

CONTACT: **Louisa Spier**
Cal Performances
(510) 643-6714
lspier@calperformances.org

Jeanette Peach
Cal Performances
(510) 642-9121
jpeach@calperformances.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 24, 2016
[Press Room](#)

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
MYRA MELFORD & SNOWY EGRET, IN
LANGUAGE OF DREAMS
AN IMMERSIVE JAZZ WORK WITH VIDEO, MOVEMENT, AND NARRATION,
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2016**

Berkeley, October 24, 2016 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents inventive and acclaimed pianist and composer [Myra Melford](#) in her genre-blending opus *Language of Dreams*, for one night only on Saturday, November 19 at 8pm in Zellerbach Hall. The immersive work, performed by Melford’s quintet **Snowy Egret**, is inspired by Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano’s magical-realist depictions of the pre-colonial Americas. Using the imaginative narrative techniques in Galeano’s *Memory of Fire* trilogy as her guidepost, Melford incorporates music, text, movement, and video imagery into her expansive work, to reflect on our collective histories and our paths forward as “Americans.”

Melford has been a professor in the UC Berkeley music department for the past 12 years, teaching composition, improvisation, and jazz, and in that time has maintained an active international career as a touring artist, earning many accolades for her work, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, an Alpert Award, and a Doris Duke Artist Award. She is known for cultivating exceptional chemistry within her ensembles, writing for each musician’s unique talents, and structuring her compositions to invite spontaneous interaction and invention. Named the 2016 Midsize Ensemble of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association, Snowy Egret is a quintet comprised of many of the best and brightest improvisers in jazz today: with Melford on piano, **Ron Miles** on cornet, **Liberty Ellman** on guitar, **Stomu Takeishi** on acoustic bass guitar, and **Tyshawn Sorey** on drums. For *Language of*

Dreams, Snowy Egret's work is enhanced with surrealist movement by dancer/choreographer **Oguri**; lush, abstract visuals by video artist **David Szlasa**; and narration by vocalist **Sofia Rei**, who recites texts from Galeano's work in English and Spanish. As the *Los Angeles Times* noted, "full of odd-angled rhythms and deft improvisations that echo with the sounds of Africa and the East, Melford's uncompromising voice soars."

Language of Dreams is constructed as a suite of short compositions—15 pieces, each three to eight minutes long—which are inspired by Galeano's texts. Melford's music is informed by vernacular American musical idioms such as blues, jazz, and Latin dance rhythms; her composed musical material directs improvisation not only by the musicians, but also for dancer, narrator, and videographer. The *New York Times* says *Language of Dreams* "rings of familiarity and mystique, rumination and seduction, keeping all possibilities close at hand." *Language of Dreams* premiered in San Francisco in 2013; this is only the second time it has been performed in the Bay Area. In September 2016 Melford joined Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra at the Paramount Theatre for Cal Performances' debut Oakland concert, performing Jazz at Lincoln Center saxophonist Ted Nash's arrangement of "The Strawberry," a piece from *Language of Dreams*.

As part of the presentation of *Language of Dreams*, Melford and her ensemble will participate in a range of residency activities on the UC Berkeley campus and in the community. Melford and UC Berkeley comparative literature professor Ivonne del Valle will speak in a *Page & Stage* book club discussion at The Musical Offering, 2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, on Wednesday, November 16 at 6pm, focusing on a discussion of *Genesis*, the first book of Eduardo Galeano's *Memory of Fire* trilogy. *Page & Stage* tickets are \$5 and include one complimentary non-alcoholic beverage. Members of Snowy Egret, as well as dancer Oguri, and video artist David Szlasa, will convene for a Composer Colloquium in 125 Morrison Hall, on Friday, November 18 from 3–4:30pm, in a discussion about the process of creating and performing *Language of Dreams*. A post-performance discussion is planned with the artists on November 19, free and open to all ticket holders.

About Myra Melford

[Myra Melford](#) emerged in the early 1990s as one of the most highly acclaimed young jazz pianists of the day. Her career has been defined by a restless curiosity and openness to collaborative creativity that is reflected in her highly personal voice as an improviser and composer, a voice that

incorporates such wide-ranging influences as Chicago blues, Zen Buddhism, and the “organic philosophy” of Frank Lloyd Wright. Melford was the recipient of the prestigious Alpert Award in the Arts for Music in 2012, as well as a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Doris Duke Performing Artists Award in 2013. A music professor at UC Berkeley since 2004, she was an artist-in-residence and artistic director of the New Frequencies Festival at YBCA in San Francisco from 2013-15, leading an initiative to increase appreciation of jazz, particularly among women and youth. In addition to a 2015 *Snowy Egret* album, recent recordings include her first piano solo album, *Life Carries Me This Way* (2013), and *Dialogue* (2016), with frequent duo partner, clarinetist Ben Goldberg.

About Cal Performances

Cal Performances is the performing arts presenter and producer of the University of California, Berkeley, fulfilling its mission by presenting, producing, and commissioning renowned and emerging artists in music, dance, and theater. Cal Performances reaches over 150,000 people annually through concerts and campus and community events, including talks, symposia, lecture demonstrations, and academic courses based on Cal Performances’ season. Under the leadership of Matías Tarnopolsky, the organization launched Berkeley RADICAL (Research and Development Initiative in Creativity, Arts, and Learning) to cultivate the artistic literacy of future audiences and connect some of the most innovative artists in the world with the intellectual capital of UC Berkeley. The 2016/17 season is the second season for Berkeley RADICAL, and embraces three strands of artistic exploration: *Inclusion*, *Innovation*, and *Immersion*. More information on Berkeley RADICAL can be found at calperformances.org/berkeley-radical.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Myra Melford & Snowy Egret* on Saturday, November 19 at 8pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$26–\$58 (prices are subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

###

**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:
CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

Saturday, November 19 at 8pm

Jazz

Myra Melford & Snowy Egret

Language of Dreams

Zellerbach Hall

Bancroft Way at Dana Street

UC Berkeley campus

Program: An electrifying improviser and trenchant composer, pianist Myra Melford combines a passion for groove and lyricism with an experimentalist's spirit of invention in her acclaimed works. *Language of Dreams* features Melford's all-star ensemble Snowy Egret—along with video, narration, and movement—and is inspired by the writings of Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano. The result is an immersive work that “rings of familiarity and mystique, rumination and seduction, keeping all possibilities close at hand” (*The New York Times*).

Post-performance discussion with the artists

Free to all ticket holders

Tickets: Performance prices range from \$26–\$58 (subject to change).

MYRA MELFORD RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES:

Wednesday, November 16, 6pm

Page & Stage Book Club

Memory of Fire trilogy by Eduardo Galeano

With Myra Melford and Ivonne del Valle

Rob Bailis, moderator

The Musical Offering

2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley

Program: UC Berkeley comparative literature professor Ivonne del Valle joins jazz artist Myra Melford in a discussion of *Genesis*, the first book of Eduardo Galeano's *Memory of Fire* trilogy, a text that inspired Melford's *Language of Dreams*. Moderated by Cal Performances associate director Rob Bailis.

Tickets: *Page & Stage* Book Club tickets are \$5 and include one complimentary non-alcoholic beverage. Tickets are available in advance through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, and at calperformances.org, and will be available on the evening of each event at the Will Call office across Bancroft Way at Zellerbach Hall, pending availability.

Composer Colloquium

Friday, November 18, 3–4:30pm

125 Morrison Hall

UC Berkeley campus

Myra Melford, members of Snowy Egret, and dancer Oguri will share their experience of creating and performing Melford's *Language of Dreams*. Presented in association with the Department of Music.

Tickets: Free and open to the public.

– Cal Performances –