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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE "SILK ROAD" TO BE FEATURED AT THE 2002 SMITHSONIAN
FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL**

January 31, 2002, New York—The 36th annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival, held outdoors on the National Mall between Seventh and 14th streets, will present a single-themed event for the first time in its history. The Silk Road: Connecting Cultures, Creating Trust will be devoted to exploring the cross-cultural influences among the lands of the legendary Silk Road. The 2002 Smithsonian Folklife Festival will be held Wednesday, June 26 through Sunday, June 30 and Wednesday, July 3 through Sunday, July 7. Admission is free.

With trade routes that crisscrossed Asia and Europe from Japan to Italy, the historic Silk Road linked diverse cultures and peoples and promoted the unprecedented sharing of ideas, art, music, science and innovations. The Silk Road: Connecting Cultures, Creating Trust will be a truly international exhibition of Silk Road traditions with some 350 musicians, artisans, cooks and storytellers from more than 20 countries telling the complex story of the Silk Road, its peoples and cultures, and the intercultural exchange it has inspired.

The Festival is produced in partnership with The Silk Road Project, a global initiative led by renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma in coordination with a distinguished team of scholars, musicians and artists from around the world. The project is aimed at exploring the cross-cultural influences among and between the lands comprising the legendary Silk Road.

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The Silk Road: Connecting Cultures, Creating Trust will highlight ways in which the many cultures of Eurasia were brought closer together through a creative commercial and cultural exchange that continues today and extends to life in the United States. Artists from countries such as China, Russia, India, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Turkey, Syria and the United States will emphasize the development of many living traditions, from noodles to tea drinking, from stringed instruments to paper making, and from silk textiles to blue-and-white porcelain. Festival visitors will see demonstrations of pottery painting, carpet making, textile weaving, martial arts, glass blowing, kite flying, calligraphy, puppetry and more. They will also be able to listen to and talk with traditional artists who still live along this ancient route and create products that draw on tradition but are influenced by the emerging global economy.