



Press Contact: Amy Wentz, Ruder Finn
Phone: (212) 715-1551; wentza@ruderfinn.com

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**THE SILK ROAD PROJECT, RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND
HARVARD UNIVERSITY, ANNOUNCE NEW EDUCATIONAL
COLLABORATIONS**

**Cultural Exchanges and Exchanges Across Art Forms Unique Interdisciplinary
Innovation**

NEW YORK, March 30, 2005 - The Silk Road Project, Inc., Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences announced today the creation of innovative collaborations designed to deepen and strengthen the interdisciplinary educational offerings of the three institutions. "The multi-year shared endeavor will provide wonderful new opportunities for cultural exchanges and collaborations across art forms and disciplines. They strengthen and extend the vision and reach of the Silk Road Project," said Dr. Merton Flemings, chairman of the Silk Road Project Board of Directors.

The Silk Road Project founder and artistic director, Yo-Yo Ma, said, "We are thrilled about the new shared endeavors with Harvard and RISD. Seven years ago, when we created the Silk Road Project, I never dreamed that it would evolve and expand in such exciting directions. There is obviously a compelling need in the world today for more exchanges across cultures, art forms, and ways of understanding. We are honored to be partnering with RISD and Harvard and anticipate many years of innovative educational and artistic collaboration."

"The Silk Road Project serves as a common resource for a number of artistic, cultural and educational programs reflecting the heritages of the countries once connected by the ancient four thousand mile network of trading routes that spanned three continents from Europe to Asia," said Laura Freid, Silk Road Project CEO and executive director. "By sharing music and art across divides we hope to enrich our understanding of each other and of the three and a half billion people who live along the Silk Road. We look forward to working with RISD and Harvard on new curricular approaches and workshops that will enhance all of our work."

The Silk Road Project strives to bring new ideas, talent, and energy into the world of classical music, and at the same time, nurture musical and artistic creativity drawing on diverse and distinguished sources of cultural heritage around the world.

Ford Motor Company is continuing as a Global Corporate Partner to the Silk Road Project, as part of its long-standing tradition of arts education support.

Rhode Island School of Design and the Silk Road Project

RISD and the Silk Road Project will collaborate on the development of a number of initiatives exploring exchanges across art forms including illustration, film animation and video, digital media, art and design education. The Silk Road Ensemble members, working in conjunction with RISD students and faculty plan to participate in workshops that feature music, storytelling, art, and demonstrations. The workshops are designed to integrate the musical arts of regions along the Silk Road with objects in the collections of museums throughout the world.

During the residencies, students and faculty at RISD will work together with Silk Road Project musicians and staff to explore cross-cultural and interdisciplinary artistic expressions. The unsurpassed arts and design educational resources at RISD, the extraordinary resources of the RISD Museum, and the small community of committed artist-students together make RISD, an ideal laboratory environment for collaboration with the Silk Road Ensemble members.

The first Silk Road Project residency at RISD will be from April 1 to April 5, 2005 and will involve students from both RISD and Brown University. It will be led by Artistic Director Yo-Yo Ma, RISD Provost Joe Deal, Silk Road Project Curatorial Director Milo Beach, and members of the Silk Road Ensemble, faculty from RISD, and RISD Museum staff.

Roger Mandle, president of RISD, said, "We are delighted that Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Project have decided to relocate their headquarters to Providence and to be embraced by the RISD community. To have this remarkable group of musicians working with our students and faculty will present everyone with a unique opportunity for artistic collaboration and learning. The impact of our working relationship on the arts in general will be profound."

"RISD's relationship with the Silk Road Project is all about crossing boundaries and the creative potential that exists when different cultures and different forms of artistic expression are brought together to create new knowledge," said RISD Provost Joe Deal. "Like any good collaboration, the outcome will be determined by people's willingness to take risks and to open themselves up to new, unimagined possibilities."

Harvard University and the Silk Road Project

Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the Silk Road Project will cooperate on the development of new interdisciplinary curricula in the arts, literature, history and music of the Silk Road regions. The focus of the residencies will be curricula centered programs designed to explore the resources of the two institutions, to facilitate multi-cultural artistic and intellectual collaborations, and to expand the scope of audience participation beyond the mainstream concert tour format. "The Silk Road Project will animate our efforts to train intellectual inquiry on artistic practices and promises to deepen our critical thinking through engagement with images, sounds, and stories. We

look forward to the creation of a vibrant community that will draw together extraordinary resources as our curriculum turns to new parts of the world," said Dean for the Humanities Maria Tatar, John L. Loeb Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures. The Silk Road musicians and staff will participate in Harvard courses, workshops, master classes, and public performances in subjects such as art history, ethnomusicology, languages, and civilization.

"We are very pleased to provide an intellectual home for the Silk Road Project. It is rare for such an exciting opportunity to come at just the right moment, but such is the case in this instance," said FAS Dean William C. Kirby, Edith and Benjamin Geisinger Professor of History. "The Faculty of Arts and Sciences is set to embark on a course that will emphasize international study, research and experiences, and that strengthen the connections between the performance and study of the arts. To begin that journey on, and in the company of the Silk Road Project is most auspicious."

The Silk Road Project's dual focus on the legacy of the Silk Road as well as new cross-cultural collaborations complements Harvard's multifaceted approach to learning, its commitment to integrate performance studies with the complementary disciplines of history, literature, art and languages, and its emphasis on international studies and research as part of the undergraduate experience. Harvard's undergraduate and graduate programs in History of Art and Architecture, Music, Sanskrit and Indian Studies, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and Folklore and Mythology will be encouraged to participate. The first Silk Road Project residency at Harvard will be from September 26 to October 1, 2005.

"Ever since his days as a student at Harvard College, Yo-Yo Ma has embodied the highest level of achievement in the arts and the highest level of commitment to having the arts enrich our students' educational experience. This exciting new collaboration should dovetail splendidly with broader efforts to enhance opportunities for Harvard students interested in the arts and to promote innovative forms of humanistic and cross-cultural learning. I'm grateful to all of those at Harvard and at the Silk Road Project who have made this collaboration possible," said Harvard University President Lawrence H. Summers.

About the Silk Road Project, Inc.

The Silk Road Project promotes collaboration and a sense of community among musicians, artists, curators, educators, students, audiences, and institutions that share a fascination with the multicultural artistic exchange symbolized by the Silk Road. The Silk Road Project has been best known for its series of interdisciplinary festivals and residencies in North America, Europe, Central Asia, China, and Japan that began in summer 2001. It has also produced three CDs, published one book, commissioned 20 new chamber works, created an education kit titled "Silk Road Encounters," and co-produced a major cultural festival with the Smithsonian Institution. For more information on the Silk Road Project please visit www.silkroadproject.org.

The Silk Road Project offices will be moving from New York City to New England in April 2005. The Silk Road Project, Inc. office headquarters will be located adjacent to RISD at 20 Westminister Street, Providence, Rhode Island. The project will also have administrative facilities at 308 Wadsworth House, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

About Rhode Island School of Design

Founded in 1877, Rhode Island School of Design is a vibrant community of artists and designers with more than 2,000 students from around the world and about 350 faculty and curators. Academic programs include research and design initiatives, the exploration of art criticism and contemporary cultural concerns as well as international exchange programs. Each year, RISD hosts prominent and accomplished artists, critics and authors to its campus. Included within the college is The RISD Museum of Art, housing 80,000 works of art in its permanent collection.

About Harvard University

Harvard University offers a broad range of courses and academic programs and research centers focused on the music, art, literature, languages, and history of the Silk Road region, spanning from the Middle East, through Asia and the Far East. The University is also one of New England's most vibrant and active arts communities, offering a broad range of cultural activities available to the entire region. During a typical academic year, students produce more than 500 musical events, 80 dramatic productions, as well as dance concerts, film festivals, multimedia events, and art exhibitions. Further, the University offers a broad range of professional cultural activities, including the American Repertory Theatre productions, the Fogg and Sackler art museum exhibitions, and the Harvard Film Archive film series.