

H U M A N I T I E S   W E S T

# EMPIRE ON HORSEBACK **GENGHIS' KHAN** AND THE MONGOLS



**FEBRUARY 22 AND 23, 2008   HERBST THEATRE, SAN FRANCISCO**

Presented with support from Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund; Silkroad Foundation; University of California Berkeley Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, Berkeley Post-Soviet Studies, and Institute of East Asian Studies; and San Francisco Bay Area Rug Society.

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# EMPIRE ON HORSEBACK GENGHIS KHAN *and the Mongols*

Moderator: **FRED ASTREN** (Director, Jewish Studies Program, San Francisco State University)

*Introductory music courtesy of Peter Marsh*

*Introductory slide show prior to the program courtesy of Daniel Waugh*

In the 13th century, Genghis (Chingis) Khan (Universal Ruler) led a nomadic East Asiatic people in the creation of the largest contiguous empire in the history of the world. In the wake of his military victories the Silk Road from China to Europe was reopened, papermaking and printing technologies were introduced to the West, and a comprehensive communications network was established (one of whose imitators,

centuries later, was America's Pony Express). His reputation as a brutal warrior is infamous. In recent years, contributions of his Empire in art, science, religious tolerance, commerce and politics, as well as military strategy, have gained more recognition. An able administrator himself, Genghis Khan, his sons and grandsons ruled the region from China to Europe for 150 years.

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## Friday, February 22, 2008

- 8:00 pm *Keynote Address* **THE 'OWL OF MISFORTUNE' OR THE 'PHOENIX OF PROSPERITY'? REASSESSING CHINGIS KHAN AND THE MONGOL EMPIRE**  
To some of their contemporaries, the conquest of Eurasia by Chingis (Genghis) Khan and his successors in the thirteenth century was the worst disaster that had ever befallen mankind. How did much of Eurasia come to be ruled from Mongolia? Were the Mongols uniquely destructive? **DANIEL WAUGH** (University of Washington) separates myth from reality and provides a balanced picture of the Mongols' impact on their contemporary world.
- 9:00 pm *Lecture/Performance* **FROM STEPPE TO STAGE: 800 YEARS OF MONGOLIAN MUSIC**  
Mongolian music, song, and dance are closely tied to the traditional pastoral ways of life of the nomadic peoples, even the music performed in the courts of Kubilai Khan. **PETER K. MARSH** (CSU East Bay) explores Mongolian music from Imperial times to the present, paying particular attention to how traditional music intersects the human, natural, and spiritual worlds. He concludes with a look at how Mongolian music has fared in the era of globalization. Performing are **ORGILSAIKHAN CHIMEDDORJ**, *morin khuur* or 'horse-head fiddle', **ULZIISAIKHAN LKHAGVADORJ**, *ever büree* or 'Mongolian horn' and singing *khöömii*, a 'throat-singing' style, and **DARKHIJAV DASH**, a *bielgeech*, or dancer.

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## Saturday, February 23, 2008

- 10:00 am *Lecture* **CULTURE AND COMMERCE**  
The image of Chingis (Genghis) Khan and the Mongols as barbarians intent on plunder and destruction is still widely held. The brutality of their military campaigns should not be ignored, but as **MORRIS ROSSABI** (Columbia University) reveals, they promoted commerce and fostered some of the arts in the vast empire they subjugated.
- 11:00 am *Lecture* **THE WOMEN IN CHINGIS KHAN'S LIFE**  
In Chingis (Genghis) Khan's era, Mongol women enjoyed higher position and greater recognition than those in China, the Arab world, or Europe. This was especially true of Mongol *Katuns*, the consorts of the khans. **JAMES D. RYAN** (City University New York) focuses on several of these remarkable women, including Chingis' mother, his chief wife and mother of the four sons who figured in succession to his empire, and several of his daughters-in-law.

- 12 noon – 1:30 pm Break for Lunch. Theatre Closes.
- 1:30 pm *Performance* **MONGOLIAN MUSIC**, introduced by **PETER MARSH** and **ORNA URANCHIMEG-TSULTEM**. Performing are **ORGILSAIKHAN CHIMEDDORJ**, *morin khuur* or ‘horse-head fiddle,’ **ULZIISAIKHAN LKHAGVADORJ**, *ever büree* or ‘Mongolian horn’ and singing *khöömii*, a ‘throat-singing’ style, and **DARKHIJAV DASH**, a *bielgee*, or dancer.
- 2:00 pm *Lecture* **THE MONGOL INFLUENCE ON ISLAMIC, ESPECIALLY PERSIAN ART**  
During the century-long period of the unified Mongol confederacy, the confluence of previously distant cultures yielded a bold new visual aesthetic that would resonate in Islamic art for centuries to come. **STEFANO CARBONI** (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) explores the impact of China’s Yüan dynasty on the art and culture of Iran’s Ilkhanid dynasty, when local artists and artisans attempted to respond to the tastes of their new royal patrons, the Mongols.
- 3:00 pm *Panel* Moderator **FRED ASTREN** will lead a panel discussion with questions from the audience.

## About Our Presenters

**FRED ASTREN**, Professor and Director of the Jewish Studies Program at San Francisco State University, received a master’s degree in Arabic and a PhD in Near Eastern Studies at UC Berkeley after a bachelor’s in Medieval History at University of Minnesota. Among his publications are the award-winning *Karaite Past and Jewish History*, University of South Carolina Press (2004); *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication, and Interaction* (Editor, with B. H. Hary and J. L. Hayes), E.J. Brill, Leiden, Netherlands (2000); *The Jewish Printed Book in India: Imprints of the Blumenthal Rare Book and Manuscript Library*, The Magnes Museum, Berkeley (1992); *Judaica, an Annotated Catalog from the Judah L. Magnes Museum and Library*, Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions, Cambridge, and The Magnes Museum, Berkeley (1991). His research interests include Karaite Jewish History and Religion; Jews in the Islamic World; the Islamization of the Middle East in the Middle Ages; and Sacred History in Western Traditions.



**STEFANO CARBONI** is Curator and Administrator of Islamic Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Visiting Professor at the Bard Graduate Center in New York. His graduate studies were in Arabic and in Islamic Art at the University of Venice, with a Ph.D. in Islamic Art at the University of London. Since 1992 he has been responsible for many exhibitions, including the acclaimed *Venice and the Islamic World, 828–1797* (2006–2007). His publications include several exhibition catalogues, including *Glass of the Sultans* (2001); the prestigious Barr Award winner *The Legacy of Genghis Khan. Courtly Arts and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (2002); and *Venice and the Islamic World*; as well as the collection catalogue, *Glass from Islamic Lands. The Al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait National Museum*, (2001). He teaches Islamic Art and Curatorial Studies at the Institute of Fine Arts (NYU), Hunter College, City University of New York (CUNY), and the Bard Graduate Center for the Decorative Arts in New York.



**PETER K. MARSH** joined the CSU East Bay Music Department faculty in 2007. An ethnomusicologist and music historian with a specialty in Asian music and culture, he earned his Ph.D. from Indiana University, where he specialized in the music and culture of Mongolia and Inner Asia. He earned an M.A. in Ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University, and a B.A. in English and B.M. in Music Performance at Lawrence University. He has written extensively on musical tradition and modernity in Mongolia, including the development of the two-string folk fiddle traditions, the “folklorization” of Mongolian folk music, and the rise of popular music. His latest book, *The Horse-head Fiddle and the Reimagining of Tradition in Mongolia* (New York: Routledge Press), is in preparation. He recently served as Founding Director of the American Center for Mongolian Studies in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, where he assisted mostly US-based faculty, students and scholars in conducting their academic research in the region.



**MORRIS ROSSABI** is Professor of History at Columbia University. Born in Alexandria, Egypt, he received his Ph.D. in East and Inner Asian History from Columbia University. He is the author of *Khubilai Khan* (UC Press) (History Book Club Main Selection in May 1988). Other books include *China and Inner Asia* (Thames and Hudson), *China Among Equals* (UC Press), *Voyager from Xanadu* (Kodansha), *Modern Mongolia* (UC Press), and other books and articles. He also wrote all the chapters on Inner Asia and China 1200–1800, for the authoritative *Cambridge History of China*. He is a contributor to catalogs of three exhibitions of Chinese, Iranian, and Mongolian art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, SF Asian Art Museum, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He is a member of the Advisory Board for the Project on Central Eurasia, Soros Foundations. Professor Rossabi has a speaking knowledge

*Continued on page 6.*



# The Mongol Empire: A Brief Chronology — compiled by Daniel C. Waugh

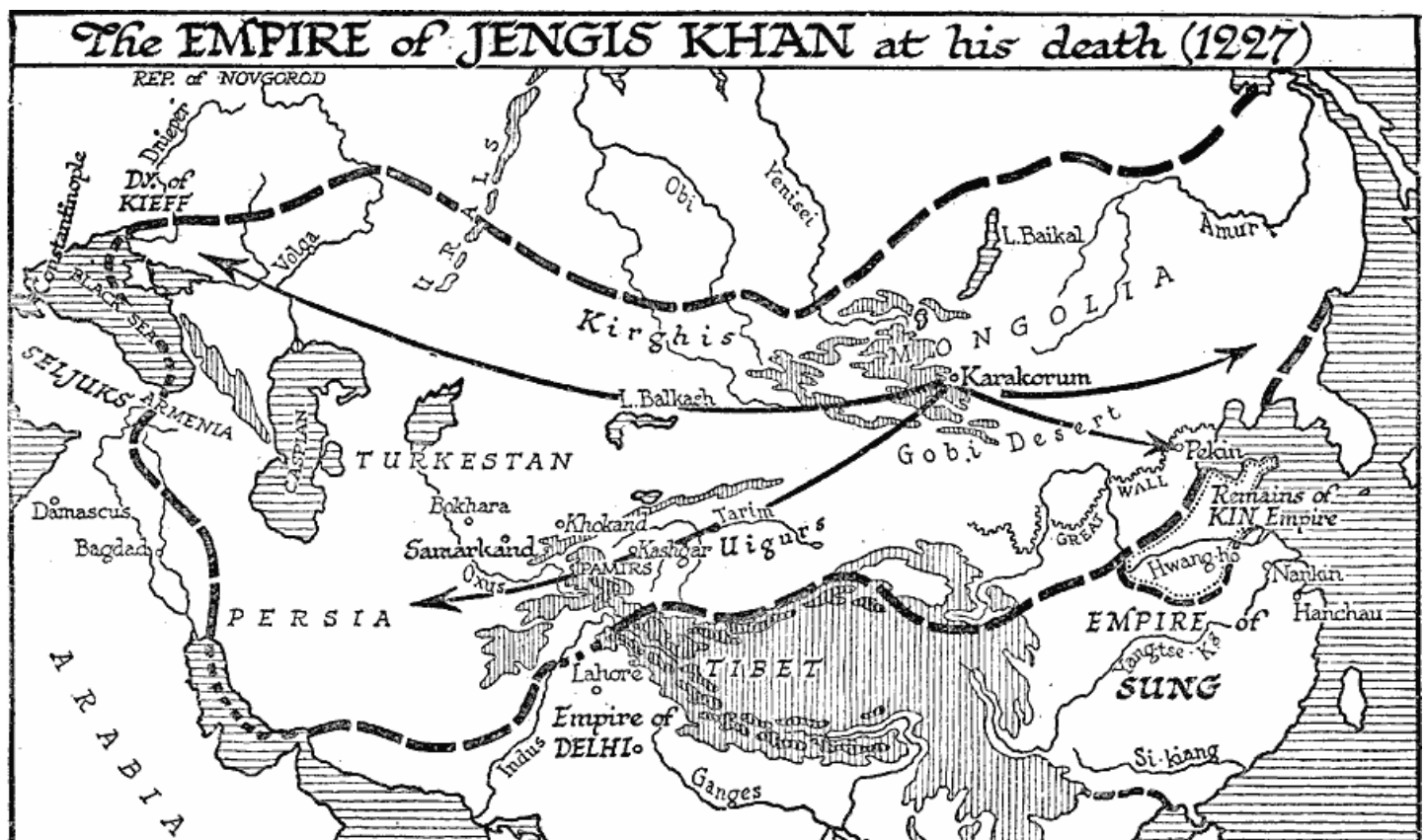
DATE	EVENT
1160s	Birth of Temüjin, the future Chingis Khan.
1206	The <i>kuriltai</i> that recognized Chingis as supreme ruler.
1209	Uighurs (based in N. Tarim basin) submit, followed by Tanguts.
1215	Mongols take Beijing, the northern capital of Jurchen (Jin).
1219–1220	Mongols invade Central Asia, destroying state of Khwarezm Shah.
1223	First encounter of Mongols with Russian armies (guess who won).
1226–1227	Destruction of Tangut state to northwest of China. Chingis dies.
1235	Development of Karakorum on Orkhon R. as Mongol capital.
late 1230s	Mongol conquest of Eastern Europe.
1252	Empire-wide tax census.
1253–1255	Franciscan William of Rubruck visits Mongol court in Karakorum.
1258	Conquest of Abbasid Caliphate with sack of Baghdad.
1260s	Mongol capital moved to Beijing by Khubilai.
1261	Golden Horde (the NW part of Mongol Empire) and Genoa help Byzantines re-take Constantinople from Venetians/Latin crusaders.
1260s	Golden Horde treaty with Genoa; charter of privileges to Russian Church.
1270s–1290s	Marco Polo in China; the several parts of the Mongol Empire separate.
1279	Mongols finish off Southern Song Dynasty.
1313–1341	Reign of Khan Özbeq in Golden Horde.
1325–1354	Travels of Ibn Battuta including a stay at Khan Özbeq's court.
ca. 1340	Pegolotti writes his handbook.
2nd half 14th c.	Most parts of Mongol Empire dissolved.
1368	End of Yüan (Mongol) Dynasty in China.
1395	Tamerlane destroys cities of Golden Horde.

## SPECIAL OFFER

HW has produced a special edition 35-page education resource/reader with the assistance of Daniel Waugh and Chuck Sieloff, *The Mongol Empire Through the Eyes of Contemporaries*. It is available upon request to Genghis Khan attendees via email in a 2 MB PDF, from [info@humanitieswest.org](mailto:info@humanitieswest.org).



For additional detail, see the chronology in David Morgan, *The Mongols*, pp. 219–221; for dynastic tables of the Mongol rulers, *ibid.*, pp. 222–225.





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Humanities West is saddened by the loss of two dedicated supporters of the arts and humanities, in January 2008: **DIANE WOOD MIDDLEBROOK**, renowned professor at Stanford University and longtime member of the Humanities West Advisory Council, and former Chancellor of UC Berkeley **ALBERT BOWKER**, Patron and regular attendee of Humanities West programs. They both will be dearly missed.

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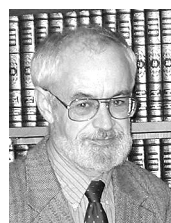
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## About Our Presenters, *continued from page 3*

of French, Arabic, Chinese, and German; and reading knowledge of Mongol, Japanese, Uyghur, and Russian.

**JAMES RYAN** is Professor Emeritus of History at CUNY. Awarded a PhD by New York University in Medieval History, he taught at Long Island, St. Lawrence, and Seaton Hall Universities before becoming Professor and then Chairman of History at CUNY, Bronx Community College. He also served as Coordinator of the Division of Humanities, and he taught History of the Crusades at the CUNY Graduate Center. He received nine PSC/CUNY Research Awards, CUNY “Access to Excellence” awards, and grants from NEH, ACLS, American Association of Community Colleges, and BCC Foundation. He is author of numerous journal articles/book chapters/encyclopedia entries, and of papers read at conferences in the US, Canada, Europe, Israel, and Hong Kong. Many of these focused on the travels of European missionaries into the Mongol Empire. Current work includes a biography of John of Montecorvino, the thirteenth-century missionary who became first Archbishop of Chambalique (Beijing).



Professor Emeritus at the University of Washington (Seattle), **DANIEL C. WAUGH** received his Ph.D. from Harvard, where he focused on medieval Russian history. He has taught extensively on the history and culture of Central Asia and has participated in archaeological work in Mongolia. He is director of the Silk Road Seattle project ([www.depts.washington.edu/silkroad](http://www.depts.washington.edu/silkroad)), an extensive collection of Internet resources on Eurasian History, and edits *The Silk Road*, the journal of the Silkroad Foundation (Saratoga, CA). The forthcoming volume *Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire* includes his essay on “The Golden Horde and Russia”; he has contributed a chapter on medieval travelers for a forthcoming *Historical Atlas of Central Eurasia*.



**ORNA URANCHIMEG-TSULTEM** studied European art history at ELTE, University of Budapest, Hungary, and Asian art history at the Mongolian University of Arts and Culture, where she earned a BA and Master’s Degree in Arts with a specialty in Mongolian Painting in 19th–early 20th century. She served as an assistant professor of Art History at the Mongolian University of Arts and Culture, and the Institute of Fine Art. She also studied Asian Art History at the Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan, at the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, and is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in History of Art, UC Berkeley. She has curated numerous exhibitions on Mongolian Art internationally and did research in the Mongolian Collection at the Himalayan Gallery of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.

**ORGILSAIKHAN CHIMEDDORJ, ULZIISAIKHAN LKHAGVADORJ, and DARKHIJAV DASH** are Bay Area musicians and performers.

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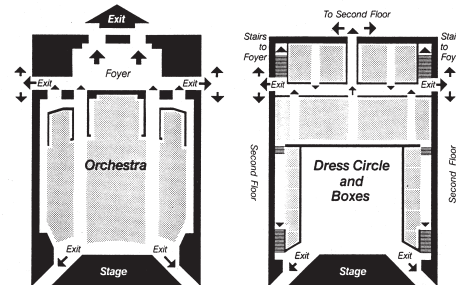
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