

## **Cheyenne Mize**

### ***Among The Grey***

June 25th, 2013

**Cheyenne Mize's** forthcoming release, *Among The Grey* (Yep Roc), fulfills the promise hinted at with her debut, *Before Lately* (sonaBLAST!), and subsequent EP, *We Don't Need* (Yep Roc). Whereas *Before Lately* was a slow-burning, introspective, meditative affair, *We Don't Need* offered an expansion of her sonic palette and left listeners wanting more. *Among The Grey* stands strong as a cohesive artistic statement, once again showcasing Mize's multi-instrumental and arranging skills.

The songs on *Among The Grey* were written during a relatively short period of both explosive creativity and harrowing self-doubt. Says Mize, "In the midst of this generally positive time I was struggling with huge questions about my life. I had the impression when I was younger that there would be a point in life when all of the sudden I would be 'grown up' and have it all figured out. *Among the Grey* comes from this idea that most of our lives are lived in the in-between places instead of the destinations. Fortunately the good stuff is in the middle, in the process. In that grey area is where you find those little sparks or dashes of color that make it all interesting and worthwhile. The record is like that; it's dark at times, but has a lot of sparkle to it."

For *Among The Grey* Mize worked with a group of musicians who had been touring companions: **JC Denison** on drums and percussion, **Emily Hagihara** on bass, percussion and backing vocals, and **Drew English** on guitar. They tracked the core of most songs live, allowing what she calls a "raw and person-driven sound. Having that human element and letting the songs develop organically was very important for me. In a way I forced my musicians to go in somewhat blind. So much energy comes with not being prepared." Mize credits recording engineer and co-producer **Kevin Ratterman** - who has also engineered My Morning Jacket and Andrew Bird - for crafting many of the sounds on the record, while also playing some drums and guitar. Mize also enlisted the help of several local musician friends (including her former touring partner **Ben Sollee** on cello), adding strings, horns, and more vocals to round out the sound.

Sonically *Among The Grey* is finely polished, and flows naturally between soft and intimate, laid back and lilting, stormy and intense. Mize is equally at ease winding melodies around almost ambient shimmering atmospheric as she is belting out lines over a locked and loaded rhythm section. Recording on the grounds of a church in Louisville, the band took advantage of their access to unique spaces. Using their environment to shape the sounds for each song, they recorded in the gymnasium for soaring guitar tones, the sanctuary for choir-like backing vocals and huge drum sounds, and even the basement, where they found the items used for the unsettling percussion on the song "Give It All."

Lyricaly, *Among The Grey* moves between buoyant positivity, wistful melancholy, and proud, almost angry defiance; yet all of the songs share a particular intensity of emotion. Interestingly, Mize sculpts her lyrics to fit the energy of the music she's written. "Being trained as a music therapist, I play from a really emotional perspective. So most often I am playing with an idea, and once I have those sounds and patterns figured out I start to translate the feelings that are embodied by those sounds- they solidify in my mind from emotions and moods to actual words."

Though Mize writes from a deeply personal perspective, all the things she speaks to on this record are very much universally human. "The last chorus on the record – I wouldn't go back – kind of sums this up. As much as we look on the past (fondly or not) we don't want to go back because where we have been is what makes us who we are– at some point we have to be okay with the process that has brought us to this moment."

Mize introduced herself internationally on the 10" release *Among the Gold* with **Bonnie "Prince" Billy** – an inventive take on a variety of late 19th century American parlor music. After the release of her debut *Before Lately* in 2010 (which The New York Times described as "sweet without being cloying, weary without hopelessness"), and subsequent performances at South By Southwest, Mize was chosen by NPR as one of their ten "Discoveries at SXSW 2011." *Among The Grey* is her third solo release. Mize resides in Louisville, KY.