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**THE SILK ROAD PROJECT TO CONTINUE WORLD TOUR AND LAUNCH
NEW OUTREACH INITIATIVES**

**Festivals in the United States, Canada, Italy and Central Asia to Feature Yo-Yo Ma
and the Silk Road Ensemble**

September 17, 2002, New York—Following a successful first season that included sold-out concerts, festivals, two best-selling recordings and innovative educational programs, the Silk Road Project (www.silkroadproject.org) announced today a concert schedule and special projects for the 2002-03 season. A multi-disciplinary initiative, the Silk Road Project explores cross-cultural influences among and between the lands comprising the legendary Silk Road and the West. Beginning this fall, the Silk Road Project season will include festivals, concerts, educational residencies, workshops and special events in Milan, Florence, Rome, Chicago, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Davis, Palo Alto, Vancouver, Toronto and cities to be announced in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan, drawing together an extensive network of presenting organizations and cultural institutions in North America, Europe and Asia.

The Silk Road Project is led by renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma in coordination with a distinguished team of scholars, musicians and artists from around the world. “The historic Silk Road, at its heart, was about connecting communities and cultures,” explains Ma. “Through the 2002-2003 Silk Road Project partner city festival tours, collaborations and educational initiatives, the Silk Road Project will continue to introduce both new music and traditional music of the Silk Road to communities in Europe, Asia and North America.”

The Silk Road Project, created in 1998, receives generous support: the Aga Khan Trust for Culture is the lead funder and a key creative partner; Ford Motor Company and Siemens are the Global Corporate Partners; 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.

Concert programs in 2002-2003 will feature Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble—a collective of musicians whose careers encompass classical, folk and pop music—performing specially commissioned pieces by composers from Silk Road countries including China, Mongolia, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iran. Masterpieces from Western composers, who were inspired by the arts and music of the East, will also be performed.

The concert programs will also include a number of new “group pieces” developed by Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble during workshop and residency periods. These new works will reflect the perspectives of the musicians. For example, a Chinese performer classically trained on the sheng (Chinese mouth organ) might draw on what he also knows about jazz and rock idioms to create an arrangement of a Chinese folksong with a Western-trained violinist or Indian percussionist.

"Essentially we are creating a collective art," explains Yo-Yo Ma, "where the result is hopefully stronger than anything we might have come up with as individuals. Part of being an artist is sharing something that happens inside you—something that's very private, very intimate. If you locate your question and make it come alive within another person, you can create a connection. I think that's a beautiful way to communicate and an essential way we can contribute."

For the first time, in April and May 2003, the Silk Road Project will present concerts in Central Asia. In partnership with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, concerts and educational workshops are tentatively scheduled in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan. Artistic Director Yo-Yo Ma comments, “I am delighted that we will be traveling to Central Asia this spring, a region that has inspired so much of the music we have commissioned and performed.”

This season Siemens, in collaboration with the Silk Road Project, introduces an Artists-In-Residence program, which awards scholarships to six composers from Asian and European countries that lie along the trade routes of the historic Silk Road. The program affords the artists the opportunity to share their culture with and demonstrate their work to new communities, to learn more about American culture and to find inspiration in the everyday experience of American industry. The first artist-in-residence is composer Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky from Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Yanov-Yanovsky is composing from a studio in a Siemens Hearing Instruments facility in Piscataway, NJ from mid-August through mid-October 2002.