

# Meshell Ndegeocello



"In the search for love, truth and justice a good vamp never hurts. That's the modus operandi of Meshell Ndegeocello."

**Jon Pareles, *The New York Times***

"The versatile Meshell Ndegeocello... confidently and creatively blends funk, rock, R&B, jazz, soul and ambient strains into a personal explosion of worldly realities and otherworldly desires."

**Stephen Deusner, *PASTE***

## Pour une Âme Souveraine: A Dedication to Nina Simone

(October 9, 2012 / NAÏVE RECORDS)

Meshell's New CD, Co-produced with guitarist Chris Bruce & Featuring collaborations with Sinead O'Conner, Lizz Wright, Valerie June, Toshi Reagon and Cody ChesnuTT

★ **10 time GRAMMY Nominee** - performed at the GRAMMY Awards broadcast from Madison Square Garden (1997)

★ Meshell has released 10 albums since 1993. She was one of the first artists signed to **Madonna's** Maverick Records, which released her first 5 albums

★ July 2012, Meshell featured in a tribute to the life and music of Curtis Mayfield along with **Mavis Staples, Dr. Lonnie Smith, William Bell, Sinéad O'Connor, The Roots**, and Kyp Malone and Tunde Adebimpe of **TV on the Radio**

★ May 2012, Meshell spoke on PBS's News Hour about the importance of the Arts in Education

★ January 2012, Meshell featured on KCRW's Morning Becomes Eclectic and **Late Night with Jimmy Fallon**

★ October 2011, Meshell featured performing "God" on *The 30<sup>th</sup> Annual John Lennon Tribute, Live from the Beacon Theatre* to benefit the Red Cross' tsunami relief efforts

★ Meshell has played on albums by **The Rolling Stones, Madonna, Santana, John Mellencamp, The Blind Boys of Alabama, Chaka Khan, Indigo Girls, Ledisi, Alanis Morissette, Joan Osborne, Basement Jaxx, Soulive, Gilles Peterson, Joshua Redman Elastic Band, Karl Denson's Tiny Universe** and **Madeleine Peyroux**, among many others

★ Meshell's music has been featured on film soundtracks including **Batman & Robin, Love Jones, Money Talks, Down in the Delta, How Stella Got Her Groove Back, The Hurricane, Love & Basketball, Standing in the Shadows of Motown, Talk to Me** and **Soul Men** among others

★ Supported **The Who's Quadrophenia** shows at Madison Square Garden, as well as supporting tours with both **Sting** and **Dave Matthews Band**

★ **Television appearances include:** Late Night with David Letterman, The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, Good Morning America, The Chris Rock Show (HBO), Sessions At West 54th, New York Undercover (Fox), Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher, The Rosie O'Donnell Show, VH1 Honors, MTV Video Music Awards and MTV Movie Awards with John Mellencamp, In Living Color (FOX), The Arsenio Hall Show and Last Call with Carson Daly among others

★ Meshell was the first woman to be featured on the cover of **Bass Player** magazine in April 1995. She was featured on the cover for the second time in November 2007

**Festival appearances include:** Glastonbury; Neil Young's Bridge School Benefit; Estádio do Pacaembu Free Jazz Festival (Brazil); toured twice with Lilith Fair; Nice Jazz Festival (France); Montreux Jazz Festival; Pori Jazz Festival (Finland); North Sea Jazz Festival; Bumbershoot Music Festival (Seattle); WOMAD Festival; Westport Festival (Germany); Copenhagen Jazz Festival; Monza Rock Festival (Italy); Montreal Jazz Festival; Essence Music Festival (New Orleans); Newport Jazz Festival; KCRW's World Festival at the Hollywood Bowl; Wiesen Jazz Festival (Austria); JVC Jamboree Jazz Festival (Poland); San Francisco Jazz Festival; Pride Texas Festival (Austin); SF Pride (San Francisco); Calgary Folk Music Festival (Canada); Blues & Ritmes (Spain); Banlieues Bleues (France); Stockholm International Jazz Festival; Vancouver International Jazz Festival.

THE ROSEBUD AGENCY

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# Pour une Âme Souveraine: A Dedication to Nina Simone

NAÏVE RECORDS

Canonized, marginalized or just scrutinized, **Meshell Ndegeocello** has given up trying to explain herself. After 20 years in an industry that has called her everything from avant-garde to a dying breed, what unquestionably remains is the fearsome bassist, prolific songwriter, and the creativity and curiosity of an authentic musical force. With that, she has earned critical acclaim, the unflinching respect of fellow players, songwriters and composers, and the dedication of her diverse, unclassifiable fans.

“**Pour Une Ame Souveraine**” (**For a Sovereign Soul**), **A Dedication to Nina Simone**, is Meshell’s tenth record, her second for Naïve. Produced by Meshell and guitar player Chris Bruce, this album is a labor of love, a reflection of Meshell’s awe, affection, and gratitude for the pioneering work of a woman who refused to be owned by genre, industry, or expectation. Meshell and Chris turned well and lesser-known songs into new experiences, inviting collaborations by **Cody ChesnuTT**, **Valerie June**, **Sinead O’Connor**, **Lizz Wright**, and **Toshi Reagon**, and the results are intoxicating. While Nina Simone is no longer here to pass the torch, this album, not just a tribute but a transformation, clearly nominates Meshell as her heir apparent.

About her choice to record the music made famous by **Nina Simone**, Meshell says, “Nina Simone was unusual, unruly, unparalleled. She has an unmistakable voice and an unavoidable spirit - she’s terse and angry and expressive of her despair and her joy and her sexuality. She is not an industry player, she was obviously difficult and volatile. She wanted success, was pressured to make hits, but her own sound was still irrepressible. She had things to say, she protested. She was a loud, proud black, female voice during a time when black female voices were not encouraged to make themselves heard.”

Meshell Ndegeocello was born Michelle Johnson in Berlin, Germany and raised in Washington DC. By the early 90’s, she had landed in New York armed with a demo recorded in her bedroom, joined the **Black Rock Coalition**, and was soon signed to Maverick. Each of her albums have offered lyrical ruminations on race, love, sex, betrayal, God, and power, and she has simultaneously embraced and challenged listeners with her refusal to be pigeon-holed musically or personally. Meshell has been both celebrated and berated for her politically charged lyrics, sexual boundary crossing, and for choosing the road less traveled - a winding adventure through her own musical ambitions rather than the industry formulas. Everything that once counted against her has emerged in her favor, earning her unusual artistic freedom, pride in her open identity, and longevity due to the integrity and artistic ambition of her recordings.

A bass player above all else, Meshell brings her signature warmth and 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**. Meshell was the first woman to be featured on the cover of Bass Player magazine and remains one of few women who write the music and lead the band.

meshell ndegeocello #10  
pour une âme souveraine  
a dedication to nina simone



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# Praise for Pour une Âme Souveraine:

## A Dedication to Nina Simone

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"It's astonishing to hear Ndegeocello deconstruct these 14 songs that cut across Simone's deep discography. Whereas Simone would typically boil, Ndegeocello mostly prefers to simmer. "Turn Me On" and "Feeling Good," seductive and slow as molasses, sound like something Sade would record."

- **The Boston Globe**

"Recording and releasing a covers album is a tricky situation... However, if there's any musician out there versatile enough to hold down all the demands of making a truly mesmerizing and significant tribute album, it's the supremely talented Meshell Ndegeocello."

- **Pop Matters**

"Known for her refusal to adhere to genre conventions, her progressive approach to pop music, and her fierce political activism, Simone is a clear artistic forbearer for Ndegeocello, and *Pour Une Âme Souveraine* both honors Simone's legacy while allowing Ndegeocello to build on her own... *Pour Une Âme Souveraine's* focus on independence and self-discovery honors the attributes that have made Simone such an enduring icon."

- **Slant Magazine**

"*Pour...* done in collaboration with a who's who of underrated indie singers like Cody Chestnutt, Lizz Wright, Toshi Reagon, Sinead O'Connor and Valerie June—arrives in the midst of an especially fertile, muscular period in Ndegeocello's own career. Having traversed R&B, rock, jazz, blues, hip-hop, electronica, new wave and folk, she effortlessly synthesizes all influences and experimentation into a sound that sits outside any specific genre."

- **Philadelphia Weekly**

"Ndegeocello's *Pour une Âme Souveraine* offers honest and innovative reflection upon the sound that Simone left behind."

- **WNYC**

"a singer-songwriter of searching candor and an electric bassist of mesmerizing skill."

- **New York Times**

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# Discography



**Pour une Âme Souveraine: A  
Dedication to Nina Simone**  
2012



**Weather**  
2011



**Devil's Halo**  
2009



**The World Has Made Me  
The Man of My Dreams**  
2007



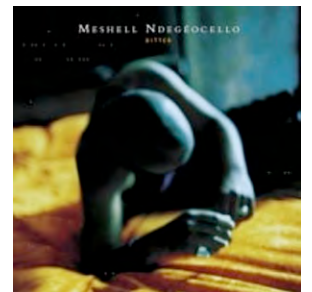
**The Article 3 (EP)**  
**GRAMMY Nominee**  
2006



**Dance of the Infidel**  
**GRAMMY Nominee**  
2005



**Comfort Woman**  
2003



**Cookie:  
The Anthropological Mixtape**  
2002



**Bitter**  
1999



**Peace Beyond Passion**  
**GRAMMY Nominee**  
1996



**Plantation Lullabies**  
**GRAMMY Nominee**  
1993

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