



For Immediate Release

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Morgan Beckford Appointed Silkroad Connect Director

Boston, MA — [Silkroad](#) announced today the appointment of Morgan Beckford as its first Silkroad Connect Director, beginning immediately. In this newly created position, Beckford will serve as a core member of the organization’s growing education and social impact team.

“It fills me with great joy to welcome Morgan to the Silkroad team,” stated Strategic Partnerships and Impact Director Alicia Robinson. “When we re-launched Silkroad Connect in 2021, one of our main goals was to evolve the program to meet the needs of modern-day classrooms through a lens of equity and justice. Morgan’s work as an educator, programmer, and administrator has focused firmly on this approach, making her the ideal person to further grow and develop the program. I’m very much looking forward to dreaming, planning, and shaping the next phase of Silkroad Connect with her.”

Originally created in 2009, [Silkroad Connect](#) was re-launched last year as a partnership between Silkroad, the Kennedy Center’s Turnaround Arts program, and four middle-school classrooms in under-resourced districts across the country. The re-envisioned initiative is rooted in social justice and advocacy, centering the arts as an integral tool to support students’ academic and social learning needs. Since the new pilot began, the program has been aligned with Silkroad’s multi-year artistic project, [The American Railroad](#), to explore the stories, cultures, and music of the Black, Chinese, Indigenous, Irish, and other European immigrant populations who helped to build the Transcontinental Railroad or were forcibly removed to make way for it.

As Silkroad Connect Director, Beckford's overarching responsibilities are to develop a comprehensive strategy for the initiative and to lead the implementation, evaluation, and ultimate expansion of its various components. These include developing a culturally responsive, arts-integrated curriculum; facilitating professional development for educators, artists, and partners; liaising with school and district-based educators to coordinate artistic residencies; and co-designing culminating events at each partner school as well as an annual conference. Beckford will collaborate closely with Robinson and the education staff to ensure that the initiative continues to uphold the overall vision, mission, and strategic goals of Silkroad.

Beckford shared, "I'm so excited to begin my journey with Silkroad. This position combines all of my passions into one role: building relationships, supporting students, and doing both through an equity-focused lens. It's a joy to be joining an organization whose values align so closely with my own."

Beckford brings to the position a decade of experience and service to the arts. Prior to joining Silkroad, she was Chief Programming Officer at the Community Music Center of Boston from 2018-2022. In that role, she collaborated with faculty, staff, students, and consultants to build an educational framework, curriculum, and evaluative tools that supported equitable, student-centered music programming. Before relocating to New England, Beckford held the positions of Fellowship Coach and In-Schools Partnerships Coordinator at the Memphis Music Initiative between 2015-2018. There, she was part of the team that launched and scaled a music fellowship program for public school students in Memphis. Her professional experience also includes administrative posts at Opera Memphis and the University of Maryland Alumni Relations Office, as well as a teaching position at the Ashburn Village Country Day School.

Originally from Memphis, Tennessee, Beckford holds a Bachelor of Arts in Voice from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Music in Voice from the University of Maryland-College Park. She remains an active vocalist, performing regularly as a staff singer at Trinity Church Boston and with other New England-based groups.

About Silkroad

Yo-Yo Ma conceived Silkroad in 1998, recognizing the historical Silk Road as a model for radical cultural collaboration—for the exchange of ideas, tradition, and innovation across borders. In an innovative experiment, he brought together musicians from the lands of the Silk Road to co-create a musical language founded in difference, thus creating the foundation of Silkroad: both a touring ensemble comprised of world-class musicians from all over the globe and a social-impact organization working to make a positive impact across borders through the arts.

Today, under the leadership of Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens, Silkroad leads social impact initiatives and educational programming alongside the creation of new music by the Grammy Award-winning Silkroad Ensemble.

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

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