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2008 Conductor of the Year ■ 2000 / 2007 Youth Orchestra of the Year ■ 2005 / 2015 Programming of the Year ■ 2001 Elgin Image Award

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: K. Eric Larson  
847-997-2109  
elarson@eyso.org

### Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra (EYSO) Appoints Matthew Sheppard to Artistic Director

**Elgin, IL (June 17, 2019)** – Matthew Sheppard will lead the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra (EYSO) into its 44<sup>th</sup> season as its newly appointed artistic director, according to Mr. Joel B. Cohen, president of the EYSO Board of Directors.

“We are very excited to welcome Matt to this new role with EYSO to ensure that our mission continues as strongly as ever,” said Cohen. “He brings the perfect balance to this role – a deep understanding of, and passionate commitment to, the EYSO mission, and a fresh perspective on new and innovative ways to bring the EYSO philosophy to more students throughout the region.”

“My time with EYSO has been extraordinary, and I am honored and humbled by the trust the board has placed in me with this new leadership role,” said Sheppard.

Sheppard is entering his fourth season with EYSO, hired in 2016 as associate conductor of the Youth Symphony and to prepare for an eventual transition into the artistic director role, which had been held by Mr. Randal Swiggum from 1998 until this year.

In addition to his tenure at EYSO, Sheppard serves on the committee of the Illinois Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (IL CMP) Project. CMP is the pedagogical approach that EYSO conductors and coaches use in delivering the EYSO mission to create a community of young musicians, enriching their lives and the lives of their families, schools, communities and beyond, through the study and performance of excellent music.

Known for his passion and enthusiasm for music and learning, Sheppard leads a career as both performer and teacher. Outside of EYSO, he serves as music director of the University of Chicago Chamber Orchestra, the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company of Chicago, and the Hyde Park Youth Symphony.

Sheppard has guest conducted orchestras in North and South America, including the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional del Paraguay, the Champaign Urbana Symphony Orchestra, and the Lake Geneva Symphony. As an educator, conductor, and clinician, he is highly regarded for his passionate musicianship and technical ability, and he regularly leads masterclasses on playing and conducting in Chicago and abroad.

Sheppard studied under Donald Schleicher as a doctoral candidate in orchestral conducting at the University of Illinois. Before moving to Illinois, he attended Penn State University and earned bachelor's degrees in Liberal Arts, Music Education, and Music Performance as well as a master's degree in orchestral conducting under the tutelage of Max Zorin (violin) and Gerardo Edelstein (conducting). During his time at Penn State, he held appointments as orchestra director at Juniata College, music director of the State College Summer Orchestra and Penn State Campus Orchestra, and assistant conductor of the Central Pennsylvania Youth Orchestra.

### About EYSO

*The mission of EYSO is to create a community of young musicians, enriching their lives and the lives of their families, schools, communities and beyond, through the study and performance of excellent music.*

EYSO serves nearly 400 students from 70 Chicagoland communities and has a national reputation for providing students with an engaging musical experience and a comprehensive learning environment of curiosity, imagination, critical thinking, and collaboration. Students explore a thematic curriculum each season – one which helps students develop artistically and technically, and prepare them for a future of complex ideas, creative risk-taking, and leadership as global citizen. This approach has led hundreds of alumni to successful careers as professional musicians, educators, and strong leaders in every field. The 2019-20 season theme is MOVE and explores the rich traditions of Dalcroze, ballet, and folk dance. Planned collaborations include work with Elgin's acclaimed Ballet Folklórico Huehucocoyotl as well as Joffrey Ballet artist Luis Vazquez.

To learn more about EYSO, visit <https://www.eyso.org> or call (847) 841-7700.

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