



Pianist Joel Fan has released his first album, "World Keys."

Pianist Fan showcases 'World' music

By **PHYLLIS A.S. BOROS**
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Joel Fan, the virtuoso pianist who elicited a standing ovation from about 1,500 music-lovers at Bridgeport's Klein last fall, has just released his debut solo album on Reference Recordings.

Joel Fan: World Keys, which debuted at the No. 3 spot on the *Billboard* Classical chart, features 10 works from contemporary and master composers from around the world.

For many, a highlight of the Greater Bridgeport Symphony's 60th anniversary celebration last season was a performance in November by Fan of one of the most popular piano works ever written: Rachmaninoff's Concerto No. 2.

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The 30-something New Yorker — who began his career at age 11 with the New York Philharmonic under conductor Zubin Mehta — performs as a soloist throughout the world and with superstar cellist Yo-Yo Ma. (In May, for example, Fan performed with Ma and the New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center.)

Fan also is a member of the Silk Road Project, founded in 1998 by Ma to illuminate the cultural legacy spawned along the ancient trade routes that connected East Asia to the Mediterranean. The group performs music from that vast region — using a host of indigenous instruments — in concerts throughout the world.

In an e-mail chat last week, Fan wrote that his association with Ma and the Silk Road Project influenced the course of his new CD, which includes works from Turkey, Russia, Syria, Egypt, China, Hungary, Australia, Germany, Latvia and the United States.

"I am deeply grateful to Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Project for providing me inspiration working with master musicians such as Yo-Yo, sheng player Wu Tong, kemanche player Kayhan Kalhor, to name just a few.

"So I've seen musical genius be translated through different cultures. It's a model for how music can make the world a smaller and more positive place.

"The piano is an amazing instrument in that we can imitate so many other instruments. So I've incorporated what I've learned about other instrumentalists into my own solo playing.