**KIRIN J CALLINAN – RETURN TO CENTER**

*Return To Center* is Kirin J Callinan’s new record, a reconnection with what made him fall in love with music over and over throughout the years, and a very personal exploration of the timeless songwriting tradition passed down and reinterpreted from one generation to the next. Following two albums of inimitable, challenging pop music that garnered global acclaim and marked Callinan as entirely unique, a singular talent, nominations for the Australian Music Prize, support slots for everyone from Crowded House to Tame Impala, a role acting in Jane Campion’s Top Of The Lake and an ARIA Award Nomination, ironically it was singing other peoples’ songs that felt like the most truthful next step for the swashbuckling Sydney artist. On *Return To Center* Callinan’s trademark flamboyance is cut with a newfound fragility that comes curled up in an attempt to do justice to the songs he holds nearest and dearest.

*Return To Center* collects Callinan reworks of both all-time favourites and last-minute spontaneous additions, songs that have shaped the artist he is today amongst songs that were jammed out of the blue in the studio. Callinan sounds all too in step with Laibach’s teutonic march “Life Is Life”, before completely transforming the twitchy Prince-lite of Momus’ “The Homosexual” into lithe, tender acoustic folk. The Waterboys’ “Whole Of The Moon” is rendered even more melodramatic and heart wrenching than the original and comes off like the theme song to the greatest 80s sitcom you never saw, while Randy Newman’s “Pretty Boy” sticks largely faithful to the sombre original, and Public Image Limited’s “Rise” ascends amidst Celtic guitars and television news clips. At the chronological and spiritual center of the record - the eye of the storm - lies the title track and sole original composition. A stark, spacious instrumental, “Return To Center’s serenity is interrupted by maniacal laughter, assumedly Callinan’s.

Recording was swift - tracking a song per day, with a few up the sleeve for overdubs, mixing and mastering. With a lengthy list of prior collaborators that has included Mark Ronson, Jimmy Barnes, Mac Demarco, Weyes Blood, Connan Mockasin and Alex Cameron to name a few, the open (garage) door policy was maintained for *Return To Center.* First luminary to lift the shutters was producer Francois Tetaz whose zeitgeist work with Gotye is legendary. More than a producer to this project, Francois’ enthusiasm to work with Kirin is in the DNA off his concept.

A cast of outlaws followed that included Drew Erickson, Benji Lysaght, Stella Mozgawa, Dave Elitch, Jasper Leek and Holiday Sidewinder, gathered in the garage of his temporary Silverlake abode, delighting in the perverse subversion of the capitalist system and the challenge of completing a record with such clear time and financial constraints. With the roller door open to the street just weeks before he was due to be evicted, they merrily blasted through the set with no time to second guess or overthink and as a result, *Return To Center* retains an instinctive, vulnerable edge, emerging as Callinan’s most tender yet celebratory record yet.

Return To Center glimmers with what Callinan describes as a “corporate spiritual” radiance. It is a punk rock meditation on record making, music past and present. For Callinan it slices through a contradictory and confusing year of exaggerations and misrepresentations to be his ‘Return to Center’ – sounds, songs, lyrics, performance.

Whatever it is and however it was made, *Return To Center* transcends to a triumph.

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