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Media Release
For Immediate Release
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Chinese Maestro Directs High School Honor Orchestra

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (Feb. 14, 2018) As the baton was raised, 81 pairs of eyes focused on the black-clad man standing on the podium in front of them. Moments later, the sounds of Fang Kejie's *Reba Dance* filled the Saguaro High School Auditorium, as the Scottsdale Unified School District High School (SUSD) Honor Orchestra began its second concert in two years under the direction of Chinese first-level conductor Zhang Yue.

The group, comprised of mostly junior and seniors from SUSD's five high schools (Arcadia, Chaparral, Coronado, Desert Mountain and Saguaro), was recommended for the elite orchestra by school music teachers. Students received the music for the February 6 concert in December and have been working on it ever since, but last Monday, the day before the concert, was the first time the orchestra met Maestro Zhang and rehearsed as a group.

Zhang, speaking through an interpreter, said the prep work done before his arrival made everything go smoothly. "I really enjoyed the honor and opportunity of working with these young musicians," he said. "They are our future."

Works by both Chinese and western composers were featured in the community concert.

SUSD Fine Arts Coordinator Nathan Johnston said the international music exchange provided students with the chance to work with an impressive, international conductor. "We are all reminded that music has a universally profound impact on all cultures around the world. Maestro Zhang gave our students the opportunity to not only hear, but also play pieces that will help broaden their understanding of the world," commented Johnston.

The event was made possible by the Sias Foundation, part of Sias International University in Xinzheng in China's Henan province, where Zhang is a full professor and conducts the university's symphony orchestra.

The *Core Purpose* of the Scottsdale Unified School District is *To Ensure All Individual Learners Reach Their Full Potential*. The Scottsdale Unified School District offers 30 schools, serving approximately 23,000 students. School boundaries include parts of Scottsdale, Paradise Valley, Phoenix and Tempe. Find more information about SUSD at www.susd.org.