ECYS ANNOUNCES FIFTY-FIFTH SEASON!

SEASON PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE BERLIOZ SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE, GERSHWIN RHAPSODY IN BLUE, ORFF CARMINA BURANA!

THE ANNUAL BENEFIT CONCERT SPOTLIGHTS BELOVED AMERICAN COMPOSERS: BERNSTEIN, GERSHWIN, AND COPLAND, WITH SPECIAL GUEST TAYLOR EIGSTI!

(Palo Alto, CA – August 7, 2017) The El Camino Youth Symphony’s fifty-fifth season is one highlight after another! Maestro Cai has selected masterworks by Berlioz, Bernstein, Dvorak, Gershwin, Smetana and more!
The **Season Opener Concert**, October 28 at Flint Center in Cupertino features Dvorak *Carnival Overture* and student soloist Kameron Duncan performing Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 1. The centerpiece of the program will be Berlioz’s captivating *Symphonie Fantastique*. The performance will begin at 7:30pm and tickets ($15 General/$8 Student-Senior) will be available through Ticketmaster.com.

The beautiful California Theatre in Downtown San Jose, the site of the December 10 **Holiday Concert**, will feature a musical tribute to the most beloved works of the silver screen! Star Wars, Jurassic Park, James Bond, the Wizard of Oz, and classic Disney tunes will delight the audience! In addition, two young artists: Cassandra May, violin, performing Lalo’s *Symphonie Espagnole*, and Fiona Tsang, cello, performing Tchaikovsky’s *Variations on a Rococo Theme*, will complete the program. A sea of color will brighten the stage as the orchestra continues its tradition of dressing in gowns and colored bow ties in the spirit of a Viennese Ball. Tickets ($15 General/$8 Student-Senior) for the 2:30pm performance are available for purchase at the California Theatre Box Office on the day of only.

The February 10, 2018 **Lunar New Year Concert** at Flint Center will feature special guest performer and Emmy Award-winning composer Vân-Ánh Võ. The concert is a true celebration, bringing to the stage both the Senior Symphony, conducted by Dr. Jindong Cai, and the Sinfonietta Orchestra, led by John Eells; as well as a meeting of East and West with a program featuring Võ’s *Lullaby for a Country*, which she debuted with the Oakland Symphony last year, as well as works by Beethoven, Grieg, and Zhou Long. Young artists Jessica Li, piano, and Simon Tao, piano, will also solo. Tickets ($25 General/$15 Student-Senior) to the 7:30pm concert can be purchased at Ticketmaster.com.

At the April 7, 2018 **Annual Benefit Concert**, ECYS will be joined by Grammy-nominated acclaimed jazz pianist, and Bay Area-Native, Taylor Eigsti for Gershwin’s most beloved work: *Rhapsody in Blue*. The special All-American program will also feature “Symphonic Dances” from *West Side Story* by Bernstein and Copland’s *Lincoln Portrait*, narrated by Michael Morgan, Conductor of the Oakland Symphony. Tickets ($38 General/$28 Student-Senior) are available at Ticketmaster.com. 7:30pm at Flint Center.
The **Season Finale Concert**, June 2, 2018, 7:00pm at Flint Center will feature a collaboration with the Ragazzi Boys Chorus and Masterworks Chorale as they join ECYS for Orff’s thrilling *Carmina Burana*. In addition, the concert will spotlight two dynamic student soloists: Emily Kao, cello, performing the first and second movements of the Elgar Cello Concerto in E minor, and Anwesha Mukherji, flute, performing Mozart’s Flute Concerto in G K313, Mvt. I. The full program will also include Smetana’s *The Moldau*. Tickets ($15 General/$8 Student-Senior) will be available at Ticketmaster.com.

Maestro **Jindong Cai** assumed the position as Music Director of El Camino Symphony and Conductor of the Senior Orchestra in 2014. In his premiere season he challenged the orchestra with programs that featured Mahler’s Symphony No. 1 and Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloé* from Suite No. 2, and led the orchestra on an acclaimed tour of Spain that included lauded performances on the main stage of the Granada Festival of Music and Dance, and standing ovations in Barcelona’s Palau de la Música de Catalana. His first season also featured the US premiere of “Perseus” from *Three Astral Poems*, for local and international tour performances and collaboration with award-winning Spanish-American composer Miguel A. Roig-Francoli.

In 2017, Maestro Cai led the Senior Symphony on a tour of Central Europe, which was nothing short of a rousing success. The performances, which featured Rachmaninoff’s *Symphonic Dances*, Shostakovich’s *Festive Overture*, and Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto with soloist David Chernyavsky of the San Francisco Symphony, received standing ovations and multiple curtain calls at every destination, including the Golden Hall, Musikverein in Vienna.

Over the 30 years of his career in the United States, Maestro Cai has established himself as a dynamic conductor, scholar, educator, and leading advocate of music from across Asia. He is a professor of music at Stanford University, serves as the Principal Guest Conductor of the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra in China, and the Mongolia State Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet in Ulaan Baatar. In 2016, Cai was named the Artistic Director of the National Youth Orchestra of China (NYO-China).
Maestro Cai started his professional conducting career with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra where he held assistant conducting positions and worked closely with music director Jesus Lopez-Cobos, conductor Keith Lockhart, and Cincinnati Pops conductor Erich Kunzel. Dr. Cai is a three-time recipient of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music. As a scholar and an expert on music in contemporary China and Asia, Dr. Cai is frequently interviewed by news media around the world including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, the BBC, and NPR. Together with his wife Sheila Melvin, Maestro Cai co-authored the book Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese. Their new book, Beethoven in China: How the Great Composer Became an Icon in the People’s Republic, was published by Penguin Books in September 2015.

At the Stanford University, he conducted the Stanford Symphony Orchestra for 11 years. Maestro Cai is also the founder of the Stanford Pan-Asian Music Festival. Over its 12-year history, the Festival - which is dedicated to promoting an understanding and appreciation of music in contemporary Asia through an annual series of concerts and academic activities - has become one of the most important platforms for the performance of Asian music in the U.S.

Born in Beijing, Cai received his early musical training in China, where he learned to play violin and 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.

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 Jon Nakamatsu, 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 2016 at the Bay Area Youth Orchestra Festival. Previous Music Directors include Dr. Camilla Kolchinsky, Melissa McBride, and Dr. Arthur Barnes. Jennifer Matthews is the current President of the Board of Directors.

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