

Yo-Yo Ma
Artistic Director

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 soloist with orchestras worldwide and his recital and chamber music activities. His discography includes over 75 albums, including 16 Grammy award winners. One of Mr. Ma's goals is the investigation of music as a means of communication and as 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 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 Barak Obama, Mr. Ma played in the quartet performance of John Williams' *Air* and *Simple Gifts* at the 56th Inaugural Ceremony.

Laura Freid
CEO and Executive Director

Laura Freid has more than two decades of leadership experience in top-tier institutions of higher education and as a consultant to not-for-profit, public affairs, and media organizations nationally and internationally. Understanding how traditional concepts and new ideas travel across time and cultures has been a lifelong interest and is the focus of her published articles and interviews. Prior to joining the Silk Road Project in 2004, Freid was executive vice president for public affairs and university relations at Brown University and served as a research associate for the Futures Project and visiting scholar for the Watson Institute for International Studies.

A magazine journalist and editor, Freid served as publisher of *Harvard Magazine* and as the first executive director of the Ivy League Magazine Network. Previously she was publisher and editor of *Bostonia* magazine. A graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, she holds an MBA from Boston University, and an Ed.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.