), join their email list by texting "MORRIS" to 66866 or by visiting [www.mmdg.org/join-email-list](http://www.mmdg.org/join-email-list), or find them on social media:

Facebook: [markmorrisdancegroup](https://www.facebook.com/markmorrisdancegroup)

Twitter: [markmorrisdance](https://twitter.com/markmorrisdance)

Instagram: [markmorrisdance](https://www.instagram.com/markmorrisdance)

Snapchat: [markmorrisdance](https://www.snapchat.com/add/markmorrisdance)

Tumblr: [mmdgontheroad](https://www.tumblr.com/mmdgontheroad)

YouTube: [Mark Morris Dance Group](https://www.youtube.com/MarkMorrisDanceGroup)



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## MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- 10/20–21 Dorrance Dance  
11/17–20 Nora Chipaumire: *portrait of myself as my father*  
1/7–8 Batsheva Dance Company

*Tickets available at [www.ums.org](http://www.ums.org).*

## ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- 10/15 You Can Dance: Mark Morris Dance Group  
(Ann Arbor Y, 400 W. Washington Street, 2–3:30 pm)
- 10/15 Panel Discussion: *Layla and Majnun*: From the Page to the Stage  
(U-M Hatcher Graduate Library Gallery, 913 S. University Avenue,  
4:30–6:00 pm)
- 10/22 You Can Dance: Dorrance Dance  
(Ann Arbor Y, 400 W. Washington Street, 2–3:30 pm)
- 11/19 You Can Dance: Nora Chipaumire  
(Ann Arbor Y, 400 W. Washington Street, 2–3:30 pm  
Boll Family Y, 1401 Broadway Street, Detroit, 2–3:30 pm  
Sessions will meet at Ann Arbor and Detroit locations concurrently.)

*Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.*



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*Supporters of this weekend's performances of Layla and Majnun.*