



## **A Statement from the Executive Director**

The Silk Road Project was founded to encourage deeper understanding of other cultures and beliefs, with the hope that we may better address our differences if we appreciate what we share in common. In times as rife with international and economic tensions as these, art and music can seem ethereal. Yet when we examine larger truths about identity and conflict and ask why we find ourselves in such a fractured world, our art and our music may be more important than ever, for our culture gives meaning and shape to our lives.

For a decade, the Project has developed exciting new cultural connections among artists and audiences. From the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C., in 2002 to the Special Olympics in Shanghai in 2007, the Silk Road Ensemble has performed for audiences the world over. Through workshops, university residencies and the development of new music, we are engaged in a continual process of cross-cultural learning and teaching, growth and renewal.

Since I joined the Project in 2004, I have witnessed firsthand the passion that our programs can awaken. In 2006-2007, Silk Road Chicago, our most extensive partnership to date, investigated local connections to a larger world. Our affiliations with Harvard University and Rhode Island School of Design have led to collaborative residencies and integrated coursework. And our partnership with the Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE) has yielded a curriculum on the historical Silk Road that thousands of Chicago schoolchildren have used, and that we will introduce in New York City during our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

As we celebrate our anniversary from 2008 to 2010, with performances and educational initiatives spanning three continents, we keep in sight our guiding mission to act as a catalyst for innovation and learning through the arts and our vision of connecting the world's neighborhoods. Under Yo-Yo's creative direction, the Silk Road Project will continue to break new ground by exploring connections among cultures and disciplines that reintroduce age-old questions about what it means to be human, throughout our collective history and in our own time.

– Laura Freid, CEO & Executive Director