AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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YO-YO MA PERFORMS WORLD PREMIERE OF *SELF COMES TO MIND* AT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

UNIQUE COLLABORATION BY BRUCE ADOLPHE AND NEUROSCIENTIST ANTONIO DAMASIO, ACCOMPANIED BY VIDEO OF ASTOUNDING BRAIN IMAGES

On **Sunday, May 3, 2009, cellist Yo-Yo Ma**, accompanied by two percussionists, will **perform the world premiere of *Self Comes to Mind*** in the LeFrak Theater at the **American Museum of Natural History**. This unusual and evocative new work was **composed by Bruce Adolphe in collaboration with neuroscientist Antonio Damasio** and was inspired by Damasio's writings concerning the evolution of human consciousness. As the piece is performed on stage, the screen will fill with various brain images—many in vivid colors—from an interactive video commissioned specially for this performance.

The premiere will be followed by a conversation with **Yo-Yo Ma**, **Bruce Adolphe**, and **Antonio Damasio** moderated by science writer **Jonah Lehrer**. The participants will discuss consciousness, creativity, music, and the genesis of the exciting collaboration behind ***Self Comes to Mind***.

Self Comes to Mind is co-produced by The Learning Maestros and the University of Southern California's Brain and Creativity Institute.

Tickets for ***Self Comes to Mind*** are $60 each for orchestra, $25 for balcony, and $125 for VIP seating (which includes a reception). The performance begins at 7 pm, followed by the collaborator conversation at 7:30. Advance tickets for the public are available by phone at 212-769-5200 or online at **www.amnh.org/programs**.

Damasio's work has inspired two previous compositions by Adolphe, but ***Self Comes to Mind* is their first collaboration.** "Science is inspiring and provocative for composition because it uses terms and images that embrace musical action," said Adolphe. "But more specifically, neuroscience, for me, has opened up a world of musical ideas because I have come to suspect that music itself is an expression of our physical minds, or the way our minds work. Antonio's science writing gives me, as a composer, images that provoke structural consequences in the music, and his poetic nature allows for the ambiguity necessary to abstraction and musical expression."

"Bruce's curiosity about brain science is matched by his ability to find a musical translation for complicated ideas," said Damasio. "And this time, rather than discovering the outcome of his work, I

was closer to its development. In fact, the entire collaboration has been a delight because Yo-Yo's well-known curiosity about music also extends to the workings of the brain."

The decision to include brain images from the work of Damasio's wife and colleague, Hanna Damasio, came from Yo-Yo Ma. Her brain imaging atlas is regarded as an international reference by neuroscientists. Ioana Uricaru, a young filmmaker at the University of Southern California, created a video with the brain images, and Diego Miralles and his team at Meemle designed the interactive program to be used in the projection.

Collaborators

Celebrating his 30th anniversary with Sony Classical and Sony Masterworks, **Yo-Yo Ma** is an exclusive Sony Classical artist, and his discography of over 75 albums (including 15 Grammy® Award winners) reflects his wide-ranging interests. He has made several successful recordings that defy categorization, among them *Hush* with Bobby McFerrin, *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*. Yo-Yo Ma's most recent recordings include *Paris: La Belle Époque*, with pianist Kathryn Stott, *Appassionato*, which contains some of the world's most romantic music and *New Impossibilities*, a live album recorded with the Silk Road Ensemble and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; he also appears on John Williams's soundtrack for Rob Marshall's film *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Across this full range of releases, Yo-Yo Ma remains one of the best-selling recording artists in the classical field. All of his recent albums have quickly entered the *Billboard* chart of classical best sellers, remaining in the Top 15 for extended periods, often with as many as four titles simultaneously on the list.

This spring **Bruce Adolphe** will be honored with an entire evening at the Kennedy Center devoted to his chamber works, while two additional new compositions will receive their premieres, the opera *Let Freedom Sing: The Story of Marian Anderson*, produced by the Washington National Opera, and a violin concerto performed in Los Angeles by Eugene Drucker. Adolphe is resident lecturer and director of family concerts for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and comic keyboard master of *Performance Today*'s weekly radio program *Piano Puzzlers*. He has recently been named composer in residence at the Brain and Creativity Institute in Los Angeles. Along with Julian Fifer, Adolphe has founded The Learning Maestros, an interdisciplinary education company.

Antonio Damasio is an internationally recognized leader in neuroscience. His research has helped to elucidate the neural basis for the emotions and has shown that emotions play a central role in social cognition and decision-making. His work has also had a major influence on the understanding of memory, language and consciousness. Damasio is David Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience at the University of Southern California where he directs the Brain and Creativity Institute. He is the author

of *Decartes' Error*, *The Feeling of What Happens*, and *Looking for Spinoza*, which are translated in over 30 languages and taught worldwide. He has received numerous academic honors and prizes, many shared with his wife, Hanna, most recently the Prince of Asturias Prize in Science and Technology.

American Museum of Natural History (www.amnh.org)

The American Museum of Natural History is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. Since its founding in 1869, the Museum has advanced its global mission to explore and interpret human cultures and the natural world through a wide-reaching program of scientific research, education, and exhibitions. The Museum accomplishes this ambitious goal through its extensive facilities and resources. The institution houses 46 permanent exhibition halls, state-of-the-art research laboratories, one of the largest natural history libraries in the Western Hemisphere, and a permanent collection of more than 30 million specimens and cultural artifacts. With a scientific staff of more than 200, the Museum supports research divisions in Anthropology, Paleontology, Invertebrate and Vertebrate Zoology, and the Physical Sciences. The Museum shares its treasures and discoveries with approximately four million on-site visitors from around the world each year. AMNH-produced exhibitions and Space Shows can currently be seen on five continents in engagements that reach audiences of millions. In addition, the Museum's Web site, www.amnh.org, extends its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions more beyond the Museum's walls.

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