

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SFJAZZ APPOINTS GENNY LIM AS SFJAZZ POET LAUREATE

(San Francisco, CA, September 25, 2016) – SFJAZZ today announced the appointment of Genny Lim as 2016-18 SFJAZZ Poet Laureate. Ms. Lim succeeds Ismael Reed, the organization's first Poet Laureate. This appointment will serve to expand and promote the role of poetry and spoken word in jazz and to continue celebrating jazz as a living art form built on a constantly evolving tradition.

The mission of SFJAZZ is to reach, develop and nurture current and future musicians and audiences by providing rich, innovative, interactive and informative programming in jazz appreciation, creation and performance. The SFJAZZ Poet Laureate is an integral part of this mission. The Poet Laureate will work with the SFJAZZ Education Department to encourage poets and celebrate poetry within the Jazz in the Middle program and Discover Jazz education series.

"I am deeply honored to have been chosen to serve as the new SFJAZZ Poet Laureate," says Lim. "As a San Francisco native and descendant of Chinese immigrant parents, a Chinese sewing woman and a migrant laborer, once stranded alone in the U.S. at twelve when his father had been deported, it is with profound pride that I receive this distinction of acceptance, which had so eluded my parents and other first generation immigrants. It is especially humbling to serve in the footsteps of such a seminal figure and leader of the multicultural literary movement as Ishmael Reed."

"Genny Lim's sublime work is steeped in musicality, risk, defying labels, and the notion in jazz that whatever is written will be stretched, improvised, and improved upon when played aloud," says SFJAZZ Founder and Executive Artistic Director Randall Kline. "She is the perfect poet to expand on Ishmael Reed's inaugural tenure as the SFJAZZ Poet Laureate."

Genny Lim is a native San Francisco poet, playwright and performer. She has previously published three poetry collections, *Paper Gods and Rebels*, *Child of War and Winter Place*; a children's book, *Wings for Lai Ho*; and is co-author of *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island*, which received the American Book Award. Her award-winning play, *Paper Angels*, a prison drama about Chinese immigrants held on Angel Island, was the first Asian American play featured on PBS's American Playhouse in 1985, and has been produced throughout the U.S. and in Canada. Reprised in 2010 at the San Francisco Fringe Festival in Chinatown Portsmouth Square, it received Best Site Specific Award and is being presented at the Seattle Fringe Festival this year. A noted jazz poet whose collaborators have included the late Max Roach, bassist, Herbie Lewis, Jon Jang, Francis Wong, Anthony Brown and Hafez Modirzadeh, Lim has performed at jazz festivals and venues from coast to coast, including SF Jazz Poetry Festival at SF Jazz and World Poetry Festivals in Caracas, Venezuela and Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Her poetry and vocals can be heard on Asian ImprovArts recordings with Francis Wong, *Devotee* and *Child of Peace*; and on Jon Jang's

Immigrant Suite. Lim is the subject of a feature documentary, *The Voice*, which aired on PBS in 2002; and was featured in the five-part PBS series, *The United States of Poetry* and *San Francisco Chinatown*. She served as SF Arts Commissioner under Mayors Art Agnos and Frank Jordan.

ABOUT SFJAZZ

Founded in 1983, SFJAZZ presents the greatest names in jazz, Latin and global music and nurtures the art of improvisation through its year-round concert, commissioning and education programs. The West Coast's biggest jazz presenter serves over 200,000 fans and students every year and has several award-winning resident jazz ensembles - the world renowned SFJAZZ Collective and the SFJAZZ High School All-Stars. After 30 years of using rented halls, SFJAZZ finally has a home in the vibrant performing arts district of San Francisco. The luminous new SFJAZZ Center opened in January of 2013 and is the only stand-alone facility built specifically for jazz in the United States. Designed by San Francisco architect Mark Cavagnero, the LEED-Gold certified center offers the superb acoustics of a great concert hall and the relaxed intimacy of a jazz club.

Media Contact: Marshall Lamm, mlamm@sfjazz.org, (510) 928-1410.

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