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**PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM AND THE SILK ROAD PROJECT, INC.  
PARTNER TO LAUNCH INNOVATIVE PILOT PROGRAM IN JANUARY 2004**

SALEM, November 3, 2003 - The Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) and the Silk Road Project, Inc. (SRPI) will partner to present Creative Exchanges: Sights and Sounds of the Silk Road, a series of innovative performance, educational and cultural activities from January 20 to 31, 2004, at PEM's newly transformed museum of art and culture.

Led by world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma, the Silk Road Project's Artistic Director, this new partnership will bring great works of visual art from the museum's collection together with the international music and storytelling embodied in the Silk Road Ensemble to create awareness of the rich and diverse cultural traditions in the lands along the ancient Silk Road.

"The Silk Road remains a potent symbol of true multiculturalism—a place where people, ideas, and artistic traditions converge,"; says Dan Monroe, PEM's Executive Director and CEO. "Today the museum can be a place where such connections are made. Working with great artists like Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble, we will bring a broad spectrum of activities to create rich experiences that will enliven the museum and appeal to people of all ages.";

During the first millennium B.C.E. through the middle of the second millennium C.E., a vast network of trade routes linked the people of Asia with those of Europe. These historic routes, which came to be known as the Silk Road, served as a conduit for the exchange of knowledge, information, and material goods between East and West, resulting in the first global exchange of scientific, cultural, and artistic traditions. The Silk Road Project celebrates both historical and contemporary expressions of these cross-cultural exchanges.

The pilot program at PEM will serve as the model for future Silk Road Project partnerships with leading museums in Asia, Europe, and North America. The Silk Road Project will work with each museum to co-produce performance, exhibition, and educational events through 2008. The focus of each program will be a work of art or a group of closely related objects selected from each institution's collection that reflects the spirit and experience of the Silk Road.

Creative Exchanges: Sights and Sounds of the Silk Road will focus on an extraordinary object: Yin Yu Tang. Built circa 1800, Yin Yu Tang has recently been moved from Anhui Province to the Peabody Essex as a permanent exhibition. Yin Yu Tang is a merchant's home that was originally located in the rural village of Huang Cun in southeastern China, 250 miles from Shanghai. PEM brought the home to America as part

of an ongoing cultural exchange with China that fosters mutual understanding between the two cultures through art and architecture. For two centuries, Yin Yu Tang was the ancestral home of the Huang Family, whose members will travel from China to Salem during Creative Exchanges to visit the house, celebrate Chinese New Year's festivities, meet museum visitors, and take part in a panel discussion.

Creative Exchanges: Sights and Sounds of the Silk Road will feature performances by Silk Road Ensemble musicians Wu Man (pipa - Chinese lute), Shane Shanahan (percussion), and Kojiro Umezaki (shakuhachi – Japanese bamboo flute) in the museum's galleries and public spaces. The Silk Road Ensemble will be joined by several internationally renowned musicians and storytellers. There will also be workshops, demonstrations, art-making activities, samplings of international foods at the museum's café and restaurant, and question-and-answer sessions with Yo-Yo Ma and other artists. Programs will appeal to adults, children, families, and school groups. A detailed schedule will be announced in December.