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**THE SILK ROAD ENSEMBLE WITH YO-YO MA EMBARKS ON TOUR
OF MUSIC FESTIVALS IN EUROPE**

**Concerts will take place in England, Belgium, Germany,
Switzerland and Romania from September 11 to 19, 2009**

August 12, 2009, Providence, R.I. — For the first time in more than two years, the critically acclaimed Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma will return to Europe and will perform at music festivals in London, England; Ghent and Brussels, Belgium; Cologne, Germany; Lucerne, Switzerland; and Bucharest, Romania. The concert tour is part of the 10th-anniversary programming of the Silk Road Project, a nonprofit artistic, cultural and educational organization founded in 1998 by Yo-Yo Ma, its artistic director. *[A complete tour schedule follows below.]*

“I love traveling with my friends in the Silk Road Ensemble, a group of musicians with deep knowledge of so many traditions, who generously share that knowledge and are curious and eager to explore other forms of expression,” commented Yo-Yo Ma. “We’re looking forward to playing for familiar audiences in Lucerne, London, Brussels and Cologne, and to introducing our music in Ghent and Bucharest.”

During the six-city tour, the Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma will perform three programs, each reflecting the diversity of these virtuosic musicians’ countries of origin, from China to Switzerland, from India to the Americas. The repertoire will include traditional music arranged by and for members of the Ensemble, as well as newly commissioned works, which combine instruments from Silk Road lands with percussion and Western strings to create music that transcends customary classification.

Highlights of the tour will include the European premieres of Giovanni Sollima’s *The Taranta Project* and Osvaldo Golijov’s *Air to Air*. Commissioned for a 2008 workshop with the Silk Road Ensemble, *The Taranta Project* premiered in New York City this spring. Sollima was born into a family of musicians in Sicily; in his compositions, he combines elements of classical, rock and jazz, as well as ethnic musical traditions from Sicily and other Mediterranean lands. Golijov’s *Air to Air* reflects similarly diverse influences. The four movements are infused by Christian and Arabic melodies, indigenous voices from Chiapas, Mexico, as well as protest song from 18th-century

Sardinia. Born and raised in Argentina, Golijov was surrounded by classical music, klezmer and tango. He describes *Air to Air*, developed during a 2006 workshop with the Silk Road Ensemble, as “music born from community.”

Air to Air is one of three pieces to be performed on the tour that will also be released on *Off the Map*, the Silk Road Ensemble’s forthcoming album. The others include *Sulvasutra*, a meditation on an ancient Sanskrit treatise by U.S. composer Evan Ziporyn, written for tabla player Sandeep Das, and *Empty Mountain, Spirit Rain*, a haunting piece by Angel Lam, a composer who grew up in Hong Kong and Los Angeles, in memory of her grandmother.

Additional works to be performed on the tour include the following selections:

- *A Silk Road Suite* comprising improvisation, a traditional Chinese piece and original works by American, Persian and Lebanese composers;
- *Where the Wind Will Take Us*, a composition based on an ancient Persian lament, which resulted from a close collaboration between Ensemble members Siamak Aghaei and Colin Jacobsen;
- *Yanzi*, or “Swallow Song,” a Kazakh folk song arranged by Zhao Lin for voice and cello;
- *Wine Madness*, a Chinese piece from the third-century Wei dynasty, scored for cello, violin, ruan, sheng and tabla; and
- *Silent City*, a work by kamancheh master Kayhan Kalhor commemorating the Kurdish village of Hallabja—a tribute to all cities destroyed by humanity, war and natural disaster.

“During the past 10 years, the Silk Road Project has developed from an extraordinary vision of Yo-Yo Ma’s into a global performing arts and educational organization,” said Laura Freid, chief executive officer and executive director of the Silk Road Project. “The Silk Road Ensemble musicians are remarkable at interpreting traditional music and creating new and innovative works. As we celebrate the Silk Road Project’s 10th anniversary with this concert tour in Europe, audiences will be treated to music with origins in many different corners of the world and in the collective spirit of this extraordinary ensemble.”

The European concert tour is one in a series of performances, premieres and innovative educational programs that mark the Silk Road Project’s 10th anniversary. Celebratory concerts began in October 2008 with a special performance at the United Nations for U.N. Day and continued through a North American concert tour and a series of performances at Lincoln Center in 2009. Anniversary programming will conclude with a concert tour in Asia—South Korea, Taiwan, Macao and Singapore—in April 2010. The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma will tour U.S. music festivals in August 2010.

About the Silk Road Project

The Silk Road Project is a not-for-profit artistic, cultural and educational organization with a vision of connecting the world's neighborhoods by bringing together artists and audiences around the globe. Founded by cellist Yo-Yo Ma in 1998 as a catalyst to promote innovation and learning through the arts, the Silk Road Project takes inspiration from the historic Silk Road trading route as a modern metaphor for multicultural and interdisciplinary exchange. Under the artistic direction of Mr. Ma and the leadership of CEO and Executive Director Laura Freid, the Silk Road Project presents performances by the Silk Road Ensemble, engages in cross-cultural exchanges and residencies, leads workshops for students, and partners with leading cultural institutions to create educational materials and programs. Developing new music is a central mission of the Silk Road Project, which has been involved in commissioning and performing more than 60 new musical and multimedia works from composers and arrangers from around the world.

About Yo-Yo Ma

The many-faceted career of cellist Yo-Yo Ma is testament to his continual search for new ways to communicate with audiences and to his personal desire for artistic growth and renewal. Mr. Ma maintains a balance between his engagements as a soloist with orchestras worldwide and his recital and chamber music activities. His discography encompasses more than 75 albums, including 16 Grammy award winners. One of Mr. Ma's goals is the investigation of music as a means of communication and a vehicle for the migration of ideas; in 1998 he established the Silk Road Project to promote the study of cultural, artistic and intellectual traditions along the ancient Silk Road trade routes. Mr. Ma was born in Paris to Chinese parents who later moved the family to New York. He began to study the cello at the age of four, attended the Juilliard School, and in 1976 graduated from Harvard University. He has received numerous awards, including the 1978 Avery Fisher Prize, the 1999 Glenn Gould Prize, the 2001 National Medal of Arts, the 2006 Sonning Prize, the 2006 Dan David Prize, and the 2008 World Economic Forum's Crystal Award. In 2006, he was designated a United Nations Messenger of Peace by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan. In 2007, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon extended his appointment. In January 2009, at the invitation of President-Elect Barack Obama, Mr. Ma played in the quartet performance of John Williams' *Air and Simple Gifts* at the 56th Inaugural Ceremony.

About the Silk Road Ensemble

The Silk Road Ensemble is a collective of internationally renowned musicians, composers, arrangers, visual artists and storytellers from more than 20 countries. Each Ensemble member'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 authentic tradition. Many of the musicians first came together under the artistic direction of Yo-Yo Ma at a workshop at Tanglewood Music Center in Massachusetts in 2000. Since then, in various configurations, Ensemble artists have collaborated on a diverse range of musical and multimedia projects, presenting innovative performances that explore the relationship between tradition and innovation in music from the East and West. The Silk Road Ensemble has recorded four albums and performed to critical acclaim throughout Asia, Europe and North America.

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(Concert programs begin on the next page)

Concert Programs

September 11-19, 2009

European Festival Concert Tour

The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma

Friday, September 11, 2009, at 10:15 PM: BBC Prom 75, Royal Albert Hall, London, U.K. – Program 1

Sunday, September 13, 2009, at 8 PM: Flanders Festival International Ghent, Flemish Opera, Ghent, Belgium – Program 2

Monday, September 14, 2009, at 8 PM: Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium – Program 3

Tuesday, September 15, 2009, at 8 PM: Cologne Philharmonic, Cologne, Germany – Program 2

Thursday, September 17, 2009, at 7:30 PM: Lucerne Festival, KKL Luzern Concert Hall, Lucerne, Switzerland – Program 2

Saturday, September 19, 2009, at 7:30 PM: George Enescu International Festival, Bucharest National Opera House, Bucharest, Romania – Program 3

Program 1 (London)

Silk Road Suite

Improvisation

Kayhan Kalhor; Arr. Ljova

Chinese Traditional

Shane Shanahan

Rabih Abou-Khalil

Wandering Winds

Mountains are Far Away

Saidi Swing

Arabian Waltz

Giovanni Sollima

*The Taranta Project**

Angel Lam

*Empty Mountain, Spirit Rain***

Traditional; Arr. Li Cang Sang and

Wu Tong

Ambush from Ten Sides

* *Commissioned by the Silk Road Project (2008)*

** *Commissioned by Carnegie Hall through the Weill Music Institute in partnership with the Silk Road Project (2006)*

The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma

Jeffrey Beecher, contrabass

Nicholas Cords, viola

Sandeep Das, tabla

Jonathan Gandelsman, violin

Joseph Gramley, percussion

Colin Jacobsen, violin

Liu Lin, ruan, guitar

Yo-Yo Ma, cello

Shane Shanahan, percussion

Mark Suter, percussion
Kojiro Umezaki, shakuhachi
Wu Man, pipa
Wu Tong, sheng

Program 2 (Ghent, Cologne, Lucerne)

Silk Road Suite

Improvisation

Kayhan Kalhor; Arr. Ljova

Chinese Traditional

Shane Shanahan

Rabih Abou-Khalil

Wandering Winds

Mountains are Far Away

Saidi Swing

Arabian Waltz

Giovanni Sollima

*The Taranta Project**

Siamak Aghaei; Arr. Colin Jacobsen

*Where the Wind Will Take Us**

Chinese Traditional; Arr. Zhao Lin

Yanzi

Ruan Ji; Arr. Wu Tong, Liu Lin

Wine Madness

Oswaldo Golijov

*Air to Air ***

Wah Habbibi

Aiini Taqtiru

K'in Svanta Ch'ul Me'tik Kwadalupe

Tancas Serradas a Muru

* *Commissioned by the Silk Road Project (2008)*

** *Commissioned by Carnegie Hall through The Weill Music Institute in partnership with the Silk Road Project.
The world premiere was given at Carnegie Hall, New York City on September 16, 2006.*

The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma

Siamak Aghaei, santur

Jeffrey Beecher, contrabass

Nicholas Cords, viola

Sandeep Das, tabla

Jonathan Gandelsman, violin

Joseph Gramley, percussion

Colin Jacobsen, violin

Kayhan Kalhor, kamancheh

Liu Lin, ruan, guitar

Yo-Yo Ma, cello

Shane Shanahan, percussion

Mark Suter, percussion

Kojiro Umezaki, shakuhachi

Wu Man, pipa

Wu Tong, sheng

Program 3 (Brussels, Bucharest)

Silk Road Suite

Improvisation

Kayhan Kalhor; Arr. Ljova

Chinese Traditional

Shane Shanahan

Rabih Abou-Khalil

Wandering Winds

Mountains are Far Away

Saidi Swing

Arabian Waltz

Evan Ziporyn

*Sulvasutra**

Kayhan Kalhor

*Silent City***

Osvaldo Golijov

*Air to Air **

Wah Habbibi

Aiini Taqtiru

K'in Sventa Ch'ul Me'tik Kwadalupe

Tancas Serradas a Muru

** Commissioned by Carnegie Hall through The Weill Music Institute in partnership with the Silk Road Project. The world premiere was given at Carnegie Hall, New York City on September 16, 2006.*

*** Made possible by a grant from the Fromm Music Foundation and first performed in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on December 20, 2005, by the Silk Road Ensemble, artists in residence at Harvard University. This arrangement commissioned by the 2006 Weill Music Institute Professional Training Workshop, presented by The Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall in partnership with The Silk Road Project and Boston Symphony Orchestra.*

The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma

Jeffrey Beecher, contrabass

Nicholas Cords, viola

Sandeep Das, tabla

Jonathan Gandelsman, violin

Joseph Gramley, percussion

Colin Jacobsen, violin

Kayhan Kalhor, kamancheh

Liu Lin, ruan, guitar

Yo-Yo Ma, cello

Shane Shanahan, percussion

Mark Suter, percussion

Kojiro Umezaki, shakuhachi

Wu Man, pipa

Wu Tong, sheng