

EXCLUSIVE



TWENTY-ONE

THIS YEAR, LAS VEGAS NATIVES
KEN JORDAN AND SCOTT KIRKLAND RELEASED THEIR
FIFTH STUDIO ALBUM AND HIT BLACKJACK
(THAT'S 21 YEARS AS THE CRYSTAL METHOD).
READ ON TO SEE HOW ELSE THIS DUO
IS WINNING.

Words by
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Photo Credit: Chapman Baehler

"N

ow we're doing things lickety-split," Scott Kirkland says as he snaps his fingers. "Nobody uses lickety-split anymore. I'm going to bring that back."

"Kinda sexy," adds Ken Jordan. "Lickety-split."

The electronic duo, from Las Vegas and transplanted in Los Angeles, is referring to the rate at which things are happening these days in conjunction with the recent release of their namesake album this January. We are at SiriusXM Radio's studios, where Scott and Ken have wrapped up a 2-hour set and photo opp with a few lucky fans.

"The name of the next record is *Lickety-split!*" Scott decides elatedly, eliciting laughter from the room, which includes Ken's wife, Janine. Obviously joking, this kind of momentum is a good thing, so fans won't have to endure another hiatus (it's been four years since their last album, *Divided by Night*, debuted).

"Dude, now the pressure's on. We'll have to, or it will redefine the whole word if it doesn't come out lickety-split," says Scott with a smile. "What does that mean? Where did that even come from?"

Being away from the studio and on the road the last few years had postponed the release of their fifth studio album, as did the removal of a benign cyst from Scott's brain in 2013, but the guys are back with a remarkable, very much on point album. The record features collaborations with a list of musicians, including: LeAnn Rimes ("Grace"), Dia Frampton ("Over It"), and Miami's Afrobeta ("After Hours"), and upholds that plucky, addictive, video-game-ish sound they are prized for.

Along with the release of their first single, "Over It," was its music video, featuring a racy bake-off scenario that has nothing to do with the lyrics, and everything to do with the art of slow motion. Think: Lots of skin, lots of flour, lots of licking, and a gratuitous girl fight. "All the stuff that I wanted would have been in slow motion. Didn't happen," says Scott. Ken laughs. "The part, rawwwrrrr, the heavy part, wowwowow, that's the part I wanted in slow motion. I wanted *more* slow motion. I thought in slow motion we just have to shoot half as much video. Right?" "Our other idea was a fashion show with girls fighting backstage in slow motion," says Ken.

And no video is complete without its stars. Ken and Scott pop up in the video as the host and janitor, respectively. "I'm like a slightly larger version of Ryan Seacrest," says Ken. "I'm fulfilling a long-lost dream of being a janitor," adds Scott, whose role allows him to really sink his teeth in --to a cupcake he rescues from his broom. Going off of Scott's play-by-play with the director, it sounds as though he would've liked a bit more screen time or at least one more take.

Director: "Ok, Scott, c'mon up here. There's no time, just grab the broom. Yeah. Great, great, great. Lookin' good. Lookin' good. Shoot it! Shoot it! Shoot it! Pick it up. Eat it! Eat it! Eat it!"

Scott: "Can I just -- one more?"

Director: "No, no, we got it. We gotta get outta here. Alright, wrap!"

"Good Lord! Ken got a fuckin' cupcake in the face. Can't a brother get at least one more chance sweepin' up the trash? What the?" His lively reenactment has us laughing hysterically.

As for favorites on the album, “I go back and fourth between, “110 to 101” and “Emulator,” says Ken. “I like those too,” Scott concurs, “We just did the last show, and hearing some of the tracks you haven’t listened to in a long time... I love “Over It.” When we were doing it with the band that was a lot of fun. “Sling the Decks.” Sometimes I don’t even remember how we did it, it’s so weird... You do so much. Just Ken and me, everyday, chipping away at every song for the last two-three years... You forget the magic moments.”

The last twenty-one years have been inundated with so many magic moments it’s cemented the two as electronic dance music fixtures. But there is much more here than a business partnership. To experience their back-and-forth commentary firsthand -- reminiscent of Forrest Gump’s effortless fluid volley with the upended side of the ping-pong table -- is to understand that this dynamic is built as much on mutual admiration and respect as it is on facetious candor. Enamored by their tight friendship, I ask how each would characterize the other.

“I would describe him [Scott] as a genius artist that always impresses,” Ken replies thoughtfully. “I thought you were going to say train wreck,” Scott jokes. “I would describe Ken as the one that I’m always trying to impress. You get it passed Ken, you’ve got a chance.” He adds that he particularly admires Ken and Janine’s “spectacular” relationship, and what I infer to be Ken’s laid-back nature, taken away from the long-winded story I am told. If I understood correctly, someone hadn’t cleaned up after their dog at Ken’s place while he was away and when Ken returned and found this, he was unfazed. “Ken’s like, ‘It’s totally cool, Dude. Whatever.’ Remember that? It’s totally ridiculous now that I think about it... Whose dog was that?” Scott laughs. For the next couple of minutes, Scott goes down the line of possible dog owners, determined to crack the mystery. Aware of their impending dinner

plans and a set at Cielo later that night, I try to steer them back on course.

A wealth of unbelievable memories and success has been achieved whilst collaborating as TCM --making their job worthwhile-- but if forced to choose, what is the best part of the job? “Being able to do what you love for a living,” Ken says seriously, then adds, “People give you free new products all the time.” He turns to Scott. “Remember the first time? We were just getting into this, and they were like, ‘Hey, they wanna give you these shoes. Pick out a pair. I was like, ‘Well, these 13 are ok with me, so give me one pair of any of those.’ They sent me *all 13!* I’m like, Ohmygod, this is a great scam business I’m in! Now, I just ask for everything, all the time.” The room erupts into laughter.

“I like when you meet people that say kind words,” Scott replies, “Like, ‘You’re the first band I listened to in electronic music,’ those kinds of things. Or you meet a person that somehow something that we did in the studio affected them in a positive way. Soldiers that were in really hairy situations, locked down in battle, buddy’s been shot. They pulled their headphones out and get through the night listening to our music --*that* stuff is amazing. To do something where people are positively affected by it, and get that feedback, that’s awesome,” he says earnestly. The room is quiet. “And free shit too.” And everyone is laughing again.

Today, electronic dance music is as ubiquitous as selfies. Not just pulsating in the nightclubs anymore, it’s on in the clothing stores, restaurants, tanning salons.... But in the early 90s, EDM was a new genre just trickling into the mainstream, and TCM’s platinum-album, *Vegas*, with “Busy Child” and “Keep Hope Alive”, was that first unforgettable taste of EDM for many of us. TCM was at the forefront, blazing a trail that sparked this music revolution we’re at the epicenter of.

EXCLUSIVE



WHAT WOULD FANS BE SURPRISED TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOU GUYS?

"I play ice hockey!" Ken shouts out. "I do yoga!" Not surprised, I hold out for a good one. "One of my favorite songs is Christina Aguilera's 'Beautiful,'" he finally reveals. *Really?* "Yes, he sings it at home all the time," Janine confirms. When Scott has a hard time thinking of something, Ken reminds him of his noteworthy guitar teacher. "Oh yes, I got guitar lessons from Mark Slaughter [from the hard rock band Slaughter]," says Scott. "I once killed a hobo. No one knows that. It would've been so cool if that was true. I dunno, I am not really that interesting. Is this off the record? I'm heartbroken that Captain & Tennille are breaking up. I really thought that love would keep them together forever." "He has a Facebook thing called Norm Trooper; he takes this tiny Storm Trooper everywhere. He takes photos of him all around the world," Ken adds.



To have played a pivotal role in the uprising of EDM is pretty major. How does that make you feel? I ask. “It is nice to hear from some of the newer acts that we were influential on their careers. We love the fact that it’s blown up so much,” says Ken. While he won’t name names, there is a number of “very talented kids that are doing things” that have given and continue to give them accolades. “It’s a satisfying road to meet people that are excited about what you did in the past and look forward to what you’re doing in the future. The future is bright. Right, Ken?” Scott asks. “So bright I gotta wear shades,” Ken replies. “What’s that song about sunglasses? Sorry,” Scott stops himself.

Of their cornucopia of accomplishments, what stands out the most? “This interview definitely,” Scott answers unhesitatingly. While I’m flattered and would love to believe that, Scott’s playful response prompts Ken to jump in. “Ok, I can give you a quick best and worst: Walking down the Red Carpet at the Grammy’s, being nominated for a Grammy-award [for Best Electronic Dance album, *Divided by Night*, 2010], and then thirty-seconds later, being interviewed by Snooki. Best to worst all in one stroll,” Ken tells me, causing Scott to launch into his impression of the *Jersey Shore* guidette.

Fortunately, the stories don’t stop there. Their “strangest” and most notable 24-hours, they tell me, took place in Milan, Italy. In the mid-90s, the two were invited to spin at Donatella Versace’s first show since her brother, Gianni’s, death, where they have supermodels Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell on either side of them. Donatella personally requests they play their song she loves: “Keep Hope Alive” and comes back with Boy George to tell them to keep it down ‘cause they drank too much tequila, and to top it off, the mother of a then-

famous-songstress tries to fix Scott up with her daughter (which, from the lyrics revealed, would make her Republica’s Samantha Sprackling), since he didn’t look like he did heroin. “It was a night!” The scene and their hotel accommodations were the zenith of extravagance.

The next day in England was the complete opposite. “The hotel room was basically some kind of closet. The weather was so shitty. The food was... It was like, ahhh!” Scott recalls, “Nobody showed up. Remember just yesterday, when we were...?” “We were on top of the world!” Ken screams. One can’t expect every day and night to be saturated with prestigious parties and relentless adulation, well, if you’re TCM, I guess you rightfully can.

Highly respected among their peers –they’ve earned a reputation that exceeds the bounds of the music industry and has permeated high-fashion, film and television. Last year, J.J. Abrams sought them out to compose the soundtrack for his futuristic FOX TV series, *Almost Human*, enabling them to add a composer credit to their hefty repertoire that consists of four music department credits and 57 soundtrack credits, including, *Fast & Furious 6* (2013), *Real Steel* (2011), and *Charlie’s Angels: Full Throttle* (2003). Like Scott said, the future is bright. Someone get these guys some shades, STAT.

Watch their “Over It” music video here:

<http://thecrystalmethod.com/over-it-ft-dia-frampton>.

To keep up with the guys, follow them on Twitter @crystalmethod and visit: <http://thecrystalmethod.com>. Their Community Service broadcast on SiriusXM Electric Area airs every Monday and Wednesday, from 9-10 pm. **ML**

