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**THE SILK ROAD PROJECT KICKS OFF SILK ROAD CHICAGO
JUNE 2006 – JUNE 2007**

**The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma Offers Free Performance on June 26 in
Millennium Park at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion**

June 20, 2006, Chicago, IL – The Silk Road Project, under the direction of acclaimed cellist Yo-Yo Ma, is collaborating with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, the Chicago Office of Tourism, Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) and The Art Institute of Chicago (AIC) on *Silk Road Chicago* (www.silkroadchicago.org), a yearlong, citywide celebration inspired by the art and culture of the historic Silk Road. From June 2006 to June 2007, Chicago will be transformed through performances, exhibitions, demonstrations and events that explore cross-cultural discovery and celebrate the artistic legacy of the Silk Road. With this initiative, Chicago becomes the first city in the world to collaborate in a yearlong partnership with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Project.

"Chicago has a long history of being at the crossroads of the world," said Ma. "Since the city's founding, it has been the site of epic world's fairs, a major transportation hub and a meeting place for people from every corner of the globe. There is no better city for such a unique collaboration."

To kick off the year-long celebration, Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble will make their Millennium Park debut with a free concert at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion Monday, June 26 at 6:30 p.m. The concert program will include highlights of the Silk Road Ensemble repertoire, and feature guest performances by a CSO brass quartet and the Natya Dance Theatre. This concert is sponsored by the Alphawood Foundation and Hyatt Hotels.

Silk Road Chicago was initiated by Ma, who dreamed of bringing the historic Silk Road, the ancient network of trading routes that connected the people and traditions of Asia with those of Europe, and the ideas it represents to life in one of the most diverse cities in the world. Inspired by this transmission of ideas and its modern-day manifestations, cultural organizations across Chicago are joining together as never before to offer a wide array of special concerts, exhibitions and other artistic programming exploring the themes of *Silk Road Chicago*, beginning this summer with more than 250 events in music, theater, dance and visual and culinary arts. Silk Road Chicago continues throughout the year with more than 150 diverse programs sponsored by the Art Institute of Chicago, the CSO and the Silk Road Project.

"Silk Road Chicago's goal is to bring the city together through cultural, artistic and scholastic programs reflecting the heritages of the countries once connected by the

historic Silk Road," said Dr. Laura Freid, CEO and executive director of the Silk Road Project. "We hope that the life of every Chicagoan will be touched in some way through these events. The Silk Road - as both fact and metaphor - is of particular importance today as we continue to discover the interrelatedness of our world's many cultures."

The Silk Road Project's contributions to *Silk Road Chicago* include performances, master classes, workshops and educational programs featuring Ma and other Silk Road Ensemble members. Events will be presented in Chicago schools, universities and cultural institutions throughout the year, concluding with extended residencies with the Art Institute of Chicago and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Silk Road Ensemble Concerts

- June 26: Free concert in Millennium Park at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion.
- April 12, 13 & 17: Concerts with the CSO and conductor Miguel Harth-Bedoya, performing works by Lou Harrison and Ernst Bloch at Symphony Center.
- April 15: Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble perform as part of the Symphony Center Presents LaSalle Bank Chamber Music Series at Symphony Center.
- April 20: Special Concert featuring Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble at Symphony Center.
- April 21: Special Saturday morning family concert, designed for concert goers of all ages at Symphony Center.

Silk Road Ensemble Residencies

- Sept. 27 - Oct. 1: Percussion from Around the World.
- Nov. 2 - 7: Music of Azerbaijan. (Univ. of Chicago)
- Jan. 18 - 23: Music of Persia.
- Feb: Music of China. (Univ. of Chicago)
- Apr. 9 -21: Intensive residency at the CSO and AIC, featuring concerts, gallery performances, seminars and educational programs.

Silk Road Education Initiatives

- August 7 - 11: Chicago Public School Teachers' Institute at the Art Institute of Chicago; teacher training on the Silk Road.
- September: "Along the Silk Road" curriculum is introduced to students grades 6 - 10, including audio and video enrichments.
- National Geographic and IBM's Genographic Project will engage a group of 1000 high school students from Chicago's Sister Cities International Program in the exploration and sharing of their own origins.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra offers a preview of its Silk Road-inspired programming, launching its 2006-2007 season with three free events: two concerts at Millennium Park's Jay Pritzker Pavilion on September 13 and 14, and the tenth annual

Macy's Day of Music at Symphony Center on September 16. Symphony Center's celebration officially kicks off on September 30, when Ma joins the CSO and conductor

Miguel Harth-Bedoya for the Orchestra's festive Opening Night Gala. Featured in the program is Uzbekistani composer Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky's *Night Music: Voice in the Leaves*, originally commissioned by the Silk Road Project. Throughout the year, many CSO concerts will offer repertoire inspired by the Silk Road—historically, geographically, and metaphorically—including Bartok's *The Miraculous Mandarin*, Chen Gang and He Zhanhao's *The Butterfly Lovers*, and Maurice Ravel's *Sheherazade*; the Silk Road theme will be further reflected in a wide variety of 2006-2007 Symphony Center Presents programs and special concert offerings. *Silk Road Chicago* at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra will culminate with a weeklong residency by Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble from April 12 to April 21 featuring concerts, family performances, and educational programs.

At the Art Institute of Chicago, the Silk Road season also begins on September 30, with the museum throwing wide its doors to showcase special exhibitions and "new takes" on the permanent collection that embody the movement of ideas across time and place. Every department of the Art Institute - from photography and textiles to contemporary art and antiquities - will participate in *Silk Road Chicago*, offering both historical artifacts and provocative interpretations to visitors. Residencies by artists and musicians, lectures, gallery walks, seminars, performances and programs will take place throughout the year, including the first-ever Art Institute of Chicago Presidential Lecture on November 9, in collaboration with the Chicago Humanities Festival. The Silk Road Ensemble will have a residency at the museum from April 9 to April 15.

Led by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs as part of the yearlong showcase, *Silk Road Chicago: Summer 2006*, a citywide celebration of cross-cultural discovery, offers an array of cultural events and activities, family attractions and hospitality packages.

About the Silk Road Project

The Silk Road Project is a not-for-profit arts organization founded in 1998 by cellist Yo-Yo Ma, who serves as its artistic director, and led by Laura Freid, executive director and CEO. The Silk Road Project promotes collaboration and a sense of community among institutions, artists and audiences who share a fascination with the cross-cultural imagination symbolized by the ancient Silk Road. The purpose of the Project is to illuminate the Silk Road region's historical contribution to the diffusion of arts, technologies and musical traditions, identify the voices that best represent its cultural legacy today, and support innovative collaborations among outstanding artists from the lands of the Silk Road and the West. The Silk Road Project is affiliated with Harvard University and Rhode Island School of Design. Ford Motor Company is a global corporate partner of the Silk Road Project. Other sponsors include Mikimoto and the U.S. Department of State.

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.

Mr. Ma is an exclusive Sony Classical artist, and his discography of over 75 albums (including more than 15 Grammy winners) reflects his wide-ranging interests. Yo-Yo 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 Yo-Yo 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.

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 musicians from around the world, has traveled the globe with as many as 50 members bringing Eastern and Western music together with inspiring results. While the Ensemble is known for its series of interdisciplinary festivals and residencies presented in North America, Europe, and Asia, Silk Road Chicago marks the first time that the Silk Road Project has undertaken a yearlong partnership in one city. Ford Motor Company is continuing as a Global Corporate Partner to the Silk Road Project as part of its long standing tradition of arts and education support.

About the Silk Road

At its height from the second century BCE until the 14th century, the Silk Road was a vast network of trade routes that connected China to the Mediterranean. For centuries, ideas, objects and people traveled along the Silk Road, making it one of the most fluid and broad arenas of exchange the world has known and a major conduit of culture and civilization. The historic Silk Road trade route continues to provide a prime example of how cultures and ideas were exchanged and celebrated. Inspired by this transmission of ideas and its modern-day manifestations, cultural organizations across Chicago are

joining together as never before to present residents and visitors with Silk Road Chicago.
For more information about Silk Road Chicago, visit www.silkroadchicago.org.