

the SILKROAD

Fall 2006

project

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Silk Road Sounds: the Santur



The *santur*, also known as a hammer dulcimer, is one of the main instruments of Iranian music with roots dating back as far as 1600 b.c.e. Its flat trapezoid body has 72 strings that are struck with two delicate felt-covered hammers called *mezrab*.



By the time he was 10, Silk Road Ensemble member Siamak Aghaei was playing the *santur*. It's an easy instrument for a beginner, he said, because a novice can produce the correct tones.

But mastery is another story. The virtuoso *santur* player produces light, glistening tones by striking the instrument with blinding speed and precision. "I had a dream of the sound of the *santur*, and in that dream the sound was like drops of water, like rain," said Aghaei.

Inside this issue:



The Silk Road runs through Chicago - the first article in a series on *Silk Road Chicago*

Yo-Yo Ma wins Dan David Prize and contributes \$900,000 to help fund *Silk Road Chicago*



Beyond Words: May 2006 Silk Road Ensemble **Residency in Baku**



RISD Residency: in the Silk Road Ensemble, **percussion doesn't play second fiddle**



"Art and music can seem ethereal. Yet when we ask why we find ourselves in such a fractured world, **art and music may be even more**

important."



Silk Road Sounds: The santur: even a novice can produce correct tones, but mastery is another story

"What could make a more fitting location for a Silk Road journey?" Artistic Director **Yo-Yo Ma on Silk Road Chicago.**

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