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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SILK ROAD STORIES: MANAS AND MUSIC

NEW YORK, July 15, 2004 - A ground-breaking collaboration between artists from the internationally renowned Silk Road Ensemble and artists from the Kyrgyz Republic, presented by the Silk Road Project, Inc. in collaboration with the Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia, a programme of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, will premiere at the British Library from 17-20 August 2004.

At the centre of the performance will be the Manas, a medieval Kyrgyz epic over 500,000 lines in length. Rysbek Jumabaev, a revered manaschi (epic reciter), and Ben Haggarty, a London-based storyteller, will recount the story of Manas, the hero of the epic, accompanied by a new musical work woven together with black-and-white archival film footage of Sayakbay Karalaev (1894-1971), one of the greatest manaschis of the 20th century.

Nurlanbek Nyshanov (Kyrgyz wind and string instrumentalist) and Kojiro Umezaki (Japanese shakuhachi) will accompany the storytelling with a musical performance using traditional instruments with support from Asylbek Nasirdinov (Kyrgyz komuz player), Shane Shanahan (US percussionist), and Wu Man (China/US pipa).

Performances will be twice a day at 1.30 - 2.00 pm and 3.30 - 4.00 pm from Tuesday 17 August - Friday 20 August.

For further information, music extracts or images please contact Catriona Finlayson, British Library Press Office on 0207 412 7115 or email <mailto:catriona.finlayson@bl.uk>

Notes for editors

1. Two CD recordings are available: Silk Road Journeys "When Stranger Meet" (Sony Classical) and The Silk Road a Musical Caravan (Smithsonian Folkways), as well as a book, Along the Silk Road, edited by Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis (Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, University of Washington Press and the Silk Road Project, Inc.).
2. The Silk Road Project, Inc. (SRPI) is a not-for-profit arts organization that acts as an umbrella organization and common resource for a number of artistic, cultural, and educational programs. Founded in 1998 by Yo-Yo Ma, the Silk Road Project strives to bring new ideas, talent, and energy into the world of classical music, while nurturing musical creativity that draws on the wonderfully diverse and distinguished sources of cultural heritage around the world. The Silk Road Project

promotes collaboration and a sense of community among musicians, audiences, and institutions who share a fascination with the transcultural artistic imagination symbolized by the Silk Road. For more information, please visit www.silkroadproject.org.

3. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture - Established in 2000, the Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia (AKMICA) strives to help in the preservation of Central Asia's musical heritage by ensuring its transmission to a new generation of artists and audiences. The Initiative grew from His Highness the Aga Khan's recognition of music's vital role in the cultures of Central Eurasia and the Middle East, where it has traditionally served not only as entertainment, but as an expression of moral values and the power of community. The AKMICA is a programme of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), an agency that implements initiatives aimed at revitalising the heritage of Islamic communities and contributing to their social and economic development. For more information, visit <http://www.akdn.org>
4. The British Library houses the world's knowledge, and with over 150 million separate items it is one of the top three libraries in the world. It is the UK's national library and the world's leading resource for scholarship, research and innovation. Its collection covers every age of written civilisation, every written language and every aspect of human thought. Material held by the Library ranges from ancient Chinese oracle bones to technical reports about the latest scientific discoveries and today's newspapers. Users including industrial companies and academic scholars, have access to the Library's collection in its Reading Rooms and via its global document supply services, which supply over 15,000 documents per day to 20,000 customers in 111 countries. Information on the Library's collection and services is available on the British Library website at <http://www.bl.uk>