**Sunflower Bean Set to Return with *“Twentytwo in Blue”*, a Second Album Made For Today**

Blue, as Julia Cumming of Brooklyn’s Sunflower Bean points out, is something of a “loaded color.” The word is of course often synonymous with sadness—certainly blues music isn’t known for its laughs. But it's also the "emotional color" of the band's upcoming, sparkling second album, *Twentytwo in Blue.* “We definitely don’t want it to come across as a sad record,” explains Cumming. “Blue is kind of hopeful, and we wanted to explore that color with this record.” The new record by vocalist and bassist Cumming, drummer Jacob Faber and guitarist and vocalist Nick Kivlen is many things: rousing, romantic, topical, empathetic and insightful. But defeatist it’s not.

All three band members will in fact be 22 when *Twentytwo in Blue* is released in March of 2018, almost two years and two months after Sunflower Bean’s hazy, charming debut LP, *Human Ceremony*. They were two momentous years in which the trio toured the world several times over and grew in accomplishment, discovering a newly confident voice they bring to the second album, one that doesn’t shy away from the political changes and cultural shifts that have left America and the world stupefied. “This has been such an unbelievable time,” says Kivlen. “I can’t imagine any artist of our ilk making a record and not have it be seen through the lens of the political climate of 2016 and 2017."

The resistance is full-throated on *Twentytwo in Blue,* on tracks like “Burn It”, a rollicking power pop opener that declares war on the status quo, and “Crisis Fest”, a call to millennial arms that melds the personal and political, with an urgent, determined hook that puts the establishment on notice: “We brought you into this place/ You know we can take you out!" sings Cumming. “It’s less a song about Donald Trump than it is about more of a generational divide,” says Kivlen.

Elsewhere on *Twentytwo in Blue,* twangy gem “Sinking Sands” delves into Kivlen’s fascination with alarmist, conspiracy-laden podcasts in the era of “fake news"; Kivlen and Cumming share vocals on glam rock stomper “Puppet Strings” and wistful first single "I Was a Fool"; and there are echoes of our ongoing cultural reckoning with sexual abuse by men in power on “Twentytwo”, a breezy mid-tempo track with a sweetness that belies a dark, truthful lyric. “Busted and used/ That’s how you view your girl/ Now that she’s 22,” sings Cumming, who’s not only been part of an emerging young band, but also spent time in the youth-besotted fashion world. “I’m not saying I want people to feel uncomfortable,” she says about the song. “But it is supposed to make you think."

While Sunflower Bean remains a guitar band at its core, new and gentler textures were welcomed this time around. “What we’ve figured out since *Human Ceremony* is that we did a lot of the rock stuff, and this time it just felt right to explore the sweeter side, and dive deep into that," says Faber. For her part, Cumming is truly *singing* like never before, on the sublime “Memoria” and “Only a Moment”. "I think before I was a little afraid to show myself as a singer, even to my band mates," she says. "I think if anything, after making this we’re the most well-rounded we’ve ever been.”

Once again, the band collaborated with longtime producer and champion Matt Molnar (Friends) and engineer Jarvis Taveniere (Woods), while new to the creative team this time was co-producer and mixer Jacob Portrait (Unknown Mortal Orchestra). "I think with this we just wanted to dig deep into the songwriting process and really just try to focus on crafting these songs," says Faber. "And also having the record just *sound* really incredible.”

If there was a ragged beauty in the gauzy, groovy wall of sound of *Human Ceremony* and its predecessor, the 2015 EP *Show Me Your Seven Secrets*, there’s a new directness to these songs, a product of Sunflower Bean’s own maturity and the insanity of the times we’re in. *Twentytwo in Blue* is a record made by millennials in solidarity with their own—the most progressive, even revolutionary generation we’ve ever seen. “I think we all really want the record to be lovable," says Cumming. "I want the songs to be something that someone can get attached to. Because that’s what I look for in songs myself, and that’s the kind of experience we want to give to others.”