

# THE *Inspirations Issue*

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# Entertainment **WEEKLY**

## Gwen Stefani

*Her New Look,  
Her New CD  
& Her Biggest  
Influences*

*Who's Your  
Role Model?  
We Asked...*

- FELICITY HUFFMAN
- WILL FERRELL
- JULIA LOUIS-DREYFUS
- HEATH LEDGER
- AND MORE!

*Readers' Choice*

THE MOVIES,  
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*Remembering*  
**ROBERT  
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**STEPHEN  
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THE END  
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THE SHOW'S  
CREATORS GO  
FACE-TO-FACE  
WITH THEIR IDOL

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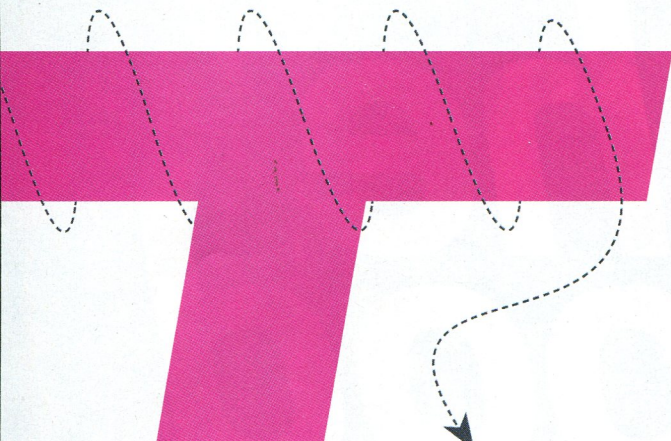


# the good girl

Gwen Stefani's new single, "Wind It Up," celebrates her lifelong obsession with Maria from 'The Sound of Music.' Yet the singer says her latest stylistic muse is Michelle Pfeiffer's drug-addled bombshell from 'Scarface.' As she prepares to release her second solo CD, the new mom talks about the unlikely people, places, and events that have shaped her career, her wardrobe—and her yodeling.

By Clark Collis

Photographs by James Dimmock



**These are a few of Gwen Stefani's favorite things: 'The Sound of Music,' 'The Sound of Music,' and, oh yes, 'The Sound of Music.' "I'm like a Trekkie, but for 'The Sound of Music,'" says the No Doubt frontwoman and solo superstar. "The first time I ever went on stage, at a high school talent show, the dress that I wore was the dress that Maria wears when she sings 'I Have Confidence.' The drop-waist tweed dress. I had that dress. I made it."**

More than two decades on, the 37-year-old's enthusiasm for the classic Julie Andrews musical remains undimmed. This morning, perched on a bench in the basement of the Cuckoo nightclub in London, where her ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY cover shoot is to take place, Stefani is thrilled to sing a few lines from "I Have Confidence" should anyone request it (or even if they don't). Further proof of her fanaticism: Stefani's new single, "Wind It Up," finds the singer mimicking Andrews' yodel from the film's "The Lonely Goatherd"—albeit over a rhythm track provided by Pharrell Williams' production team, the Neptunes.

"I was threatening for a while to put *The Sound of Music* to a beat," Stefani says. "When I heard ["Wind It Up"] for the first time, I was in tears. I was, like, That is the craziest s--- I've ever heard! It's bizarre how that movie has followed my life." Indeed, their plots are similar: Naive and chatty but well-meaning young Catholic girl—who makes her own clothes!—goes out into the big wide world, where she survives assorted adventures and meets the man of her dreams. Of course, in Stefani's case, the "assorted adventures" didn't involve escaping from Nazis but selling 26 million albums worldwide with a globe-trotting ska-pop band, then 7 million more with her 2004 solo debut, *Love.Angel.Music*.

*Baby*. And the "man of her dreams" is a British rocker (Bush frontman Gavin Rossdale, 39, whom Stefani married in September 2002), not an Austrian naval captain. But both stories do have a happy ending, as is evidenced in Stefani's case by the 6-month-old bundle of joy named Kingston James McGregor Rossdale, right now nestled in a Bugaboo across the room from his mommy.

All of which raises the question: Why does the cover of her new CD, *The Sweet Escape*, find her dressed not as the heroine von Trapp, but in the style of Michelle Pfeiffer's drugged-out gangster's moll, Elvira, from Brian De Palma's blood-drenched 1983 classic, *Scarface*?

The answer to this conundrum is connected to the clean-living, gym-frequenting, new-mommying Stefani's obvious delight in being ever-so-slightly naughty. (She repeatedly uses the phrase "coke whore" to describe her newfound fashion muse—and does so with a mischievous smirk.) But, more specifically, the idea came to the singer early last year while shooting the video for her single "Cool" in Lake Como, Italy. Also on hand: Tony Kanal, 36—No Doubt's bassist and, many moons previously, a teenage Gwen Renee Stefani's first boyfriend—and Kanal's current steady, Erin Lokitch. "She had on this long, peach, polyester





## The Way She Wore

Bindis! Braces! A Galliano bridal gown! Behold Stefani's transformation from couture virgin to style icon.

1986

**Just a Girl**

"I was always anti-designer growing up," says Stefani, pictured here during her junior year at Loara High School in Anaheim, Calif.

1989

**Strike a Pose**

She looked like a Madonna wannabe while performing at an early No Doubt show at the Roxy in Los Angeles, but...

1997

**Who's Sari Now?**

...Stefani wore a bindi before the *Material Girl* did. She was inspired by bandmate Tony Kanal's Indian mother.

1999

**In the Pink**

That April, she sported Debbie Harry-evoking blond locks. But by December, she had braces—and pink hair prompted by a breakup with Rossdale.

2001

**'Steady' as She Goes**

Stefani promoted *No Doubt's* reggae-influenced, partly Jamaican-made 'Rock Steady' CD in a suitably laid-back manner.

dress," Stefani recalls. "I was looking at her silhouette going, 'You look so hot.' It was probably a late-'70s dress, and I started thinking about Michelle Pfeiffer and how amazingly styled she was [in *Scarface*]."

Needless to say, it is something of a leap from the hills being alive with the sound of music to the restroom stalls being filled with the sound of people hoovering up Bolivian marching powder. "Yeah, I know!" Stefani says, laughing. "I've never even done coke, so it's hilarious. Do you know how many times I've said 'Let's look like a coke whore' in the last two months?"

We're guessing it's a lot. With *The Sweet Escape* due for release on Dec. 5, Stefani—who, with Rossdale, has houses in London and Los Angeles—is in the midst of a feverish, Atlantic-crisiscrossing publicity tour. But album promotion is hardly the only thing that has been occupying chunks of Stefani's diary. She oversees two fashion lines, L.A.M.B. and Harajuku Lovers (which a L.A.M.B. source says are on track this year to post a combined \$90 million in retail sales), and is preparing for an upcoming world tour, set to start this April. In addition, there's the much-wanted Kingston to coo over and the much-unwanted 40-odd pounds of baby weight to remove from the Stefani frame. Judging by her appearance today, the latter mission seems to have been accomplished already.

Or not. "I have a little bit of, you know, skin or whatever," says Stefani, lifting up her L.A.M.B. sweat-suit top to reveal a stomach that would be regarded as close-to-flat in any but these most size-0-obsessed times. "If I wasn't having the record come out there's no way I would have lost the weight. A year would

have gone by [before] I'd be, like, 'Well, s---, maybe I should start trying to get the weight off now!'"

Stefani has come a long way from her baby-fat days as a self-described "lazy" teen in Anaheim, Calif., who was fanatical about Sting and Madness singer Suggs. "At high school I would think, All I want to do is eat and sleep. It wasn't until I discovered that I could write songs... Because, when I discover things that I'm good at, then I get really passionate and fiery and you can't slow me down."

Early last fall, Stefani learned that she was finally going to have her first child—and not even that could get her to ease up. The pregnancy was good news for someone who, like a true *Sound of Music* fan, has frequently expressed her desire for children. The bad news was that she was about to start her first solo American tour.

"I'd be crying before I was going on," she recalls. "I couldn't breathe, because when you're pregnant, you get short of breath. So I'm trying to breathe with the corset and the high heels and the nine costume changes. I was in pain. I won't go into detail, but I had really bad stomachaches. What saved me was God put these young girls in the front row; you could tell it was their first concert and that they were looking at me as if I was Cinderella. They just thought I was great."

To hear Stefani tell it, she hadn't planned on releasing an official solo album—never mind spending the first half of her pregnancy traveling around the country on a tour that, as far as she was concerned, couldn't end soon enough. Following the last No Doubt tour in 2004, she thought about making a

(PAGE 94) STEFANI IN 1996: CLASSMATES.COM; YEARBOOK ARCHIVES; IN 1999: BARRY KING/WIREIMAGE.COM; MADONNA: STEFANI WITH PINK HAIR IN 1999: RON GALELLA/WIREIMAGE.COM; STEFANI IN 1997 AND BLOND IN 1999: JIM SNEAL/WIREIMAGE.COM; HARRY: PAUL SLATTERY/RETNA U.K.; STEFANI IN 2001: STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE.COM



**2002**  
**Bridal Sweet**

Stefani married Rossdale in a dress made by John Galliano. "He was the first designer to invite me to a show," she says. "I'd never seen art like that."

**2004**  
**On the L.A.M.B.**

When the singer hit the red carpet at the Grammy Awards, she was decked out in pants, a halter, and purse from her own fashion line.

**2004**  
**Gwen in Wonderland**

Accompanied by her backup dancers, the Harajuku Girls, Stefani suited up Mad Hatter-style for the American Music Awards.

**2005**  
**Runway Project**

Naomi Campbell and other catwalkers modeled the L.A.M.B. spring 2006 line during New York's Fashion Week.

**2006**  
**Hey, Baby**

Six months pregnant and still stylin': Stefani covered her bump in a L.A.M.B. leopard-print Empire-waist gown at the Grammys.

**2006**  
**'Face' Time**

Stefani's says her "Wind It Up" look was inspired by Michelle Pfeiffer's "coke whore lady" and gangster's moll from 'Scarface.'

low-key dance album, possibly to be released under the name "GS." Her boss, chairman of Interscope Geffen A&M Records Jimmy Iovine, talked her out of it.

"I saw the potential for what she could accomplish," Iovine says. "You have to remember, she's one of the last rock stars. This isn't a girl that was put together in a dance studio. She's toured clubs for 10 years, no different from the Clash. I thought she could make a mark on the culture."

That mark was the Alpine-mountain-size smash "Hollaback Girl." A late addition to *Love. Angel. Music. Baby.*, it was recorded after Stefani decided the CD lacked a "Don't f--- with me" song. The result was a perfect, pounding meld of the Neptunes' production wizardry and her feisty ska-rock chick persona, the first single to sell one million digital downloads in the U.S. and the inspiration for a number of, let's say, "homages" by other artists (think Fergie's "London Bridge"). In addition to making marching bands hip, Stefani's song "connected with the clubs and the urban centers," Iovine says. "It was not unlike Debbie Harry with 'Rapture.' With Gwen, the whole fashion thing comes through, so you actually move that cultural needle of how young kids react, feel, dance."

But not everyone warmed to Stefani's "whole fashion thing"—in particular, the showcasing of her admiration for Tokyo trendsetters via an entourage of four Japanese women that she called the Harajuku Girls. The Girls silently accompanied her on photo shoots and to public appearances, and subsequently appeared on her tour. Stefani regarded the Girls, all of whom looked as if they had come straight off the streets of the

capital city's hip Harajuku district, as a figment of her imagination brought to life in a culturally positive manner. But last year, Korean-American comedian Margaret Cho publicly decried them as "a minstrel show."

"She didn't do her research!" spits Stefani, who says she's been a fan of Japan and its mix-and-match fashion sense since first visiting the country with No Doubt in the mid-'90s. "The truth is that I basically was saying how great that culture is. It pisses me off that [Cho] would not do the research and then talk out like that. It's just so embarrassing for her. The Harajuku Girls is an art project. It's fun!" (Cho told EW via e-mail, "I absolutely agree! I didn't do any research! I realize the Harajuku Girls rule!!! How embarrassing for me!!! I was just jealous that I didn't get to be one... I dance really good!!!")

Stefani continues: "I was surprised how racist everybody was about them. Especially when I came over here and they'd make all these jokes, like Jonathan Ross." Ross, a British TV host, asked Stefani whether an "imaginary hand job" from one of her "imaginary" dancers would count as cheating on his wife. Stefani responds, "Everybody's making jokes about Japanese girls and the stereotypes. I had no idea [I'd be] walking into that."

The Harajuku Girls make an encore appearance in the "Wind It Up" video (as von Trapp children, of course). Also returning to Stefani's side for the *Sweet Escape* project are the Neptunes and Kanal, who helped Stefani pen her favorite song on the record, "Four in the Morning."

After Kingston's May 26 birth, Stefani sought out new collaborators, including rapper Akon, producer Sean Garrett (Beyoncé's *B'Day*), and Tim

# Becoming Gwen Stefani

So what made her the global megastar she is today apart from *The Sound of Music*? British ska, the land of the rising sun, and Uncle Walt, of course.



## Vivienne Westwood

"The only time I ever spend much money on clothes is when I f---in' spend it on Vivienne Westwood. But I get a discount."



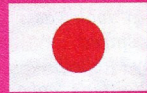
## Disneyland

"Totally an influence. My brother was a huge animation fan, so I had a very cartoon-driven upbringing."



## Madness

"I wouldn't be sitting here without them. My brother started playing this Madness record, 'Our House,' and it never came off. That got us into ska. And that's why we started the band."



## Japan

"I first went there with No Doubt. I love the naive recycling of cultures, the way they suck everything in and make it their own."



## Sting

"The guy is so talented and he's cute! He was probably the first famous person I ever met. He was really rude to me. Years later I told him the story. He was, like, 'I was such an a--hole.'"

Oxley-Smith of the British band Keane. The latter co-wrote a tortured and not un-Keane-like lament called "Early Winter." "She likes to write from the heart," Oxley-Smith says. "She's obviously quite an emotional person. Within 10 minutes of us sitting down, she was crying. I played her a little bit of a thing that I'd been working on just before she came in and she welled up about it."

Though Stefani made her solo-career mark with the upbeat "Hollaback Girl," it was the melancholic 1996 ballad "Don't Speak" that took No Doubt from little ska band to serious platinum recording act and made Stefani a celebrity. Their

first No. 1 single, "Don't Speak," dealt directly with Stefani's tortured, drawn-out breakup with Kanal. Stefani also got personal on the 2000 No Doubt single "Ex-Girlfriend," in which she references a brief separation from Rosedale: "I kinda always knew I'd end up your ex-girlfriend." Given all that, it seems reasonable to ask how much fans should read into the heart-wrenching lyrics to "Early Winter," the chorus of which finds Stefani singing, "And I always was, always was, one for crying/Always was the one for tears/No, I never was, never was one for lying/You lied to me all these years."

"The lyrics on this album are probably more autobiographical than the last," she concedes. "A song like 'Wind It Up' isn't about anything. But there are definitely a few relationship songs on there."

But does Rosedale ever say, Look, if you put this on the album people are going to be thinking, What's going on here?

"No, of course he doesn't," she replies before continuing, hesitantly. "I mean... I think it's like... It's vague enough that it's... And... To be honest, everyone has the same problems. We all have the same problems. And there's nothing to hide about that. I could have a problem with Gavin at some point in our marriage. I've been with him for over 10 years. I'm not ashamed of it. It's just, like, working through it. And songs are so good at helping you get through things. I think it's a really good way to put things behind you and document it and move forward. I'm not ever scared to share my situations with people."

**B**ack at the Cuckoo Club in London, around 20 people have arrived to help with, or observe, the photo shoot. The star of the show, however, is sound asleep. We refer, of course, not to Gwen Stefani but to baby Kingston, whose beatific, slumbering, Gavin-favoring face is being inspected with utter devotion by Stefani, her U.K.-visiting parents, and assorted Rosedale in-laws. (Gavin himself is recording in Los Angeles.)

Stefani admits she too could do with a doze, having wrapped *The Sweet Escape* just a week before. (In fact, following the shoot, she goes straight to her bed and gets under the covers with Kingston.) "I was literally doing vocals and mastering and mixing all at one time" in a race to make the release date, she says. She swears that her fellow No Doubt members were happy about her decision to record a second solo CD, despite the fact that the band hasn't released an album of new material since 2001. At least they *were* happy when the plan was for her CD to come out in 2005—and before she decided to embark on a full world tour in 2007.

**"Songs are so good at helping you get through things," says Stefani.**

"I'm sure they were, like, bummed that I was going on tour," she says. "But everybody's busy. It's not like they're sitting around going, 'Where's Gwen?' They all have their projects. I need to do the tour to complete my life journey of this whole thing. I felt like I got ripped off on the last tour because I was pregnant. Although I can't believe I'm going to do it, especially with Kingston."

Speaking of whom, has Stefani thought about the possibility of a little brother or sister for the nipper? After all, as every good *Sound of Music* fan knows, there were no fewer than seven von Trapp children. "I really want to have more," she says with a big smile. "One solo record, two solo records. One baby, two babies. I always want more of everything!" ■

PAGE 35: STING: EVERETT COLLECTION; (THIS PAGE) WESTWOOD: AND STEFANI: FOG KAN/WIREIMAGE.COM; DISNEYLAND: MADNESS: RON WOLFSON/WIREIMAGE.COM; JAPAN: FLAG: GETTY IMAGES/WIREIMAGE SOURCE; STING: ALFREDO ROCHA/WIREIMAGE.COM