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EL CAMINO YOUTH SYMPHONY TO BECOME GOLDEN STATE YOUTH ORCHESTRA

WORLD PREMIERE OF MARK VOLKERT’S COMMISSIONED WORK: FANFARE FOR GOLDEN STATE YOUTH ORCHESTRA

FEATURED PERFORMANCES BY BAY AREA JAZZ PIANO PRODIGY TAYLOR EIGSTI AND MUSIC DIRECTOR OF OAKLAND SYMPHONY MICHAEL MORGAN

(Palo Alto, CA – March 7, 2018) The 2018 Annual Benefit concert is an event fifty-five years in the making! When young maestro William Galbraith founded El Camino Youth Symphony in 1963, he envisioned an orchestra that would give youth musicians the opportunity to
perform challenging standard professional repertoire. Since that time, the Palo Alto-based organization, which took its name from the nearby El Camino Real, has grown to support nearly 500 young musicians annually, from over 100 schools throughout six counties. The Senior Orchestra is known worldwide, as it tours internationally every other summer.

The El Camino Youth Symphony Association of parents decided it was time to embrace a name that better reflected what the organization had become and what it still could be. President of the Board of Directors Jennifer Matthews said, “El Camino Youth Symphony has grown tremendously since it was founded in 1963. We now have 6 ensembles, and our Senior Symphony is one of the finest youth symphonies in the country. Our aim was to find a new name that more accurately represented the strength and depth of our brand, and so the Golden State Youth Orchestra was born, complete with a beautiful new logo that embodies youth, classical music and our California heritage.”

The Golden State Youth Orchestra (GSYO) with Maestro Jindong Cai will debut on April 7, 2018. The Concert, which is a celebration of American composers, will feature the world premiere of Mark Volkert’s Fanfare for Golden State Youth Orchestra. Mark Volkert, recently retired Assistant Concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony, has premiered works with Capella SF and the San Francisco Symphony, under the baton of Michael Tilson Thomas. When developing the theme that would become Fanfare, Volkert had in mind the virtuoso ability of the orchestra, the grandeur of the Pacific Ocean, and the majesty of the Sierra.

Last but certainly not least, GSYO will be joined by Grammy-nominated jazz pianist and Bay Area-Native Taylor Eigsti for a performance of Gershwin’s most beloved work: Rhapsody in Blue. The all-American program will also feature “Symphonic Dances” from West Side Story by Bernstein and Copland’s Lincoln Portrait, narrated by Michael Morgan, Music Director and Conductor of the Oakland Symphony. Tickets ($38 General/$28 Student-Senior) are available at Ticketmaster.com. Concert at 7:30pm at Flint Center. More info at ECYS.org.

The rebranding and marketing for the event was made possible by the generous support of the Graybird Foundation, Jill Grossman, Founder and CEO.

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32-year old New York-based pianist and composer Taylor Eigsti started playing the piano when he was four years old. Eigsti was quickly labeled a prodigy, and has since released 7 albums as a bandleader, in addition to appearing on over 50 albums as a sideman. Eigsti has garnered multiple individual GRAMMY Award nominations over the years for his work as a recording artist and composer, including Best Instrumental Composition, and Best Jazz Instrumental Solo. Recently, Eigsti also contributed a featured composition on the 2017 GRAMMY-winning soundtrack to the motion picture Miles Ahead, starring Don Cheadle. Eigsti has had the good fortune of performing, touring or recording with such luminaries as Dave Brubeck, McCoy Tyner, Chris Botti, Joshua Redman, Sting, John Mayer, Esperanza Spalding, Terence Blanchard, Joshua Bell, Chick Corea, David Benoit, Christian McBride, Julian Lage, Marian McPartland, Stefon Harris, Red Holloway, James Moody, Chris Potter,

Eigsti has travelled internationally quite extensively with his trio and quartet, and also is a frequent and integral part of the regular touring bands of Chris Botti, Eric Harland Voyager, Gretchen Parlato, Kendrick Scott Oracle, and Sachal Vasandani. Eigsti’s career has involved much global touring, and he has performed at many premiere venues throughout the world, including the Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Hall, Salle Pleyel, Red Rocks Amphitheater, Royal Festival Hall, Vienna Konzerthaus, Olympia Hall, Massey Hall, Lincoln Center, Davies Symphony Hall, and many top festivals including Montreal Jazz Festival, North Sea Jazz Festival, Singapore Mosaic Music Festival, Monterey Jazz Festival, Stockholm Jazz Festival, Istanbul Jazz Festival, Quito Jazz Festival, Jakarta Jazz Festival, Sydney Jazz Festival, Newport Jazz Festival, Chicago Jazz Festival, Toronto Jazz Festival, and many more performances worldwide, including a private performance for former President Bill Clinton.

Eigsti has also been featured numerous times in various television specials, NPR appearances, commercials, and composed the theme music to the motion picture *Detachment* (2011) starring Oscar-winner Adrien Brody, collaborating on the score with the Newton Brothers.

In addition to leading and performing with various small ensembles, Eigsti frequently has had the opportunity to work with, compose for and orchestrate music for various symphony orchestras, and has written a growing repertoire of music for orchestra and jazz ensemble. Various soloist and compositional features include the San José Chamber Orchestra, Oakland East Bay Symphony, New York Philharmonic, New York Pops, Chicago Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Buffalo Orchestra, Naples Philharmonic, Nashville Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic, Boston Youth Symphony, New York Pops, Pittsburgh Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, San Jose Youth Symphony, Bear Valley Symphony, Tassajara Symphony, Reno Philharmonic and multiple featured collaborations with the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra.

**Michael Morgan** was born in 1957 and raised in Washington, D.C. where he attended public schools and began conducting at the age of 12. He attended McKinley Tech High School in Washington D.C. and was affiliated with the D.C. Youth Orchestra Program. While a student at Oberlin College Conservatory of Music (studying composition) he spent a summer at Tanglewood. There he was a student of Gunther Schuller and Seiji Ozawa and it was at that time that he first worked with Leonard Bernstein. During his final year at Oberlin he was also the Apprentice Conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic under Julius Rudel.

In 1980, he won first prize in the Hans Swarowsky International Conductors Competition in Vienna, Austria and became Assistant Conductor of the St Louis Symphony Orchestra under Leonard Slatkin. His operatic debut was in 1982 at the Vienna State Opera in Mozart’s *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. In 1986, Sir Georg Solti chose him to become the Assistant
Conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, a position he held for five years under both Solti and Daniel Barenboim. He became music director of the Oakland East Bay Symphony in 1990. Maestro Morgan serves as artistic director of the Oakland Youth Orchestra, music director of the Sacramento Philharmonic Orchestra (and the Sacramento Opera) and was artistic director of Festival Opera in Walnut Creek, California for more than 10 seasons. He teaches the graduate conducting course at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and is Music Director at the Bear Valley Music Festival in California.

In 2002 and 2003, he taught conducting at the Tanglewood Music Center and has led conducting workshops around the country. As Stage Director he has led productions of the Bernstein Mass at the Oakland Symphony and a modern staging of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* at Festival Opera, where he has also staged Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Gounod’s *Faust*. As a chamber musician (piano) he has appeared on the Chamber Music Alive series in Sacramento as well as the occasional appearance in the Bay Area. As a guest conductor he has appeared with most of America’s major orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, National Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Alabama Symphony, Houston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Winnipeg Symphony, Edmonton Symphony and Omaha Symphony. He was Music Advisor to the Peoria Symphony during their most recent conductor search. As a conductor of opera, he has performed with St. Louis Opera Theater, New York City Opera (in New York and on tour), and the Staatsoper in Berlin. Abroad he has conducted orchestras in Europe, South America, the Middle East (Israel and Egypt) and even the Kimbanguiste Symphony Orchestra in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

In 2005, he was honored by the San Francisco Chapter of The Recording Academy with the 2005 Governors Award for Community Service. On the opposite coast, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) chose Morgan as one of its five 2005 Concert Music Award recipients. ASCAP further honored Oakland East Bay Symphony in 2006 with its Award for Adventurous Programming. The San Francisco Foundation honored him with one of its Community Leadership Awards, and he received an Honorary Doctorate from Holy Names University in Oakland, CA.

In addition to his duties with the Symphony, Maestro Morgan serves as Artistic Director of the Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra, Music Director at Bear Valley Music Festival, and Music Director of the Gateways Music Festival. He is Music Director Emeritus of the Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera, and is on the boards of Oaktown Jazz Workshops, the Purple Silk Music Education Foundation, and the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute. He makes many appearances in the nation’s schools each year.

Maestro Jindong Cai assumed the position as Music Director of El Camino Symphony, now Golden State Youth Orchestra, 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, Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* from Suite No. 2, and featured the US premiere of “Perseus” from *Three Astral Poems* by 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.

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.

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