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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**YO-YO MA AND THE SILK ROAD ENSEMBLE PERFORM FOR FIRST TIME  
AT MILLENNIUM PARK**

**Free Concert at Jay Pritzker Pavilion on June 26 is Centerpiece Event of Silk Road  
Chicago: Summer 2006**

May 2, 2006, Chicago, IL – On Monday, June 26, the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park will host a spectacular free concert featuring the incomparable Yo-Yo Ma and his Silk Road Ensemble. The musicians will perform works from both Asia and the West, playing a combination of familiar and exotic instruments. The concert marks the first time that Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble have performed in Millennium Park.

The performance is the centerpiece event of *Silk Road Chicago: Summer 2006*, a citywide celebration from June 1 to September 30. Inspired by the historic Silk Road trade route and 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 is the headquarters for the summer celebration.

*Silk Road Chicago: Summer 2006* kicks off the yearlong *Silk Road Chicago*, a partnership among the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Chicago Office of Tourism, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the Silk Road Project. *Silk Road Chicago* began when Ma selected Chicago as the first city in the world to collaborate on a yearlong partnership with the Silk Road Project.

The Silk Road Project, founded by Ma, was formed to bring new ideas, talent and energy into the world of music as well as to nurture musical and artistic creativity. The Silk Road Ensemble, made up of 50 musicians from around the world, has traveled the globe bringing eastern and western music together with inspiring results.

The concert is funded by the Alphawood Foundation, with hotel sponsorship by the Hyatt Chicago.

**About Yo-Yo Ma**

Cellist Yo-Yo Ma is the founder and artistic director of the Silk Road Project. His many-faceted career is a testament to his continual search for new ways to communicate with audiences. One of his goals is to explore music as a means of communication and as a vehicle for the migration of ideas across cultures.

Ma is an exclusive Sony-BMG Masterworks artist, and his discography of over 75 albums (including more than 15 Grammy winners) reflects his wide-ranging interests. Ma was born to Chinese parents living in Paris. He began to study the cello with his father at age four and soon after came with his family to New York, where he enrolled in the Juilliard School. He graduated from Harvard University in 1976.

### **About the Silk Road Ensemble**

The Silk Road Ensemble is a collective of musicians interested in exploring the relationship between tradition and innovation in music from the East and West. Each musician's career illustrates a unique response to what is one of the artistic challenges of our times: nourishing global connections while maintaining the integrity of art rooted in an authentic tradition.

Most of the Ensemble musicians first came together at a Silk Road Project workshop at the Tanglewood Music Center in Massachusetts in 2000, under the artistic direction of Ma. Since then, various combinations of these artists, whose diverse careers encompass and often intermingle Western and non-Western classical, folk and popular music, have performed a variety of programs, both with and without Ma, in Silk Road Project concerts and festivals in Europe, Asia, and North America.

### **About Millennium Park**

Located in downtown Chicago on Michigan Avenue between Randolph and Monroe Streets, the 24.5-acre Millennium Park is an unprecedented center for world-class art, music, architecture and landscape design.

Among the park's prominent features are the Frank Gehry-designed Jay Pritzker Pavilion, the most sophisticated outdoor concert venue of its kind in the United States; the interactive Crown Fountain by Jaume Plensa; the contemporary Lurie Garden designed by the team of Kathryn Gustafson, Piet Oudolf, and Robert Israel; and Anish Kapoor's hugely popular Cloud Gate sculpture.

For more information about Millennium Park or the "Family Fun Week," please visit <http://www.millenniumpark.org> or call 312-742-1168.

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>.