

Empowering ‘Voice’ for Young Girls Renewed

Gwen Stefani on the gratitude of a childhood dream embraced with a second-season series on Nick



By R. Thomas Umstead

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Gwen Stefani talks about the new season of her animated series *Kuu Kuu Harajuku* at Nickelodeon’s upfront in New York. (inset) Stefani on the set of NBC’s *The Voice*.

GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING singer-songwriter Gwen Stefani is widely known for her success on the music charts, but recently her

television endeavors have taken center stage in her career. Stefani, who currently stars as a musical coach for the 12th season of NBC’s hit music competition series *The Voice*, recently saw her Nickelodeon animated children’s series, *Kuu Kuu Harajuku* (about a crime-fighting girl music group), renewed for a second season. Stefani spoke with *Multi-channel News* programming editor R. Thomas Umstead about the series, her experiences on *The Voice* and her future musical aspirations. An edited transcript follows.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Stefani has been able to parlay *Voice* success into a career with even more solid TV clout.

long time ago that came true later in life. I never thought it could happen. They took a chance on me and now they’re doing season two—it’s just hard to believe. I’ve done so many different things in my lifetime now, and I’m just so proud of it. Around the time I was trying to make my first solo record I really

wanted to do something outside music; I wanted to do a live action or animated project. I feel like I’ve made something that I’m so proud of because it’s a really safe place for little girls to go and watch something that’s really entertaining and fun, and about girls being unique, creative and individual.

Why was Nickelodeon the best fit for the series?

I became a fan of the channel, especially after becoming a mom and watching it. It’s

funny how life comes full circle, because I grew up with tons of animation in my own life because my brother is an animator [who’s] worked on *The Simpsons* and *Ren & Stimpy*, and Nickelodeon is all about animation and creativity. It just seemed like an obvious choice. I just feel like it’s a really good fit for me and I can’t believe we get to do another season. The new season is going to evolve and feature a little more music, dancing and stage performances, which I’m excited about.

Are you considering creating another kids-targeted series?

Of course, I would love to. One of my favorite things about *The Voice* is that they lowered the age [for competitors] this year, so working with the younger kids to me is just really exciting. There’s something about working with them, having already done all that they’re going through. I get to share this experience with them, and it’s the same with this. It’s like having children and creating stuff that they’re excited about, so yes, I would love to.

You mentioned *The Voice*. How does it feel to be back on the competition show?

I’m so excited. I recently watched [an episode] even though I was there. It’s crazy—the days are so long and you’re seeing hundreds of people singing; it’s really quite intense. They’ve filmed all the way through to the knockout [round] so I already know what’s going to happen, but reliving it again is very emotional and intense. I love being on the show; it’s really inspiring for me just on all levels, not just music.

How is your own music coming along?

It’s going good. I’m actually going to be in the studio next week to write some new music; I don’t really know exactly what for yet. I think I’m in a really cool place in my life where I can choose what I want to do. I don’t want to repeat myself. I’ve done the touring, I’ve done and made the records, I’ve done *The Voice*. For me, it’s really about how to evolve and contribute; to use my gift and just build my destiny. So I’m just going to be searching for that in the next couple of years. ☑

What does it mean for you to have had your Nickelodeon series renewed for a second season?

I still haven’t digested that I’m even on Nickelodeon. It was a dream that I had a

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