

August & J

40

Webster's dictionary defines "passion" as a powerful feeling, great enthusiasm. It defines "creativity" as inventive, imaginative. When these two things come together, they propel you. For those souls lucky enough to have them, they are elements that never fade. For the Denton, TX based duo **August & J**, it is their enduring passion and creativity that have sparked a rebirth.

"There's something about being creative that helps you to continue to be creative," says vocalist **August**, who was surprised to receive a phone call from his old writing and recording partner **J**. It was the first time the two had spoken in over a decade. "I really didn't think much of that first phone call. J called me and said, 'I get the feeling that you really want to sing on some of my songs,' I remember rolling my eyes and chuckling. It was very noncommittal."

J, who had recently picked up a guitar again after a long hiatus, had written some new music and found himself thinking of his old bandmate. "I called him up and asked him if he wanted to sing on my songs. Whenever I would sit down and write something, I would always hear his voice in my head."

And so begins the story of **August & J's** debut full-length release **40**, a solid album of fresh rock songs with a southern pop sensibility, with influences ranging from Bon Jovi to Train to Wilco, all recorded at August's home studio. It is an album that came together under the auspices of that rare and continued musical connection between two people. After years of writing bits and pieces on their own, J and August were both full of musical and lyrical ideas, and the chemistry was as sharp today as the day they met. There was no ego, no disagreement, just a common desire to write the best songs they could. They complemented each other's strengths and weaknesses.

August says, "There can't be a formula for inspiration. Songs can start with a guitar line, or a hummed melody, or a single word or phrase. Then J and I start batting ideas back and forth. You never know where an idea will take you. Simply trying an idea could spur five more ideas! That's what I love about writing with J, we try *every* idea. No matter how absurd it might be, we always try it."

"August has a way of piecing together the ideas and making them cohesive songs," J adds. "But first and foremost, it's about the songs. Good, hummable catchy, singable songs. They stick in your head and won't leave. That's where it all starts. Are they catchy? Can you sing them in your car? I think the answer is yes."

The result is a collection of unique vocals, thoughtful lyrics with power guitar riffs and catchy melodies that you indeed find yourself humming hours after you've last heard the songs. The album's first single, "**For Once**," a touching track written for August's wife reflecting long sought after dreams finally realized - something that any couple who has endured highs and lows together can relate to - gained national airplay at AAA radio. The song's self-produced video, inspired by the lyrics but showcasing a very clever storyline twist, has just surpassed 3 million views on YouTube and has been featured prominently in several major retail chains. With this

momentum, August & J are ready to launch their second single, “**The Moon,**” which they recently performed acoustically on Q104.3’s “Out of the Box” hosted by Jonathan Clarke, airing on New York City’s only rock station. Since their appearance, “The Moon” has seen additional airplay on the program. Touring plans are in the works, as is the band’s first appearance at Austin’s renowned SXSW festival in March. Such success was a surprise to the band, as August points out, “All I wanted to do was get back to being a songwriter. My mind was not in a place where I wanted to rehearse for shows or even put together a band for that matter. I just wanted to fall in love with writing songs again.”

And with *40*, it’s safe to say, *mission accomplished*.