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THE CALIFORNIA YOUTH SYMPHONY RELEASES NEW RECORDING
'THE MAESTRO'S PICK: ORCHESTRAL VIRTUOSO SHOWPIECES,
FEATURING ASHLEY LAU AND THE CALIFORNIA YOUTH SYMPHONY'

Music director Leo Eylar is world class, as a violinist, composer, and conductor. He doesn't coddle his charges. He presents them with programs that would cause most regional orchestra members to tremble; he draws from them impeccable performance, and they never drop a bead of sweat. – Keith Kreitman, San Mateo County Times, March 18, 2005

PALO ALTO, October 18, 2005 – The award-winning **California Youth Symphony**, under the direction of **Maestro Leo Eylar**, announces the **November 13** release of a new CD, **'The Maestro's Pick: Orchestral Virtuoso Showpieces, featuring Ashley Lau and the California Youth Symphony'** (California Youth Symphony, \$15). Proceeds from the limited edition CD will benefit the first-ever CYS tour to China in June 2006.

Recorded live at two concerts during the 2004 – 2005 season, **'The Maestro's Pick: Orchestral Virtuoso Showpieces'** features award-winning violinist **Ashley Lau** as soloist in the **Sibelius** Violin Concerto. The CD also includes the **California Youth Symphony**, under the direction of Maestro **Leo Eylar**, performing **Franz Liszt's** *Mazeppa*, **Richard Strauss's** 'Dance of the Seven Veils,' and *Medea's Dance of Vengeance* by **Samuel Barber**.

Wrote music critic Keith Kreitman in May 2005, "I use a professional/non-professional scale. **It might seem absurd that with a musical organization of middle school and high school students, I would use the professional scale, but with CYS, I do. Any mid-sized town in America would be proud to host a professional orchestra of this quality.**"

Notes CYS Music Director **Leo Eylar**, "The California Youth Symphony is very excited about the release of its latest CD, featuring violinist Ashley Lau performing the Sibelius Violin Concerto. In addition, I have chosen three outstanding live performances from last season that are sure to please and astound listeners. Franz Liszt's *Mazeppa*, originally a virtuoso piano work, was orchestrated by the composer in the 1850s and is universally recognized as one of the most demanding orchestral showpieces. Richard Strauss's 'Dance of the Seven Veils' from his 1905 landmark opera *Salome* has long been a concert hall favorite, superbly rendered by CYS in this recording. Completing the CD is the marvelously atmospheric *Medea's Dance of Vengeance* by Samuel Barber, bristling with energy and rhythmic vitality."

Composer-conductor **Leo Eylar** has been Music Director of the **California Youth Symphony** since 1990. **Maestro Eylar** has earned an outstanding reputation, both locally and internationally, for his spirited conducting with CYS, the San Jose Symphony, and as a guest with several prominent international orchestras. A composer of international acclaim, Eylar's works have been performed throughout Europe and North America, and his *Dance Suite for Trumpet and String Orchestra* was recorded by the Seattle Symphony. **Leo Eylar** is a faculty member at California State University Sacramento

Sixteen-year-old **Ashley Lau** was one of two **winners of the 2004 California Youth Symphony Young Artist Competition**. A student of Jenny Rudin of Palo Alto, Ashley has been the recipient of numerous prizes and awards including the Outstanding Musician Award from the San Jose Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Command Performance Award from the California Music Educators Association Music Festival, the Peninsula Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition, the Burlingame Music Club Young Musicians' Award, the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra Young Musicians' Competition, and the Nova Vista Symphony Young Artist Concerto Competition. She was also a laureate of the Junior Bach Festival and an American String Teachers Association Solo Competition finalist. Ashley has appeared as soloist with the San Jose Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Peninsula Youth Orchestra. She is a twelfth-grader at Saratoga High School and is 2005 – 2006 concertmaster of the **California Youth Symphony**.

Every other year, the **California Youth Symphony** mounts an international tour. Recent tours have included Central Europe, where CYS won the grand prize at the International Youth and Music Festival in Vienna; Italy (where CYS participated in the Albano Laziale Summer Music Festival and Cento Summer Music Series), Spain, Japan, and Taiwan.

The state's first independent youth orchestra, the **California Youth Symphony** is one of the largest and most influential youth symphony organizations in the United States. **CYS** includes two full symphony orchestras, as well as six ensembles for younger musicians. This season's **CYS** membership includes 500 of the most promising young musicians ranging in age from 9 to 18 from throughout the Bay Area and representing more than 100 different schools between San Francisco and Morgan Hill. Members are chosen at auditions held each spring.

'The Maestro's Pick: Orchestral Virtuoso Showpieces, featuring Ashley Lau and the California Youth Symphony' will be available at upcoming CYS concerts in Cupertino and San Mateo (November 13 & 20, December 11, March 13 & 26, May 15 & 21, and June 14), as well as by mail order. To order, or to purchase tickets for upcoming events call (650) 325-6666 or email info@cys.org. Additional information is available at www.cys.org.

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*For more information about the **California Youth Symphony** or to schedule an interview with **Ashley Lau** or **Leo Eylar**, please contact Elizabeth Waldman Frazier at Waldmania Public Relations: 415.334.2787 or elizabeth@cys.org.*