



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

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**PERSIAN MUSIC AND CULTURE CELEBRATED JANUARY 18-23 AS
PART OF *SILK ROAD CHICAGO***

Silk Road Ensemble members from around the world will meet in Chicago for a six-day residency with performances at the Chicago Children's Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago and Northwestern University

**Yo-Yo Ma to lead "Creating a Life with Music" workshop
for music students Jan. 22**

January 4, 2007, Chicago, IL – The Silk Road Project, under the direction of world renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma, offers Chicagoans a rare opportunity to celebrate the music and culture of Persia during a six-day Chicago residency Thursday, Jan. 18 – Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2007. With an array of concerts, gallery performances, workshops and special events, this highly-anticipated residency is presented as part of *Silk Road Chicago*, a yearlong citywide celebration inspired by the art and culture of the regions of the historic Silk Road.

With free performances at the Chicago Children's Museum and the Art Institute of Chicago's gallery spaces and a concert at Northwestern University's Pick-Staiger Hall, the January residency offers the rare opportunity to experience the extraordinary talents of two internationally recognized Iranian musicians — Siamak Aghaei and Siamak Jahangiry. Aghaei, who specializes in the santur, ranks among the very best Iranian classical musicians of his generation. Having played the *ney* (an end-blown flute) since the age of twelve, Jahangiry has studied with the most eminent *ney* players and is also a star in the world of Iranian classical music. Other Silk Road Ensemble members scheduled to participate include Jeffrey Beecher, bass; Nicholas Cords, viola; Jonathan Gandelsman, violin; Joseph Gramley, percussion; Ben Haggarty, storyteller; Colin Jacobsen, cello; Shane Shanahan, percussion; Mark Suter, percussion; Kojiro Umezaki, *shakuhachi*; and Yang Wei, *pipa*. This residency brings together the talents of world-class artists from six nations across the globe to celebrate and honor the cultural contributions of the Silk Road's Persian region.

Silk Road Project founder and artistic director Yo-Yo Ma will join Ensemble members to present an exclusive interactive workshop for area music students Monday, Jan. 22, 2007 at the Music Institute of Chicago. (Additional details about the workshop are below.) The Silk Road Project's January residency is generously supported by Ford Motor Company; this visit to Chicago marks the Silk Road Ensemble's fourth appearance in the city as part of *Silk Road Chicago*.

Concerts and Public Performances

The January residency will kick off with a free Silk Road Ensemble family concert in the Great Hall of the Chicago Children's Museum, Thursday, Jan. 18, 2007 from 6:15 – 7 p.m. This fun, informal concert will feature storytelling and music from the Silk Road in a lively performance designed for children and families. Internationally recognized musicians from Iranian, Japanese and Western traditions will show children how artists from different backgrounds can connect while performing and demonstrating lesser-known instruments.

The Silk Road Ensemble will present gallery performances, free with museum admission, in the Silk Road exhibit spaces at the Art Institute of Chicago Sunday, Jan. 21, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Ensemble members will perform throughout the galleries, linking visual works and sound in a unique and captivating multi-sensory interaction.

The Ensemble will also perform at Northwestern University's Pick-Staiger Hall at the final concert of the Winter Chamber Music Festival Sunday, Jan. 21, 2007 at 8 p.m. Included in the concert are such selections as "Arabian Waltz" by Abou-Khalie and "Ney Nara" by Iranian composer Hossein Ali-Zadeh. Featuring internationally renowned musicians hailing from Iranian and Japanese traditions, as well as from Western backgrounds, the Silk Road Ensemble will present the second half of a concert of works that celebrate diverse heritages and intercultural connections. Tickets range from \$10 – \$22. For more information or to reserve tickets, call 847.467.4000 or visit www.pickstaiger.com.

"Creating a Life with Music" Workshop

Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble will lead a special "Creating a Life with Music" workshop entitled *Entering into Tradition: Bridging the Foreign and Familiar* Monday, Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. at the Music Institute of Chicago's Nichols Hall. The second in a series of four intensive sessions for students from Chicago music schools, this workshop intertwines music from the past and present, as well as from diverse regions throughout the world, giving students new insights into non-Western musical traditions.

Driven by the diverse experiences of celebrated cellist Yo-Yo Ma and members of the Silk Road Ensemble, as well as of the workshop participants, "Creating a Life with Music" workshops engage participants in an investigation of what it means to be a musician in today's global culture.

About *Silk Road Chicago*

Silk Road Chicago (www.silkroadchicago.org) is a unique collaborative effort between the Silk Road Project, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, the Chicago Office of Tourism, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) and the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC). From June 2006 to June 2007, Chicago is being 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 year-long partnership with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Project. *Silk Road Chicago* was initiated 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. 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*.

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.

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 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.

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 year-long 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 educational support.