



DUO WILL MIX IT UP

From New York to the Gold Coast, Swedish band Icona Pop are taking the world by storm – and they love it, writes **Sally Browne**

You should see me right now,” says brunette Aino Jawo. “They painted some kind of rainbow on my cheekbones and my hair was standing up like spikes. We looked really cool, like superheroes.”

Jawo (above left), 26, has just got back home from a magazine photo shoot in New York – and it’s not her last for the day.

She and band-mate Caroline Hjelt, who together make up Swedish synthpop duo Icona Pop, have been living a whirlwind since making it to the big time with their energetic and catchy DJ act.

Their storming single, the punk esque call-to-arms, break-up song *I Love It*, is going great guns around the world – including in Australia, which brings the delightful duo to play Summafieldayze festival at Doug Jennings Park at the Gold Coast Spit on January 5.

The song contains the memorable lyrics: “I crashed my car into the bridge. I watched, I let it burn. / I threw your s--- into

a bag and pushed it down the stairs.

“I crashed my car into the bridge / I don’t care, I love it”

Although it’s one of the few songs they didn’t write themselves, it’s a song Icona Pop could relate to.

In fact, the two met after Jawo was suffering from a bad breakup.

“I was dumped and I was really depressed and we had this mutual friend called Emily,” she says. “She called me every day for two or three weeks and after a while she was like, you have to do something, you can’t just lay in bed’.

“She forced me to go to a party and Caroline was hosting the party at her place. She knew that – OK, there’s a girl coming and she’s been dumped, so let’s make sure she has a really fun night. I heard this a few years after.

“But she just opened the door and was like, hi how are you? I think it was magic from the first time we met. We both started to talk and went out dancing and we had

such a good night. I just told her we should do something together, but that’s something you often say when you’ve been drinking a lot.”

The two bonded over music and they did do something together – they formed Icona Pop. Jawo remembers going around nervously to Hjelt’s house not long after with a laptop and a bottle of wine.

“We didn’t talk about any musical influences or anything,” she says. “We just sat down, we started to produce stuff and we wrote our first song. And from that day on, we decided, hey we should start a band, and our friends were laughing at us, going, what are you doing? It’s not that simple and we were like, oh, yes it is.”

Their first song was a Quentin Tarantino-inspired number called *Sheriff Came to Town on a Big Black Horse*.

They booked their first gig two days after that and a month later were on stage for their first performance.

Jawo says that she and Hjelt have plenty in common, but they are quite different too. Jawo is generally the more chilled and calm one, while Hjelt takes the reins as the driving force – but lately things have started to switch around.

“I was always like, let’s save that for tomorrow and Caroline was always the one that pushes. I think that makes things happen. But at the same time Caroline does the thing where she makes too much happen and we end up in a really strange situation. So that’s when I fit in perfectly. I can kind of chill her down. But lately, we’ve been kind of mixing it up.

So I’m, instead of Caroline, stressing, and she’s been more calm.”

Certainly it’s great having your best friend on the road, whether you’re performing in North Carolina – their next stop on tour – or Australia. Jawo feels blessed to have found a kindred spirit.

“I would never have made it without Caroline,” she says. “It’s so amazing how you can meet this friend overnight and just know instantly that you’re going to have a long life together.”

Although they love the beat and pace of New York City where they live, Jawo says she would like to go back to Sweden eventually. It was a great place to grow up.

“I grew up in the big city, in Stockholm. Sweden is a beautiful, beautiful country to grow up in. You’re surrounded by water, you’re surrounded by forest. It’s a luxury to grow up in Sweden.”

Icona Pop’s success has taken them around the world, and at Summafieldayze they’ll perform alongside The Chemical Brothers, M.I.A, Hot Chip, Fedde Le Grand, Mark Ronson, Kimbra, Booka Shade and tons more.

They’re looking forward to stepping off the plane for their first visit to Australia and they’ll bring their swimsuits and their suntan lotion.

“We’re expecting a lot of sun,” Jawo says. “A lot of nice people, handsome men and a really good time. I’ve got this positive feeling about Australia. I think it’s going to be one of the best times of my life. I’ve got a really good feeling about it.”

They’ll love it.

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