

## MYRA MELFORD'S SNOWY EGRET

Premiering live in 2012, with roots that reach back to the mid-'90s, **Snowy Egret** features the renowned pianist-composer **Myra Melford** leading and collaborating with four of the most compelling musicians currently at work in jazz and the avant-garde: cornetist **Ron Miles**, guitarist **Liberty Ellman**, bass guitarist **Stomu Takeishi** and drummer (and MacArthur Fellow) **Tyshawn Sorey**. On two raved-about releases, 2018's *The Other Side of Air* (Firehouse 12) and the band's 2015 self-titled debut (Enja/Yellowbird), an array of concepts and strategies are in play. Hard-angled counterpoint, grooving rhythms, free playing, beautiful melody and harmony, through composition, swing and other elements appear and then dissipate, as the ensemble reconfigures in varying combinations and digs into the material with an intuitive sense of interplay. "There's a lot of trust," Melford says, "and there's a lot of willingness to let go of what was supposed to happen and go with what is happening in the moment."

More than any of her acclaimed ensembles thus far, *Snowy Egret* is the Melford vehicle that best embodies her unique, evolving creative language—a seamless, shifting blend of composition and improvisation, and a probing of the space shared between dynamic small-group jazz and contemporary chamber music. As *Down Beat* commented, "The group has clearly internalized Melford's conception in a profound manner, demonstrating remarkable intimacy and grace in its execution, truly extending the composer's vision without surrendering individualism." In San Francisco in 2013, *Snowy Egret* gave the world premiere of Melford's multisensory experience *Language of Dreams*, for which she received a Guggenheim Fellowship. In the Jazz Journalists Association's 2016 Jazz Awards, the band was named "Midsize Ensemble of the Year."

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"Myra Melford's *Snowy Egret* Is Jazz's most dynamic quintet. Impeccably accomplished and deeply satisfying, *The Other Side of Air* proves how successful Melford has been at rising to what, in my judgment, is one of the most daunting challenges in all the arts: honoring an established tradition—in this case, the tradition of improvisational liberty, defying the formal conventions of jazz harmony, form, and style—to make high-quality music, rich with original ideas. Her work is important not because it's radically new but because it's powerful and compelling. Newness, after all, isn't really a measure of value; it's a term of category. The term for Myra Melford's work is, simply, 'fine music.'" —**David Hajdu, The Nation**