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**THE SILK ROAD ENSEMBLE AND MIDDLE EAST MUSIC ENSEMBLE
OFFER FREE CONCERT SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 AT 8:00 P.M.**

**Offered as part of *Silk Road Chicago*, concert to be presented at the University of
Chicago's Mandel Hall**

October 27, 2006, Chicago, IL – The world-renowned Silk Road Ensemble will partner with the Chicago-based Middle East Music Ensemble for a special free concert of music celebrating the cultures of the Silk Road. Offered as part of the yearlong, citywide celebration of *Silk Road Chicago* and co-presented by the Silk Road Project and the University of Chicago, the concert is scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 5 at 8 p.m. at the University's Mandel Hall, 1131 E. 57th St.

The Silk Road Project was founded by acclaimed cellist Yo-Yo Ma, who has brought together more than 50 world-class musicians, composers, choreographers and other artists from across the globe. Members of the Silk Road Ensemble share an interest in exploring the relationship between tradition and innovation in music from the East and West. Representing five countries, including Azerbaijan, Armenia, Israel, Japan and the United States, Ensemble members performing in Chicago in November include Jeffrey Beecher, bass; Nicholas Cords, viola; Jonathan Gandelsman, violin; Rauf Islamov, *kamancheh*; Colin Jacobsen, violin; Ali Asgar Mammadov, *tar*; Kevork Mourad, visual artist; Alim Qasimov, Azeri mugam singer; and Kojiro Umezaki, *shakuhachi*. Chicago Civic Orchestra member Adrienne Taylor, cello, and percussionist Rod Squance will also perform as guest artists.

At the concert, the Silk Road Ensemble will perform Franghiz Ali-Zadeh's "Mugam-Sajahy," Angel Lam's "Empty Mountain, Spirit Rain" (a Silk Road Project commission recently debuted at Carnegie Hall) and other traditional Azeri mugam music. The Middle East Music Ensemble's selections will be announced at a future date. The two ensembles will also perform pieces together.

For more information on the Nov. 5 concert, please call the University of Chicago Department of Music hotline at 773-702-8069.

About the Silk Road Project and *Silk Road Chicago*

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 Project has a vision of connecting the world's neighborhoods by bringing together artists and audiences around the globe. Inspired by the cultural traditions of the

historic Silk Road, the Silk Road Project is a catalyst promoting innovation and learning through the arts.

Ma first brought together members of the Silk Road Ensemble in summer 2000 at a workshop held at the Tanglewood Music Center. Performing new commissions as well as indigenous music, this international collective of musicians, who perform on Western instruments as well as instruments from their respective countries, has appeared around the globe in a variety of programs, intermingling Western classical music, non-Western classical music, folk, and popular music.

Silk Road Chicago was inspired by Yo-Yo 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. Focusing on the Silk Road as metaphor for artistic and cultural exchange, 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. The celebration of *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. For more information about *Silk Road Chicago*, please visit www.silkroadchicago.org.

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 The Middle East Music Ensemble

The Middle East Music Ensemble at the University of Chicago was established by the Music Department in 1997 to provide a performance space in which theoretical, practical and historical interests in Middle Eastern music could be explored, and performers from across the university and the neighboring community could share their expertise and learn from one another. The ensemble is committed to the study and performance of a wide range of Middle Eastern music, with a certain emphasis on those underpinned by the theory and practice of maqam. The ensemble's repertoire reflects the diverse cultures found in the Middle East region and introduces a variety of vocal and instrumental music. Distinguished Palestinian composer and well-known 'ud player Issa Boulos leads the Ensemble. The repertoire includes music from Lebanon, Armenia, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Greece, Bosnia, Iraq, and the Balkans and features singers and traditional instruments such as the 'ud, nay, qanun, baglama, tar, riqq, darbukka and the buzuc.