

## Valley Queen ‘*Chord of Sympathy*’ Album Bio

*“I see a lot of the writing I do as sourced from a wound, or sourced from love and abundance. Both are valuable. Our full-length debut *Supergiant* was written from a lot of wounding, but *Chord of Sympathy* plays more like a love letter out to the world. Writing this one, I had more access to my inner love, which I wanted to share as a source of comfort for people who listen to our music. *Supergiant*’s yin has been answered by *Chord of Sympathy*’s yang.”*

– **Natalie Carol, vocalist/guitarist/songwriter for Valley Queen**

*Chord of Sympathy*, the sophomore album from Los Angeles-based band Valley Queen, is a dynamically layered sonic universe of intense range. Here, Carol’s inimitable vocals are as fearlessly fluid as ever—ethereal to thunderous in a note—and fully consuming. Whereas 2018’s *Supergiant* channeled pains of the past, *Chord of Sympathy* is borne of the endless present Carol experienced in her bedroom during lockdown, where time collapsed and the future needed to be created.

The album marks a definitive transformation in Valley Queen’s approach to writing, arranging, and producing. Making art through a global pandemic, and in the wake of an original band member’s departure, the group rerouted their roles. Instead of sticking to their individual instruments, the trio of Carol, Mike Deluccia, and Neil Wogensen moved around, trying on different hats, sharing them, and reinvigorating the Valley Queen sound in a style newly and truly collaborative.

It was Wogensen’s first time producing for Valley Queen. His deft studio touch shapes the overall texture of *Chord of Sympathy*, elevating Carol’s intimate musings to a cosmic scale. Deluccia co-produced a number of songs, while also contributing pristine

percussion and exuberant synth arrangements throughout. *"We kept it all in-house, out of necessity," Carol explains. "You can hear the experimentation in these tracks, the diligence and play. It's the sound of our band breaking free."*

*Chord of Sympathy* reveals itself with the layered allure of a Russian doll: the album as a whole is one love letter, but each song inside is its own note. It opens with "Falling," a track that's mystical glow sets a supernatural tone for the rest of the album. *"Someone shared a quote from Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche with me soon after we recorded this one," Carol shares. "It goes, 'The bad news was, I was falling. The good news was, there was no ground.' I think this song is about that. What you think is the ground is the trap door. It was the first song Mike, Neil and I arranged as a three-piece in the studio. It kicked off a whole new era of sound-making for us."*

On the jaunty, earnest "Nobody Ever," Carol stretches her heart outwards: *"Now nobody's ever gonna love you / More than I do / If love is a language / My words are the sounds on your ceiling."* "Pavement" is addressed to the girls in LA County youth prisons with whom Carol worked as a creative writing teacher, and grapples with the notion that none of us are free until all of us are free. "Cassavetes," based on a quote from actor, director and screenwriter, John Cassavetes, is a message to oneself: *"It's about the illusion of selfhood, how we essentially put on costumes and posture in our identities to find some sort of ground in a groundless reality,"* says Carol. *"Ultimately, the full span of the self lies outside of our intellectual capacity. Trying to become 'ourselves,' in an intellectual sense is, perhaps, a more trivial pursuit in the midst of a deeper reality."* Elsewhere on the album, she explores the difference between poetry and songwriting, and where they meet ("Pelican"); past lives ("Fairy Wing"); and turning inward in order to come back renewed ("Curse of the Unknown"). The through line of each song is a sensation Carol experienced

while penning “Knife In The Trunk”: *“Feeling strong but soft and unstoppable in love.”*

Valley Queen’s vibrant new heartbeat resounds across the album, a forward-looking, starry-souled collection of songs that wrap listeners in a warm and hopeful embrace. *“I didn’t coin the phrase ‘chord of sympathy.’ It comes from Hazrat Inayat Khan, an ancient sufi mystic,”* Carol shares. *“Writing this album, I wanted to embody such a notion: the chord of sympathy, a sound connecting us all.”*