

Toronto duo dvsn's edgy, sexy R&B feels like hard-fought rugged peace. Producer Nineteen85 and vocalist Daniel Daley explore love's knottiness and ponder the weight of loneliness, their music is driven by a feeling of unrelenting calm at the center of it all. Their new project with Ty Dolla \$ign, *Cheers to the Best Memories*, only underscores this with lead single "I Believed It" featuring late L.A. great Mac Miller. Opening with Ty cooing, "Bitch, you lied to my face and I believed it," it's a wounded tear-down that somehow sounds downright sunny.

On that opening salvo, they sing about infidelity but the instrumental lifts dvsn, Ty, and Mac above any problems, giving them the distance to look down at past lovers. That odd uplift is the essence of the project: a champagne-filled celebration of these men and their friend's whirlwind careers—the bright, the dark, the utterly toxic—not to mention the memories yet to be made.

"Everything we've done prior has been self-contained, but this is going to be the first time that fans get to see us leave our house and go into another world with Ty," Nineteen85 explains. "We want this to feel like you walked in on our thoughts. We are very methodical and working with him allowed us to be freer and more in the moment because that's more of the vibe he brings."

*Cheers to the Best Memories* has only further emphasized the tasteful romantic introspection, bold sex appeal, and velvety production that's become dvsn's signature sound since they joined OVO Sound in 2016 with their sultry debut, *SEPT 5TH*. The pair met in Toronto's music scene in the late 2000s, before Nineteen85's mastery of smooth melodies scored him a handful of hits for Drake: "Hold On, We're Going Home," "Hotline Bling," and "One Dance." dvsn eventually formed as a challenge for Nineteen85 and Daley (a former rapper) to explore music beyond the borders of the mainstream. The pair was initially shrouded in mystery so the music could speak for itself. But their identities began to emerge through that music, especially on 2017's *Morning After*.

"There's no boundaries and we both think in an unorthodox way," Nineteen85 says, acknowledging how their individuality informs the chemistry. "One thing we both always ask each other is, 'What is this movie that we want people to walk away with?' Sometimes we're shocked by what the other person says, but we have so much trust in each other that it works."

That approach yielded the unparalleled intimacy of their 2020 album, *A Muse in Her Feelings*. Boasting an all-star cast of collaborators including Future, PARTYNEXTDOOR, Summer Walker, and Ty, the set arrived to critical acclaim from the

likes of *Complex*, *Pitchfork*, *Noisey*, *Essence*, *Billboard*, and *NME*. Always evolving and ever inspired by the cultural melting pot that is their city, dvsn returned in early 2021 with *Amusing Her Feelings*, a deluxe version with new songs.

*Cheers to the Best Memories* is a whole new chapter, a modern take on the seduction that R&B icons like Jocedi, Jon B., and Xscape evoked in the '90s. "Don't Say a Word" is wrapped in that nostalgia, while "Fight Club" untangles relationship insecurities through the lens of an egotistical male conscience. "Better Yet," by contrast, looks back to the late-night romance found on their debut album. When taken together, these standout songs hint at bold new directions, but they're also reminders of the keenly emotional songwriters these two have become over the years.

The joint mixtape sure to put more eyes on dvsn as they continue to evolve their own approach and change the R&B climate, shifting the mainstream with that mix of vulnerability and swagger that captivated fans in the first place. "No matter how big or wide-reaching a record might be, we've always wanted to figure out what could make it more personal," Nineteen85 says. That's what brings them in—there's a sense that in dvsn's songs, everything might be okay, one day.