

## ***Golden City Suite***

Composed by Miguel Zenón

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SFJAZZ Center  
San Francisco, CA

*Created with funding from a Hewlett Foundation 50 Arts Commission*

### **From the Composer:**

*Golden City* is inspired by the rich history of the city of San Francisco and its surrounding areas, specifically from the perspective of its immigrant communities and minority groups. The compositions compiled here are the final product of interactions and conversations with various individuals and community leaders, all of whom graciously donated their time and informed the compositional process in countless ways. These interviews took place in the spring and summer of 2019, with plans to perform the piece here at the SFJAZZ Center a year later in the spring of 2020. For reasons that are obvious to us all, this could not be. And yet, here we are now, able to share a project that has been years in the making and holds such a special place in my development as an artist, furthering my connection to SFJAZZ and to this wonderful city and its communities.

So many people to thank, starting with the Hewlett Foundation for granting this Hewlett 50 Arts Commission. To Randall Kline and SFJAZZ for the unconditional support throughout, what's now, an almost 20 year-long (and counting) professional relationship, and to Lilly Schwartz and her team for their assistance during this whole process. To Brian Staufenbiel and David Murakami for their hard work putting together the amazing theatrical elements and designs. To the extraordinary musicians featured tonight: Matt Mitchell, Chris Tordini, Matt Brewer, Dan Weiss, Miles Okazaki, Daniel Diaz, Diego Urcola, Alan Ferber, and Jacob Garchik. To Elga & Elena for their love and support.

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Finally, I would like to thank Jeanette Wong at SFJAZZ for her assistance and dedication throughout this process; this would all have been impossible to put together without her hard work.

## **About the Music:**

### **Sacred Land**

Northern California was, in the not too distant past, home to the Ohlone people, a population that extended from the San Francisco Bay all the way to current Monterey. Ohlone descendants are still among us today, proudly carrying on their ancestor's customs and traditions.

### **Rush**

The California Gold Rush of 1848 was an unprecedented historical event, changing this part of the world in countless ways while simultaneously altering the way we think about migration, capitalism, ambition, and success. It transformed San Francisco from a small settlement of about 200 people into a town of 30,000 within a span of 4 years and in many ways accelerated the population decline of Native Californians.

### **Acts of Exclusion**

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 essentially prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers into the United States. This federal law displays one of the many examples of what happens when ignorance, racism, and xenophobia is accepted and enforced by the highest powers. The act was finally repealed in 1943, after 70 years.

### **9066**

In 1942, fresh from the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attacks during World War Two, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed and issued Executive Order 9066. This extremely controversial act authorized the incarceration of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans, of which nearly two-thirds were U.S. Citizens, born and raised in the United States. Although the Order was suspended in 1944, the ripple effects from this traumatic experience are still very present within the Japanese American community in the Bay Area.

### **Displacement and Erasure**

Even though the gentrification of San Francisco might seem like a recent phenomenon, it has actually been happening for decades, brutally transforming neighborhoods like The Western Addition, The Mission, Chinatown, North Beach, and Bayview, among many others. Several of these communities are effectively displaced over time, only to start the process over and over again.

### **SRO**

Single-Room Occupancy Hotels (or SROs) are a vital part of San Francisco's housing and have been throughout the city's history. Traditionally populated by low-wage workers and transient laborers, SROs have been especially fundamental for immigrant populations, even in present day San Francisco. As new development buildings become customary all across the city, the number of SRO units has been reduced dramatically; what was once 90,000 units is now closer to 20,000.

### **Wave of Change**

Even though they might differ on their methodology and focus, most community centers and organizations in the city agree on one crucial fact: Change is unstoppable and unavoidable. Instead of making their missions to stop this big "Tsunami of Change," these groups instead make it a priority to be prepared to adapt and reinvent themselves, all for the sake of providing for their families and communities.

### **Sanctuary City**

A term that describes cities or municipalities with active laws focused on protecting their immigrant population. These ordinances range from prohibiting local and state authorities from cooperating with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) regarding undocumented individuals to banning local authorities from detaining immigrants without violent felonies on their records. San Francisco declared itself a “Sanctuary City” in 1989, and the State of California became a “Sanctuary State” in 2017 under bill SB 54.

### **Cultural Corridor**

“Cultural Districts” are geographical areas within San Francisco, defined by its residents’ cultural and historical contributions to the city. Found all over San Francisco and including SOMA, Pilipinas, Calle 24 Latino Cultural District and Japantown (among others), these Cultural Corridors are supported by the city and function as virtual representatives of the best each one of these communities has to offer.

### **The Power of Community**

For every hurdle encountered by immigrant communities and minority groups in the city, there are individuals and organizations who make it their mission to fight for their civil and human rights. *CARECEN SF, La Raza Community Center, Immigrants Rising, Acción Latina* and *New Community Leadership Foundation*, are among the many groups who provide support, representation and hope for those who can’t find it elsewhere.