**Career Remix: Why The Jane Doze Quit Their Jobs to Take the Stage** by ANNEKE JONG

I’m at a no-frills diner with one of the most buzzed-about electronic music DJ duos of the year. They’ve shared the stage with names like Diplo and Erykah Badu, and they’re fresh off sold-out shows in San Francisco and New York City. The Huffington Post SXSW Music Preview featured the duo on the front page and urged readers to check them out “before you can only see them in big venues and on festival stages.”

But what’s most striking about The Jane Doze is how normal they are. Jen Mozenter orders a waffle. Her partner Claire Schlissel orders toast. It’s 3 PM. “I just felt like a waffle,” explains Mozenter as she sips her ginger ale. Schlissel unfolds her napkin into her lap and gives a wide, warm smile.

The duo met a few years ago but disagree about the specifics. Mozenter, 24, and Schlissel, 23, tell the story of their meeting like an old married couple, bickering over details.

“We met at Highline Ballroom,” says Schlissel. “I remember the show, but I don’t remember Jen.” Mozenter says they bonded over their shared love of mash-ups and electronic dance music (EDM), and a duo was born. Well, not right away. They started making music together just for fun, but friends kept asking when they could see the duo perform live. “We were like, ‘Huh?’” jokes Mozenter, who says the interest in their act caught her off-guard.

“We’re definitely different from other producers,” says Mozenter. “Female DJ duos aren’t that common.” Schlissel nods in agreement. “We have that girls-next-door vibe.”

Perhaps it’s not surprising that Mozenter and Schlissel seem like regular women—until recently, they were. Both worked full-time day jobs in Manhattan office buildings, commuting to work and sitting in cubicles. By day, they were just a couple of regular Joes—er, Janes. But at night, they turned into The Jane Doze.

Schlissel remembers the juggling act: “We did this one show in Chicago that would never have worked unless we had the time difference. Jen left after work, flew to Chicago, and went directly to the club to play the set.”

“Oh yeah, that was brutal,” exclaims Mozenter. “I slept on a bench in the airport because I had to catch the first flight back to New York to go to work in the morning.”

When asked how it felt to lead two very different professional lives, Mozenter had mixed feelings. “At first it was cool—like a Batman lifestyle. A lot of people didn’t know. But then we had a print feature in Billboard Magazine, and since I worked in the music industry, my co-workers saw it. They were like, ‘Um, WTF?’” she recalls.

“It was really hard because I wanted to be 100% present for my day job and for my clients. It got to the point where we spent so much of our free time playing shows that we were running out of time to make the music to play at the shows. Quality can really suffer when you’re balancing too many things.”

At that point, The Jane Doze had a decision to make: stay in their day jobs or quit to give their dreams a shot. “We really wanted to know how far we could take this if we both gave it 100%,” explains Schlissel. So the duo took the plunge and left their steady paychecks to pursue music full time.

Mozenter, who worked in digital marketing at Columbia Records, reflects on the transition: “It was really hard for me to make this change. Working in the music industry was the path I always wanted. When I got the job, I fully immersed myself in the world of digital marketing, helping artists develop their voice online. I loved it. But this opportunity came up and it presented a choice between an awesome known path and a totally crazy unknown path as an artist. I picked the latter because the other path will always be there.”

When I ask how they decided whether or not to take the plunge, Schlissel explains: “Until we start making our own music to sell, almost all of our income comes from gigs. I think we knew for a while that [doing The Jane Doze full time] was the goal, but we had to decide if we could actually pay our rents doing this. We looked back at the last six months and saw that we could have paid our rents, so that was encouraging. But some of it is faith. We had to believe that by putting in 100%, we could make it.”

So, what’s it like now that they’re full-time artists? Mozenter says she hasn’t even had time to feel scared. “My biggest fear about leaving my job was that I wouldn’t be able to fill my days. I haven’t even thought about that fear since I quit because I’ve been so busy.”

Schlissel agrees. “I can’t imagine what this month would have been like with a day job. Between making music, doing our shows, and coordinating everything for SXSW, it really is a full-time job.” (The Jane Doze played five different venues this week in Austin, where I got a sneak listen of their new Spring Break mix rumored to drop any day now. Get ready. It’s good.)

The duo splits time between their apartments and The Sandwich Station, the studio they use in Brooklyn, where they concept new music, play songs that inspire them, jam on instruments, and keep up with the latest music news. Schlissel says it can be exhausting. “Sometimes I just want to go 45 minutes without listening to EDM.”

In addition to making music, Mozenter says she spends a lot of time thinking about where they want to go with the brand. “What venues do we want to play? What schools do we want to visit? What’s the strategy for our next release? We never do anything willy-nilly. It’s all very strategic.”

She says the pair also spends several hours a day on email and social media, connecting with their fans on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. “We read it all and really try to respond to everyone,” says Mozenter.

But despite thousands of fans, the duo remains humble and gracious. Mozenter still thinks about where it all began: “I remember flying to our first show in Syracuse being like, ‘Oh my god, they bought our flights!’” “Yeah, we got snowed in and hung out at the frat house all day,” laughs Schlissel.

Now they make a habit of spending time with fans. “We like to hang out for a bit and be accessible,” says Mozenter. Schlissel agrees: “We’re really good at ping pong.” She finishes her toast, thinking for a minute. “But I’m also an 85-year old at heart, so I like to go to bed early.” “Yes!” says Mozenter. “My dream night: spin a crazy show, eat at a diner, go to bed. Boom. Done.”

Just like the rest of us. Well, mostly.