ECYS ANNOUNCES FIFTY-SECOND SEASON OPENER
WITH CONDUCTOR DR. JINDONG CAI ON NOVEMBER 2 IN CUPERTINO!

ECYS PERFORMS FULL MAHLER SYMPHONY FOR THE FIRST TIME!

TALENTED YOUNG MUSICIAN CASSANDRA CHUM WILL SPARKLE ON
ELGAR’S CELLO CONCERTO IN E MINOR, MVT IV!

(Palo Alto, CA – October 1, 2014) The El Camino Youth Symphony’s fifty-second season of excellence marks the beginning of a new era in artistic leadership when Dr. Jindong Cai lifts the baton as Conductor of the Senior Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of ECYS. The upcoming season will be full of fantastic works and collaborations all culminating in an exciting tour of Spain in Summer 2015.
The first highlight of Dr. Cai’s inaugural season is the **Season Opener Concert**, November 2, at Flint Center in Cupertino. The impressive program will feature Gustav Mahler’s stunning Symphony No. 1 “Titan,” Samuel Barber’s haunting *Adagio for Strings*, and Edward Elgar’s Cello Concerto in E Minor, Mvt. IV with soloist Cassandra Chum. The performance will begin at 4pm and tickets ($15 General/$8 Student-Senior) will be available through Ticketmaster.com.

Performing Mahler’s “Titan,” a magnificent work that redefined the genre, is a major undertaking for a youth orchestra. The score calls for four flutes and three piccolos, four oboes and English horn, four clarinets, two E-flat clarinets and bass clarinet, three bassoons and **contrabassoon**, seven horns, four trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tam-tam, harp, and strings! When asked why he chose to tackle Mahler, Dr. Cai said: “Mahler’s inspirational music reflects his view of the world and the many challenges he faced in his life. By performing it, I hope our students will learn how to challenge themselves - and to face the challenges that life will inevitably bring them.” Up to the challenge is the fantastic ECYS Bassoon section (left to right: Demetri Nicolaou, Kevin Yang, Taige Hu, Victor Xue, Anna Matthews, and Aaron Wong), including Demetri Nicolaou playing ECYS’s recent acquisition: a new contrabassoon.

Born in Beijing, Music Director and Conductor **Dr. Jindong Cai** received his early musical training in China, where he learned to play the violin and the piano. He came to the United States for his graduate studies at the New England Conservatory and the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati. In 1989, he was selected to study with famed conductor Leonard Bernstein at the Tanglewood Music Center, and won the Conducting Fellowship Award at the Aspen Music Festival in 1990 and 1992.

Professor Cai served on the faculties at the Louisiana State University, the University of Arizona, the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, and the University of
California at Berkeley. He held assistant conducting positions with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, and the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, working closely with conductors Jesus Lopez-Cobos, Erich Kunzel, and Keith Lockhart. Dr. Cai joined the Stanford University faculty in 2004 as the first holder of the Gretchen B. Kimball Director of Orchestral Studies’ Chair and Associate Professor in Music Performance. He is currently the Music Director and Conductor of the Stanford Symphony Orchestra, the Stanford Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Stanford New Ensemble. He is also the Artistic Director of the Stanford Pan-Asian Music Festival, which he founded in 2005. Read Dr. Cai’s full biography here.

Soloist Cassandra Chum, age fourteen, is a freshman at Palo Alto High School. She began her cello studies at age six under Sieun Lin and currently studies under Jonathan Koh. This is her seventh year in ECYS and her third year with the Senior Symphony. She has participated in the Junior Bach Festival twice and has won awards in the United States Open Music Competition, CMTANC Music Competition, MTAC VOCE Competition, and MTNA Junior Performance Competition. Last summer, she attended the Sid and Mary Foulger International Music Festival in Utah where she performed with her piano trio. She also had the unique opportunity to learn from amazing faculty, including Julian Hersh. She is also currently a member in one of California Music Preparatory Academy’s cello quartets. Aside from cello, she enjoys horseback riding, volleyball, singing, and hanging out with her friends.

Two core principles underlie the ECYS mission: Music Education, to nurture, train and develop young musicians from culturally diverse backgrounds and encourage a lasting appreciation of music, and Musical Excellence, to provide high-quality performance opportunities for young people and outstanding musical events for the wider community. The Senior Symphony, El Camino Youth Symphony’s preeminent orchestra, is comprised of over 120 talented young musicians from all over the Bay Area who perform professional repertoire and travel internationally. ECYS offers its students the opportunity to learn from and perform with world-renowned musicians, recent guest artists include pianists Ilya Yakushev and Naomi Kudo, violinists Philippe Quint and David Kim, cellist Zuill Bailey, and Brandon Ridenour, trumpet. The orchestra has been honored to perform at Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, most recently in January 2014 at the Bay Area Youth Orchestra Festival. Previous Music Directors include Dr. Camilla Kolchinsky, Melissa McBride, and Dr. Arthur Barnes. Grace Lai is the current President of the Board of Directors.

Interviews and photographers are available upon request!