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For immediate release:

Silk Road Project moves to Harvard

*New Allston headquarters will expand campus and community arts education;
renewal of five-year affiliation and relocation will strengthen partnership*

April 13, 2010, Cambridge, MA —The Silk Road Project will move its headquarters to Harvard University this summer, strengthening a partnership between the University and the world-renowned organization that promotes innovation and learning through the arts.

Harvard President Drew Faust and Yo-Yo Ma '76, the project's founder and artistic director, today (April 13) announced that the relocation of the Silk Road Project from Rhode Island to Harvard-owned property at 175 North Harvard St. in Allston this July will enable new artistic and cultural opportunities at the University and in surrounding communities.

"We will act as a working laboratory, exploring intersections between the arts and academics, seeking passionate learning across disciplines and cultures," said Ma, the acclaimed cellist who founded the project in 1998. "I am thrilled that our partnership with Harvard has resulted in this renewal of our joint commitment to learning through the arts. I am looking forward to an exciting collaboration with Harvard faculty and students."

The Silk Road Project is a nonprofit artistic, cultural, and educational organization with a vision of connecting the world's neighborhoods by bringing together artists

and audiences. The announcement marked the second time Harvard has welcomed a major not-for-profit organization to Allston in as many months, and it represented a milestone in Faust's initiative to better integrate the arts into the cognitive life of the University.

"The Silk Road Project is a thriving example of how the arts enhance our understanding of the world," said Faust. "This new, closer relationship between Harvard and the Silk Road Project will create educational opportunities that will benefit our local communities as well as our students."

The new partnership builds on the success of a relationship between the Silk Road Project and Harvard, begun in 2005, that has already inspired multidisciplinary college courses as well as numerous workshops and performances involving members of the Project and Harvard undergraduate musicians. The new Project headquarters' location — in space shared with the Harvard Allston Education Portal — provides opportunities for further cultural collaborations that will benefit the Harvard community and its neighbors.

The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma will give annual public performances at Harvard, and Silk Road Ensemble musicians and artists will be available to take part in classroom work on campus, through performance, discussion, and collaborative projects.

The Silk Road Project's move to Allston highlights Harvard's ongoing stewardship of its properties and active engagement in Allston. In addition to today's announcement, Harvard recently repurposed one of its properties to serve as a temporary community skating rink and announced that the world headquarters of Earthwatch, a leading scientific research and environmental education organization, was coming to the neighborhood.

"The Silk Road Project and Earthwatch are great examples of the kinds of vibrant organizations we can bring to Allston," said Harvard Executive Vice President Katherine Lapp. "These are not-for-profit organizations with priorities that mesh nicely with Harvard's educational mission, and bringing them into the neighborhood opens up a world of possibilities for collaborations that will benefit the community."

Faust has raised the profile of the arts on the Harvard campus following the recommendations of a University-wide Task Force on the Arts that she named in 2007. The task force report encouraged new artistic programming and more opportunities for arts-making as a way of moving the arts already prevalent in the Harvard community closer to the curriculum. In the past year, 12 General Education and departmental courses and 15 freshman seminars integrated arts-making into their syllabi, and the number of venues for the practice, viewing, or performing of the arts online and on campus has increased.

“The interchange of music, art, culture, and ideas is the heart of our artistic programming and our educational work,” said Laura Freid, chief executive officer and executive director of the Silk Road Project. “Entering into this deeper relationship with Harvard and fully integrating into the Harvard campus will allow us to enrich our ongoing explorations of the Silk Road as a metaphor for cultural exchange and interdisciplinary collaboration.”

About the Silk Road Project

<http://www.silkroadproject.org/>

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 Project takes inspiration from the historic Silk Road trading routes as a modern metaphor for multicultural and interdisciplinary exchange. Under the artistic direction of Ma and the leadership of CEO and Executive Director Laura Freid, the 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 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 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 traditions. 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 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 five albums and performed to critical acclaim throughout Asia, Europe, and North America.

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. 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 his 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.

Ma was born in Paris to Chinese parents who later moved the family to New York. He began to study the cello at age 4, 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, Ma played in the quartet performance of John Williams' "Air and Simple Gifts" at the 56th Inauguration Day ceremony.

About Harvard and the arts

The arts abound at Harvard. Blending theory, practice, and passion across a diverse curricular and extracurricular landscape, Harvard is home to a vibrant and dedicated community that celebrates, interrogates, and practices art. The arts require a prominent place at a research institution because they inspire creative thinking and leadership. As the December 2008 Task Force on the Arts Report said, a university that wants to be a place where dreams are born and exciting collaborations push the boundaries of knowledge must include the practice of the arts in the curriculum and embrace it as an integral part of intellectual life on campus.

For links to video of Silk Road Project performances and projects and additional stories on Harvard and the arts, go to: <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2010/04/silk-road-project-moves-to-harvard/>

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