



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MASTER CELLIST YO-YO MA AND THE SILK ROAD ENSEMBLE JOIN FORCES WITH THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY MIGUEL HARTH-BEDOYA ON NEW IMPOSSIBILITIES, AN ALL-NEW LIVE RECORDING ON SONY CLASSICAL**

**TO BE RELEASED ON JULY 31, 2007**

**The Album Documents and Celebrates A Yearlong, Multi-National Voyage of Discovery In Chicago**

*“We struck the home trail now, and in a few hours were in that astonishing Chicago—a city where they are always rubbing the lamp, and fetching up the genii, and contriving and achieving **new impossibilities**...”* ---Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, 1883

New Impossibilities, a new live recording by Sony Classical featuring multiple-Grammy-Award-winning cellist Yo-Yo Ma, the Silk Road Ensemble, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and conductor Miguel Harth-Bedoya, will be released on July 31. The recording is the result of “Silk Road Chicago,” the first city-wide year-long residency spearheaded by the Silk Road Project, the organization founded by Ma as a catalyst for promoting innovation and learning through cross-cultural and interdisciplinary partnerships. **The Silk Road Project partnered with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the Chicago Office of Tourism from June 2006 to June 2007 in a program of exhibitions, concerts, workshops, readings, films, dance performances and educational events. The new recording captures some of the concert highlights of Silk Road Chicago.**

On April 15 and 20, 2007, Ma and the Ensemble interpreted tradition-based and/or newly composed works inspired by the historic splendors of the Silk Road. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra joined them on April 12, 13 and 17 for the world premiere of *Ambush From Ten Sides for Pipa, Sheng, Guitar, Cello and Orchestra*, an orchestral suite which depicts the fierce battle between the kingdoms of Han and Chu that led to the founding of the Han Dynasty. The title *New Impossibilities* refers to Mark Twain’s description in *Life on the Mississippi* of the bracing energy and wide-open embrace of diversity that has always characterized the great city of Chicago and its people. It also reflects the Silk Road Project’s vision of connecting the world’s neighborhoods by bringing together artists and audiences around the globe.

Later this season, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra will also release a disc on their new in-house label CSO Resound that showcases the symphonic repertoire highlighted as part

of Silk Road Chicago. The CD, which was recorded live during performances in April at Symphony Center, features Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble in collaboration with the CSO under the direction of Miguel Harth-Bedoya on works by composers such as Bloch, Shostakovich, Harrison, and Prokofiev.

When Yo-Yo Ma founded the Silk Road Project in 1998, even he could not have imagined its eventual impact. Like the ancient pan-Asian trade route for which it was named, the Project links the East and West. But rather than spices, carpets and rich fabrics, the Silk Road Project showcases the equally intricate beauty of several centuries-worth of single and intersecting arts traditions. Meanwhile, the Silk Road Ensemble has explored folkloric and classical music styles from Iran, Armenia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, China, Korea, Japan, India and Turkey and new Silk Road Project-commissioned works by emerging composers from the above and other nations. Through nearly a decade of warmly inclusive adventures, Ma and his team of legendary virtuosos have charmed audiences of all ages and backgrounds, demystifying unfamiliar and sometimes enigmatic cultures and creating opportunities for positive face-to-face encounters during an era that sorely needs them.

The present disc commences with Rabih Abou-Khalil's *Arabian Waltz*, a sexy, poly-rhythmic piece that gives the Ensemble's string players, including a Persian kamancheh spike fiddle and a plucked Chinese pipa, plus a Japanese shakuhachi flute, a vigorous workout. Next is the *Night of the Flying Horses*. Composed by Osvaldo Golijov, the three movements are redolent of Eastern European and Roma (Gypsy) themes and feature the shakuhachi and sheng, a Chinese mouth organ. Hai-Hai Huang's *Galloping Horses* is a merrily witty sonic picture of Mongolian wild steeds on the move, with solos for pipa and double bass. Track four, the muscularly atonal, impressionistic *Song of Eight Unruly Topsy Poets*, was composed by Chinese-born Zhou Long, who is now based in the USA. Kayhan Kalhor is a renowned exponent of the kamancheh and a noted composer. His *The Silent City*, scored for strings and percussion, is an elegy for the town of Halabja in Iraqi Kurdistan, which was destroyed in 1988. *Shristi*, a work by famed tabla (Indian tuned drum) master Sandeep Das, depicts the Hindu god Shiva Nataraj and his drum in the act of creating the universe. On the world premiere of *Ambush From Ten Sides*, a Chinese traditional melody is arranged by Li Cang Sang and China Magpie into six sweepingly cinematic visions of war and its aftermath. The album concludes with *Vocussion*, a Silk Road audience favorite in which the five Ensemble members who created it explode into vocal percussion effects.

The Silk Road Project is featured on Sony Classical's Web site at [sonyclassical.com](http://sonyclassical.com) and on Yo-Yo Ma's artist domain at [Yo-YoMa.com](http://Yo-YoMa.com). Additional information -- such as background on the performers and their instruments, plus concert schedules -- can be found on the Silk Road Project Web site at [silkroadproject.org](http://silkroadproject.org).

An Intimate Journey through the music of Yo-Yo Ma, the popular podcast series featuring interviews with him discussing his life and career, continues with exclusive interviews with members of the Silk Road Ensemble as they discuss the recording of *New*

*Impossibilities.* The podcast can be accessed via the podcast section of Mr. Ma's official website, [yo-yoma.com](http://yo-yoma.com).

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