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**THE SILK ROAD PROJECT TO TOUR EUROPE WITH FESTIVALS IN
AMSTERDAM, COLOGNE, BRUSSELS, PARIS AND LYON**

**Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble perform world premieres, new commissions
and traditional works from Silk Road countries**

January 28, 2002, New York—This month, the Silk Road Project embarks on a Festival Tour of Western Europe with concerts and events continuing in February and April. In partnership with the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Societe Philharmonique de Bruxelles, the Cologne Philharmonie, the Orchestre National de Lyon and the Cité de la Musique in Paris, the Silk Road Project will present a series of events including concerts, workshops, lectures, educational initiatives and exhibitions. The festivals will feature Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble performing three world premieres, an additional seven specially commissioned pieces by composers from Silk Road countries including China, Mongolia, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey. The concert repertoire will also include traditional works and Western music by composers such as Ravel and Debussy who were profoundly influenced by Eastern traditions.

The Silk Road Project explores cross-cultural exchange between the lands of the Silk Road and the West through an ambitious program that includes concerts, festivals, educational outreach, commissioning, recordings and publications. Led by Artistic Director Yo-Yo Ma and a distinguished international team of musicians, artists and scholars, the Project is designed to illuminate the historical contributions of the Silk Road, support innovative collaborations among artists from Asia, Europe and North America, and explore classical music within a broader global context.

“We live in a world of increasing awareness and interdependence, and I believe that music can act as a magnet to draw people together,” commented Ma.

The festivals in Europe are part of a larger Silk Road Project Festival Tour comprised of more than a dozen presenting organizations and cultural institutions in the major cultural capitals of North America, Europe and Asia. The first festival opened last August at the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival in Germany. Since that time, Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble have performed in Washington, D.C. and in a four-city tour of Japan. Two additional concerts in Atlanta and Dallas were added to the fall schedule.

Following the festivals in Western Europe, the tour will return to the United States with performances at Cal Performances at the University of California, Berkeley, at Carnegie Hall, followed by concerts presented by the Seattle Symphony. The final venue for the Silk Road Project’s 2001-02 festival season is the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in

Washington, D.C., the result of a partnership with the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. In conjunction with the Silk Road Project, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival will feature the Silk Road as its only theme in the summer of 2002—the first time the Festival has produced a single-themed event in its 35-year history.

Through its various components, the Silk Road Project reflects the cross-pollination of ideas, culture, music, and art that occurred along the ancient Silk Road—a vast network of trade routes that were active from the first millennium B.C. up to the middle of the second millennium A.D. At its height, the Silk Road extended eastward from China and Japan and westward through the oasis cities of Central Asia—Kashgar, Samarkand and Bukhar—to Persia, Turkey, Greece and Italy, serving as a crucible for cultural innovation and the transmission of ideas.

The Silk Road Project has received generous support. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture is the lead funder and a key creative partner of the Project. Ford Motor Company and Siemens are the Global Corporate Partners of the Silk Road Project. Sony Classical is the founding supporter. Major funding has been provided by The Starr Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Henry R. Kravis, Richard Li and William Rondina.