What a difference three years makes. Lucius went from being the five-piece *Rolling Stone* claimed was the “Best Band you’ve never heard of” to the group you can’t get enough of.

Fronted by the sleek and compelling look-alike twosome of Jess Wolfe and Holly Laessig and backed by their counterpart bandmates Dan Molad, Pete Lalish and Andy Burri, Lucius spent more than 250 days on the road in the past year. They’ve sold out shows big and small, headlined all over the US and Europe, played slots at Bonnaroo, Newport Folk Festival, Lollapalooza, End of The Road, Reading and Leeds Festivals and more and shared the stage with a variety of musicians including Roger Waters, Jack White, Mavis Staples, Jeff Tweedy, Sara Bareilles, The Head and the Heart, Tegan and Sara and David Byrne.

The band’s uphill ascent began when Jess and Holly crossed paths while at college in Boston; more than 10 years ago, Lucius started making music and hasn’t stopped since. Along the way they’ve become NPR darlings, grist for Britain’s prestigious *Guardian* and favorites of the Nobel-prize winning *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman. Since the critically acclaimed release of their 2013 debut LP *Wildewoman* they have built a stunningly loyal following, and share an intimate bond with their fans. It’s not uncommon to see Lucius doppelgängers in the crowd.

Sitting with Jess and Holly to discuss the band’s sonically-grand and emotionally-honest sophomore release *Good Grief,* the first thing that strikes you when you meet the frontwomen of Lucius is how fine-boned and delicate they both are. But even more striking is that they don’t actually look alike once you see them offstage. Their builds are markedly different: Jess is curvy, with a generous mouth and eyes that tilt up at the corners; Holly is willowy and angular, serious and with the pale complexion that conjures up the image of a Nordic princess.

But despite the six-inch disparity in their height on stage you could swear they were identical. Of course it helps that they always dress exactly alike, their hair is the same style and shade — right now a warm curry red — and they sing in a strong unison, doubling their high, clear voices and creating a third sound that is as unnerving as it is lovely, like two mirrors, creating an infinite number of reflections that reveal as much as they obscure.

“We wanted to feel like we were transforming ourselves and going into a different head space while performing,” Jess says. “In some way I think what we do is like a fantasy. We wanted to take people along with us for a ride. We wanted to present that visually so when you look at us you’re *seeing* what you’re *hearing*."

What you’re hearing (and seeing) when Lucius takes the stage are two voices becoming one. The band’s distinctive play on duality showcases Jess and Holly’s powerful voices at the center — bolstered and surrounded by the mathematically precise drumming of Dan with the graceful, chiming guitars of Pete and Andy. Together the quintet create a sound the *New Yorker* calls “seemingly impossible with flawless grace that brings delicate beauty to even the most bombastic moments.”

The recordings on Lucius’ second studio album *Good Grief* mirror the band’s distinguishing on-stage configuration. One shared figure 8 mic serves as an anchor for conversation between the band’s lead duo, which has resulted in the 11 raw and often heart wrenching songs you hear on the album. Among these is the explosive track “Gone Insane,” which gives a direct look into one of the few arguments between Jess and Holly.

“Some songs really feel like an expulsion of emotions, beyond your control,” Holly says. “The writing of ‘Gone Insane’ was based on the feeling after one of those loose cannon type of heated fights, with helplessness and rage hitting you in alternating waves.”

“But maybe the perfect description of this song comes in the recording process,” Jess adds. “Holly and I have seen maybe three arguments in the past 12 years. But perhaps the biggest of all, came the day we were to record this song. Emotions were running high, and at some point, Holly blew up at me. In shock, I yelled back and we both stormed off.

“This was a prime example of our partnership because a short while later she returned, we apologized, hugged and immediately went to record. It was just the two of us in the dark. There was no plan for vocal arrangement, we wanted to use the intensity of the moment and go for it. The ‘falling off’ part at the end of the song was completely organic, the two of us screaming into the same mic, losing it, together, in song form, as the lyrics suggest. “

“It was definitely one of those magic studio moments you can't quite explain,” Holly finishes.

A majority of the tracks on *Good Grief* fall in line with the overarching theme of discovering the goodness that can come from any hardship. The albumproves to be a release for the band both physically and emotionally, after experiencing the highs and lows of being on the road for almost two years, the band moved to Los Angeles from Brooklyn where the album was recorded during the spring and early summer of 2015 at Grammy-winning engineer and producer Shawn Everett’s studio.

However, a few songs including the first single “Born Again Teen” became what Holly describes as something like “the antithesis of the other things that we were working on, to give ourselves some relief."

From the first swooping, synthy intro of “Something About You” to the alarm-clock menace of “What We Have (To Change),” there’s a sense that these expertly wrought pop songs are full of emotional depth.

They veer from sassy, soul-drenched vocals to glitzy rhythmic pop to songs that call up the charm and crushed innocence of '60s girl groups, but in the end there is no comparison to the dark secrets Jess and Holly convey when they put their two voices together.

“There are songs here that are deeply personal and emotional, and in a way we’ve exposed ourselves to reveal parts that are fragile, maybe even a little broken, but not destroyed,” Jess says. “There’s certainly a little bit of humor, and there’s also a lot of truth and sadness."

The lyrics of *Good Grief* read like personal journal entries because the friendship and writing partnership established between the band’s cofounders has given the women of Lucius an outlet to express their unusually parallel experiences.

“I always say Holly’s been the healthiest and longest relationship I’ve ever had,” Jess says.

That relationship has clearly blossomed musically into a many-faceted, enthralling sound and image sure to resonate deeply with music lovers everywhere.

March 2016 brings the release of *Good Grief*, the band’s highly anticipated sophomore effort.