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YO-YO MA Cellist

Yo-Yo Ma's multi-faceted career is testament to his enduring belief in culture's power to generate trust and understanding. Whether performing new or familiar works from the cello repertoire, collaborating with communities and institutions to explore culture's role in society, or engaging unexpected musical forms, Mr. Ma strives to foster connections that stimulate the imagination and reinforce our humanity.

Mr. Ma maintains a balance between engagements as a soloist with orchestras, recital and chamber music activities, and collaborations with a wide circle of artists and institutions. With partners from around the world and across disciplines, Mr. Ma creates programs that stretch the boundaries of genre and tradition to explore music-making as a means not only to share and express meaning, but also as a model for the cultural collaboration he considers essential to a strong society.

Expanding upon this belief, in 1998 Mr. Ma established Silkroad, a collective of artists from around the world who create music that engages their many traditions. In addition to presenting performances in venues from Suntory Hall to the Hollywood Bowl, Silkroad collaborates with museums and universities to develop training programs for teachers, musicians, and learners of all ages. Silkroad has commissioned more than 100 new works from composers and arrangers around the globe, and released seven albums, most recently a collection of music recorded for *The Vietnam War*, a documentary film from Ken Burns and Lynn Novick.

Through his work with Silkroad, as well as throughout his career, Yo-Yo Ma seeks to expand the classical cello repertoire, frequently performing lesser-known music of the 20th century and commissions of new concertos and recital pieces. He has premiered works by a diverse group of composers, among them Osvaldo Golijov, Leon Kirchner, Zhao Lin, Christopher Rouse, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Giovanni Sollima, Bright Sheng, Tan Dun, and John Williams.

In addition to his work as a performing artist, Mr. Ma partners with communities and institutions from Chicago to Guangzhou to develop programs that champion culture's power to transform lives and forge a more connected world. Among his many roles, he is the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant; artistic director of the annual Youth Music Culture Guangdong festival; and UN Messenger of Peace. He is the first artist ever appointed to the World Economic Forum's board of trustees.

Mr. Ma's discography of over 100 albums (including 19 Grammy Award winners) reflects his wide-ranging interests. In addition to his many iconic renditions of the Western classical canon, he has made several recordings that defy categorization, among them "Appalachia Waltz" and "Appalachian Journey" with Mark O'Connor and Edgar Meyer, and two Grammy-winning tributes to the music of Brazil, "Obrigado Brazil" and "Obrigado Brazil – Live in Concert." Mr. Ma's recent recordings include: "Songs from the Arc of Life," with pianist Kathryn Stott; "Sing Me Home," with the Silkroad Ensemble, which won the 2016 Grammy for Best World Music Album; "Bach Trios," with Edgar Meyer and Chris Thile; "Brahms: The Piano Trios," with Emanuel Ax and Leonidas Kavakos; and "Six Evolutions - Bach: Cello Suites."

This year, Mr. Ma begins a new journey, setting out to perform Johann Sebastian Bach's six suites for solo cello in one sitting in 36 locations around the world, iconic venues that encompass our cultural heritage, our current creativity, and the challenges of peace and understanding that will shape our future. Each concert will be an example of culture's power to create moments of shared understanding, as well as an invitation to a larger conversation about culture, society, and the themes that connect us all.

Yo-Yo Ma was born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris. He began to study the cello with his father at age four and three years later moved with his family to New York City, where he continued his cello studies with Leonard Rose at the Juilliard School. After his conservatory training, he sought out a liberal arts education, graduating from Harvard University with a degree in anthropology in 1976. He has received numerous awards, including the Avery Fisher Prize (1978), the Glenn Gould Prize (1999), the National Medal of the Arts (2001), the Dan David Prize (2006), the Leonie Sonning Music Prize (2006), the World Economic Forum's Crystal Award (2008), the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2010), Kennedy Center Honors (2011), the Polar Music Prize (2012), the Vilcek Prize in Contemporary Music (2013), and the J. Paul Getty Medal Award (2016). He has performed for eight American presidents, most recently at the invitation of President Obama on the occasion of the 56th Inaugural Ceremony.

Mr. Ma and his wife have two children. He plays two instruments, a 1733 Montagnana cello from Venice and the 1712 Davidoff Stradivarius.

For additional information, see: yo-yoma.com, silkroad.org, and opus3artists.com.

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