

San Diego Symphony Music Director Jahja Ling has high hopes for his beloved orchestra.



# Music To Our Ears

San Diego Symphony launches its new season, hitting all the right notes **By Charlene Baldrige**

San Diego Symphony (SDS) Music Director Jahja Ling has thousands of photos stored in his Apple iPad. Seated at a sandwich shop in Hillcrest, he shows off at least 50, taken in concert halls ranging from Jakarta to Taipei, Beijing to Berlin, with such celebrated artists as cellist Yo-Yo Ma and pianists Emanuel Ax and Lang Lang, who returns to San Diego Oct. 5 and 7 to open the 2012-13 Jacobs Masterworks season with Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 5 ("Emperor").

The Jacobs Masterworks season, which Ling describes as the heart and soul of the orchestra's year, consists of 14 separate programs featuring music by a hit parade of classical composers, including Jean Sibelius, Hector Berlioz, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Gustav Mahler, Dmitri Shostakovich, Johannes Brahms, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Modest Mussorgsky, Ludwig Van Beethoven and the aforementioned Pyotr Tchaikovsky.

Waving a fork over his chicken salad, Ling makes it clear he wants recognition, not just for himself—he's already got that—but for his 80-

member, 102-year-old orchestra. He thinks they, like Olympians, deserve a ticker-tape parade for their progress since he came aboard for the 2004-05 season. His first task was to fill 25 vacancies. By now he has hired and integrated a total of 55 players.

When the champagne flutes were hoisted at the end of last season, subscribers of long standing told Ling they had never heard the San Diego Symphony play so well. Ling wants the world to know.

An American citizen born to Chinese parents in Jakarta, Indonesia, Ling received his master's degree from The Juilliard School. Before coming to San Diego, he served as