



Courtesy Meshell Ndegeocello

MESHELL NDEGEOCELLO

PROGRAM

There will be no intermission.

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Saturday, May 6 @ 8 PM

Zellerbach Theatre

AFRICAN ROOTS, AMERICAN VOICES

Part of the African Roots, American Voices series.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Meshell Ndegeocello

Mercurial and masterful, Meshell Ndegeocello has survived the best and worst of what a career in music has to offer. She has eschewed genre for originality, celebrity for longevity and musical trends for musical truths. She has lived through the boom and bust of the industry and emerged just as she entered - unequivocally herself. Fans have come to expect the unexpected from Ndegeocello, and faithfully followed her on sojourns into soul, spoken word, R&B, jazz, hip-hop and rock, all bound by a lyrical, spiritual search for love, justice, respect, resolution and happiness.

Groove driven, infectiously melodic and lyrically meditative, Ndegeocello's latest album, *Comet, Come To Me*, finds her returning to the same well of creativity that launched her career. Her 11th release, it is a culmination of all previous work: lush, vocal, seeking, wise, collaborative and driven by the signature bounce and precise pocket of Ndegeocello on bass. Assured of her place as an authentic musical thinker and an uncompromising artist, *Comet* continues to discover, examine and explore all that music has to offer her.

"*Comet, Come To Me* was a little labor but a lot of love. It was made with my favorite collaborators, and it felt good to channel the sounds in my mind after having Nina in residence for a while," says Ndegeocello, referencing her last album, a tribute to Nina Simone. She is especially inspired by the collaborative process that comes with making an album. "When I'm writing songs and recording the demos, I'm having my own awesome experience in my attic, or on a plane or in a hotel room, just making my beats on my laptop. Then I get together with these people that I have an intimate musical relationship with, and we bring the songs to life."

A vast array of influences have informed all of Ndegeocello's albums, and there are traces of her native go-go, hip hop, R&B, new wave and punk in each. Each album has been a step away from the last, each used as a chance to investigate and integrate new sounds and ideas, and fans have been treated to everything from the deep-funk of *Plantation Lullabies* to the raw and confessional *Bitter* to the melodic, lyrical *Weather*. Possessed with instrumental gifts as diverse as her interests, Ndegeocello composed, arranged and produced a jazz record in 2005. Her previous release paid homage to Nina Simone, a kindred musical spirit and among Ndegeocello's most-cherished inspirations.

In addition to her own recording, Ndegeocello has been expanding her repertoire as a producer, producing three albums in the past year: British/Trinidadian poet and musician Anthony Joseph's new album, *Time*; Jason Moran's Fats Waller Tribute, *All Rise: A Joyful Elegy For Fats Waller*; and a new album by Grammy®-nominated Ruthie Foster.

A bass player above all else, Ndegeocello brings her warm, fat and melodic groove to everything she does and has appeared alongside the Rolling Stones, Madonna, Alanis Morissette, James Blood Ulmer, The Blind Boys of Alabama, Tony Allen, John Medeski, Billy Preston and Chaka Khan. As for her own bass-playing influences, she credits Sting, Jaco Pastorius, Family Man Barrett and Stevie Wonder. Ndegeocello was the first woman to be featured on the cover of *Bass Player* magazine and remains one of few women who write the music, sing the songs and lead the band.