

REVIEWS

MESHELL NDEGEOCELLO

**Weather**

[Naïve]

Meshell Ndegeocello has been pushing the limits of her genre-bending ambition for 20 years, and in the process the agile bassist has gained a reputation as a must-have session player and a solo artist whose skills are matched only by her daring. Produced by the ever-eclectic Joe Henry, Ndegeocello's ninth album (and first since 2009's *Devil's Halo*) blends pulsating rhythms, atmospheric arrangements and dense, dark undercurrents to meld a most seductive set of songs. At once intimidating and inviting, *Weather* finds Ndegeocello and guest stars Chris Connelly, Benji Hughes and Henry himself emphasizing ambiance over melody and ambiguity over specifics. Nevertheless, a steady stomp and Ndegeocello's soulful, subdued vocals make the title track, "Rapid Fire" and a cover of Leonard Cohen's "Chelsea Hotel" essential. -LZ

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