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**WORLD-RENOWNED SILK ROAD ENSEMBLE
EXPLORES UNCHARTED TERRITORY WITH NEW CD: *OFF THE MAP***

**Album of globe-spanning music newly commissioned
from Osvaldo Golijov, Gabriela Lena Frank, Evan Ziporyn and Angel Lam
is available on CD November 10, 2009, with an early digital release October 13, 2009**

October 1, 2009, Providence, R.I. — *Off the Map*, a new album from the internationally acclaimed **Silk Road Ensemble**, is the group's first independent recording, released on **World Village**. Produced by the **Silk Road Project** and **In A Circle Records**, *Off the Map* is a testament to the close collaborative spirit of the Silk Road Ensemble. The album features new works commissioned from four celebrated contemporary composers—Osvaldo Golijov, Gabriela Lena Frank, Evan Ziporyn and Angel Lam—performed by fifteen members of the collegial musical collective, including international stars Kayhan Kalhor, Wu Man, Cristina Pato and Wu Tong. The recording will be released on CD in the United States on November 10 and will be available as a digital download on October 13, 2009. The CD will be available in France on October 12, Germany on October 16, and the United Kingdom on November 9, 2009.

Off the Map's release marks a highpoint during the 10th anniversary of the Silk Road Project, a nonprofit artistic, cultural and educational organization founded in 1998 by cellist Yo-Yo Ma, its artistic director. For this album, Mr. Ma stepped out of the recording studio but offered his artistic direction on the CD, which was produced by violinist Jonathan Gandelsman and the Silk Road Ensemble—evidence, as the Silk Road Project enters its second decade, of the Ensemble's emergence as a seasoned group of performers and developers of genre-defying new music.

“I’m proud of what the Silk Road Ensemble, this exceptional group of musicians and friends, has accomplished with *Off the Map*,” Mr. Ma commented. “It has been a pleasure to be part of the evolution of Gabi, Angel, Evan and Osvaldo’s pieces over the last three years, and I think this recording is a wonderful celebration of a true and ongoing collaboration. *Off the Map* makes these four great works accessible beyond the concert hall, and I hope audiences will embrace the Ensemble in the release of its first independent CD.”

The four pieces recorded on *Off the Map* resulted from an intensive workshop at Tanglewood Music Center in 2006, during which Silk Road Ensemble performers collaborated with composers on new works inspired by sources as varied as Peruvian mythology, an ancient

Sanskrit treatise, personal childhood experience, and the intersection of traditional Christian, Muslim and Arabic music. The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma has toured these works to critical acclaim in North America and Europe within the past year. Each springs from a musical crossroads, displaying a distinctive outlook embraced by the Silk Road Ensemble, one that seeks to learn from others' traditions and reflects the multicultural reality of many contemporary musicians' lives.

Embracing myriad musical influences is typical of the work of renowned composer **Oswaldo Golijov**, whose *Air to Air* culminates the CD. Raised in Argentina surrounded by classical music, klezmer and tango, Golijov studied in Israel and now resides in the United States. *Air to Air* recasts four pieces originally written for voice for Western strings; percussion; the Persian kamancheh, a spike fiddle; the Korean jang-go drum; the Galician bagpipe; the nay, a Lebanese flute; and the Chinese pipa, a lute, and sheng, a mouth organ. Influences on the work's four movements range from indigenous music of Mexico to protest song from 18th-century Sardinia; sacred song is juxtaposed with contemporary music through Muslim Arab melodies and songs from the Christian Arab Easter service, known to millions across the Middle East through recordings by the incomparable Lebanese singer Fairouz. As Golijov has described *Air to Air*, it is "music borne from community."

For Golijov, the music and musicians of the Silk Road Ensemble exemplify this concept. "For them the connection between Western and non-Western is now almost a mutation," he commented. "They've opened the gates of communication. This is good for music."

Other works on the album include *Ritmos Anchinicos* from **Gabriela Lena Frank**, a 2009 Guggenheim Fellow and Latin Grammy Award nominee who was recently named creative advisor to the Berkeley Symphony. The piece incorporates Latino/Latin American mythology, archeology, art, poetry and folk music into Western classical forms, reflecting Frank's Peruvian-Jewish-Chinese heritage. **Evan Ziporyn**, founding member of the Bang on a Can All-Stars and artistic director of Gamelan Galak Tika, contributes *Sulvasutra*, a devilishly complicated rhythmic work evocative of the creation of the universe, written for Sandeep Das, a master of the tabla, or Indian drums, and pipa virtuoso Wu Man. *Empty Mountain, Spirit Rain*, a work inspired by a poignant memory of family, features a soaring motif from Kojiro Umezaki on the shakuhachi, a Japanese bamboo flute. The composer, **Angel Lam**, grew up in Hong Kong and Los Angeles; her works have been performed in East Asia, the United States, Europe and South America.

The works recorded on *Off the Map* were commissioned by Carnegie Hall through the Weill Music Institute in partnership with the Silk Road Project. The world premieres were given at Carnegie Hall, New York City, in September 2006.

As part of the Silk Road Project's 10th-anniversary celebration, *Off the Map*'s release follows a critically acclaimed tour of European music festivals by the Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma in September 2009. Anniversary programming will conclude with an Asian concert tour in 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.

Sample tracks from *Off the Map* are featured on World Village's website, www.worldvillagemusic.com and In A Circle Records' website, www.inacirclerecords.com. Background on the Silk Road Ensemble performers and composers and their instruments, as well as concert schedules, can be found on the Silk Road Project website: www.silkroadproject.org.

About the Silk Road Ensemble

The Silk Road Ensemble is a collective of internationally renowned performers and composers 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 spring from Eastern and Western traditions and contemporary musical crossroads. The Silk Road Ensemble has recorded five albums and performed to critical acclaim throughout Asia, Europe and North America.

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.

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