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**YO-YO MA AND THE SILK ROAD ENSEMBLE RETURN TO JAPAN
APRIL 19 – 27, 2008**

**Performances and workshops to take place in Matsumoto City, Nagoya, Tokyo,
Osaka and Okayama City**

February 11, Providence, R.I. — The Silk Road Project, a not-for-profit arts and educational organization that connects musicians, composers, artists, and audiences around the world, will send the Silk Road Ensemble and Artistic Director Yo-Yo Ma on tour to Japan from April 19 through April 27, 2008. The concert tour, presented by the Music Plant Co., Ltd., will include performances and educational activities in Matsumoto City, Nagoya, Tokyo, Osaka and Okayama. American Express is the lead sponsor of the Silk Road Project in Japan.

Commenting on the upcoming tour, Yo-Yo Ma, acclaimed cellist and founder of the Silk Road Project, stated, “I am delighted to return to Japan with the talented musicians of the Silk Road Ensemble to present a wide-ranging program of music as part of the Silk Road Project’s ongoing exploration of cultural intersections. We are excited to once again share music from across the Silk Road with Japanese audiences, and we look forward to learning much from our journey.” One of Mr. Ma’s inspirations in founding the Silk Road Project was an 8th-century Japanese biwa, a pear-shaped stringed instrument decorated with Persian and Central Asian designs, that he saw in the Nara National Museum’s Shosoin Collection.

The Ensemble will perform a varied repertoire that reflects the diversity of the artists’ backgrounds and the cultures of the countries linked by the historic Silk Road. Concert programs will include a series of works by Silk Road Project composers, including *Ritmos Anchinos*, or “Anchino Rhythms” that reflects American composer Gabriela Lena Frank’s Peruvian-Jewish-Chinese heritage; *Empty Mountain, Spirit Rain* by Angel Lam, a composer who grew up in Hong Kong and Los Angeles, in memory of her grandmother; *Paths of Parables*, a work by Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky from Uzbekistan based on Sufi parables; *Silent City*, a work commemorating a destroyed Kurdish city, composed by Ensemble member Kayhan Kalhor from Iran; and *Sacred Cloud Music and Summer in the High Grassland* by Chinese composer Zhao Jiping. Works by Rabih Abou-Khalil from Lebanon and Sapo Perapaskero from Romania will complete the international program.

In addition to their performance commitments, Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble will offer a musical presentation sponsored by American Express at The American School in Japan in Tokyo, introducing students to the music of the Silk Road in an

interactive setting. The tour will conclude with two special screenings of *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, Lotte Reiniger's classic animated film based on the tales of *The Arabian Nights*, with a live soundtrack created and performed by the Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma.

The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma previously toured to Japan in 2001 and 2005, when they gave a series of nine concerts at the Aichi World Expo 2005 in Nagoya in July 2005. Their performances of original compositions were featured in the NHK's ten-part "Silk Road 2005" television series, which aired in Japan for one year beginning in January 2005. The Ensemble also visited Japan in October 2005 as artists-in-residence at the Nara National Museum and for a performance at the gala opening of the Kyushu National Museum.

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THE SILK ROAD PROJECT IN JAPAN

The Silk Road Ensemble
Yo-Yo Ma, Artistic Director

Concert Tour

April 19, 2008 5 p.m.	Matsumoto Bunka Kaikan Hall, Matsumoto City
April 20, 2008 5 p.m.	Aichi Prefectural Arts Theater (Grand Hall), Nagoya
April 21, 2008 7 p.m.	Suntory Hall, Tokyo
April 23, 2008 7 p.m.	Suntory Hall, Tokyo
April 24, 2008 7 p.m.	The Symphony Hall, Osaka
April 25, 2008 6:30 p.m.	Okayama Symphony Hall, Okayama City
April 27, 2008 3 & 5:30 p.m.	Suntory Hall, Tokyo

Concert Programs

April 19, 23 & 24

Silk Road Suite:

KAYHAN KALHOR (arr. Ljova)	<i>Mountains are Far Away</i>
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ZHAO JIPING *Sacred Cloud Music*
ZHAO JIPING *Summer in the High Grassland*
RABIH ABOU-KHALIL *Arabian Waltz*

KAYHAN KALHOR *The Silent City*
(arr. Kalhor/Ljova)

DMITRI *Paths of Parables*
YANOV-YANOVSKY *I. The Answered Unanswered Question*
 IV. Black Angel
 V. The Father, the Son and the Donkey

GABRIELA LENA *Ritmos Anchinós*
FRANK

SAPO PERAPASKERO *Turceasca*
(arr. Golijov/Ljova)

April 27

The Adventures of Prince Achmed

A screening of one of the great classics of animation, Lotte Reiniger's 1926 silent film based on the tales of The Arabian Nights and portraying Prince Achmed's adventures through intricately cut paper images, with a new musical score performed live by the Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma

Education Activities

April 23, 2008 Workshops
 The American School in Japan, Tokyo

About the Silk Road Project

Inspired by the interchange of culture, ideas and innovations along the historic trade route, the Silk Road Project is a not-for-profit arts and educational organization that connects musicians, composers, artists and audiences from Asia to Europe to the Americas. 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 is a catalyst for promoting innovation and learning through cross-cultural and interdisciplinary partnerships. The Silk Road Project presents performances by the Silk Road Ensemble;

commissions interdisciplinary works of music, visual art, and storytelling; and develops educational materials and programming.

American Express is the lead sponsor of the Silk Road Project in Japan. Silk Road Project Cultural Exchange Initiative activities are assisted financially by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The Silk Road Project is affiliated with Harvard University and Rhode Island School of Design, where the Ensemble collaborates with students and faculty as artists in residence.

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 select group of performers and composers drawn from a wide range of cultural and international musical heritages. The Ensemble presents innovative and energetic performances that explore traditional and contemporary music from their diverse backgrounds, provide a creative platform for their own artistic growth and engage audiences in further learning about the Silk Road.