



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

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**PATH TO SUMMER BEGINS WITH SILK ROAD CHICAGO: SUMMER 2006 -
JUNE 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30**

**Free Concert on June 26 Features Yo-Yo Ma and Silk Road Ensemble in
Millennium Park**

May 2, 2005, Chicago, IL – The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs invites Chicagoans and visitors to participate in Silk Road Chicago: Summer 2006, a citywide celebration of cross-cultural discovery from June 1 to September 30. Inspired by the historic Silk Road trade route and renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Project, the celebration offers more than 250 events in music, theater, dance, and visual and culinary arts presented by over 70 cultural and community partners throughout the city.

The Silk Road Oasis at 72 E. Randolph Street is the headquarters for the summer celebration and includes performances, special events, and exhibitions. The centerpiece event is a free concert at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park featuring Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble on June 26 at 6:30 p.m. *Silk Road Chicago: Summer 2006* kicks off the yearlong Silk Road Chicago celebration, a partnership among the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the Chicago Office of Tourism, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Silk Road Project that began when Yo-Yo Ma selected Chicago as the first city in the world to collaborate on a yearlong partnership with the Silk Road Project.

Created in 1998, the Silk Road Project was founded by Ma, who through his many years of traveling around the world as a musician became interested in the flow of ideas among different cultures along the historic Silk Road, the ancient network of trading routes that connected the people and traditions of Asia with those of Europe.

“With its vibrant and diverse communities and its world-class cultural institutions, Chicago is a natural choice to host our yearlong Silk Road celebration,” said Ma. “There could be no better place to explore the artistic traditions and cross-cultural connections that are the essence of the Silk Road Project. At the Silk Road Oasis, people of all ages and cultures will have an opportunity to celebrate the arts together.”

The Silk Road Oasis, a center for Chicagoans and visitors to gather and experience the cultural and artistic legacies of the Silk Road, also features artists' demonstrations such as silk screening and weaving, and performances by musicians and storytellers.

“Chicago has a tradition of collaborations that bring people together,” said Lois Weisberg, commissioner, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. “We are excited that

Yo-Yo Ma has chosen our city to demonstrate how artistic expression can connect the people and cultures of the world in a wonderful way.”

From June 1 to September 30, Chicagoans and visitors can enjoy events such as The Silk Road Staged Reading Series (June 4 and 13, August 8 and 27), a showcase presented by The Silk Road Theatre Project featuring work by playwrights of Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean descent; *Music Without Borders* (June 29, July 10 and August 13), a new three-concert series featuring artists from around the globe that previews the World Music Festival; The Chicago Cultural Center's Summer Opera: Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (August 7, 9, 10 and 13), a four-day production that draws from the Sanskrit Theater of India as well as Balinese theater styles; and *Dance India: Choreographing Traditions* (September 6-10), a new dance festival and conference presented by Natya Dance Theatre including performances by leading dance artists and musicians from India and dance workshops led by Indian masters. Many events are free and fun for the entire family.

“We are excited to help Yo-Yo Ma realize his dream of transforming cities through the arts,” said Dorothy Coyle, director, Chicago Office of Tourism. “To encourage cultural connections and exchanges similar to those that took place along the Silk Road, we are offering an array of events and activities that showcase Chicago's rich multicultural legacy.”

More featured *Silk Road Chicago: Summer 2006* events include the following:

- **Sister Cities International 50th Anniversary Festival**, noontime performances, food and a marketplace that highlight each of the 25 Chicago Sister Cities at Daley Plaza, June 5-9
- **Journey Along the Silk Road**, a series of lunchtime concerts featuring music and dance from around the world at Millennium Park's Wrigley Square, June 23-September 15
- **Silk Road Caravan**, a day of food and fashion along Chicago's Silk Road departing from the Chicago Cultural Center, August 5
- **Charting Our Journeys**, a series of workshops where families can create a journal charting memories from the past and dreams for the future at the Chicago Children's Museum, through August 31
- **One Exotic Evening**, a night of exotic food and innovative fashion where Chicago and Indian designers present one-of-a-kind fashions at Vermilion, July 16
- **Dragon Boat Race for Literacy**, a day of Chinese traditions including the Awakening Dragon Ceremony, Lion Dance, and Dragon Boat Race are celebrated at the at Ping Tom Memorial Park, July 22

- **World of Games**, expert demonstrations of international games that people play in Chicago ranging from the martial arts of Asia and Brazil to the popular Italian pastime bocce in Millennium Park, July 30
- **Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Millennium Park**, two free concerts launch the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's downtown 2006-2007 season at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park, September 13-14
- **Utamaro: Aspects of Beauty**, a special exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago of work by Japanese artist and woodblock print designer Kitagawa Utamaro, through October 22
- **Neighborhood happenings** including ethnic festivals, farmers markets, and Chicago Neighborhood Tours take place throughout *Silk Road Chicago: Summer 2006*.

Other events taking place this summer in Chicago that celebrate the cultures and people of the world are the Chicago Gay Games VII (July 15-22) and Tall Ships Chicago (August 3-9).

Beginning late May, travelers can book hotel accommodations and receive detailed information about all of the *Silk Road Chicago: Summer 2006* events and activities, including travel packages, Immersion Weekends, by calling toll free, 1.877.CHICAGO (1.877.244.2246) or visiting <http://www.silkroadchicago.org>. For those calling from outside the United States, Mexico and Canada, please call 1.312.201.8847. The TTY toll-free number for the hearing impaired is 1.866.710.0294. Chicago tourism information is also available on the Internet at <http://www.cityofchicago.org/ExploringChicago>.

Information is also available at Silk Road Oasis (Chicago Tourism Center, 72 E. Randolph Street), Silk Road Chicago's headquarters. The Oasis also features an exhibition and free public programs.

Silk Road Chicago continues in the fall through 2007 with programming offered by the Art Institute of Chicago and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, including the residency of The Silk Road Ensemble at both institutions, April 9-21, 2007.

Silk Road Chicago: Summer 2006 is also supported by the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau, the Mayor's Office of Special Events, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism, with American Express as an official partner.