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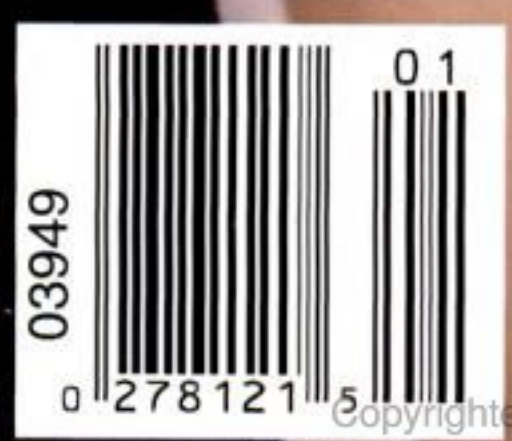
ISSUE starring Gwen Stefani

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Go, Gwen! Go!

Our fave rock star-designer dropped some knowledge on what it's like to release a solo CD, and how every good song deserves a slamming outfit. By Crystal Meers

It's been two years since the hardest-rocking lady in music first graced our cover. Since then, Rock Steady and No Doubt's Greatest Hits have taken the world by storm, lovely L.A.M.B. gear has hit the streets, and that fine fiancé Gavin Rossdale has become the very lucky Mr. Stefani. As if that's not enough, Gwen somehow found time to team up with powerhouses Andre 3000 of OutKast, Eve and the Neptunes to make a solo album, which hit stores November 23. It's totally a big deal. The record, *Love Angel Music Baby*, is a dance-party dream and marks Gwen's first magical musical adventure without the No Doubt family. (Don't worry—they're not breaking up!)

ELLEgirl: We're so excited about *Love Angel Music Baby*. But Gwen, weren't you supposed to take last year off?

Gwen Stefani: I mean, we were supposed to be off, but we put out the *Greatest Hits* album, we went to the Grammys, we went on tour, we put out a B-sides collection.

GS: Finding your passion is such a great thing, because then it's not like work. It's like doing something because you just can't help yourself. I feel very lucky. No Doubt have always been huge. We were playing for, like, 2,000 people from our first show on. We definitely had a cult following, and a long time ago I could go into any record store and someone would go, "That's the girl from No Doubt." Then we got to travel the world. The biggest shock was seeing how we could be pulled apart by being together every single day in such an intense way. Playing shows sucks the blood out of you. And no one tells you are going to do interviews and talk about yourself the whole freaking time, while being an ex-girlfriend of the bandmate sitting next to you [Tony], talking about yourselves and what happened. But I know how lucky I am and how incredible it's been.

ELLEgirl: Were you into fashion when you were a teenager?

GS: I was anti-fashion-magazine. I was a little ska wannabe punker, and I was about thrift stores and making my clothes

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It was a huge year for No Doubt. We are 18 years into the band, and No Doubt has been having our cake and eating it too and having so, so, so, so, so much fun.

ELLEgirl: What inspired you to make this album?

GS: This record came from me sitting on the bus listening to Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam and Club Nouveau and saying to Tony [Kanal, No Doubt's bassist], 'Hey, I wanna make a dance record.' I wrote a song and another song, and then I thought to myself, *Oh, my God! I want to make a dance record before I die, and it's like time is running out!* So I just pushed myself and went for it.

ELLEgirl: What was it like working on your own?

GS: I thought it would be fun and fast and easy, but really it was the most challenging hurdle. When you are used to doing something your whole life with the same group of people, you get used to that security. When that comfort is taken away, it's really frightening. For the new album, I would go into the studio with all these really talented people and I would start drowning in all their creativity. I'm used to doing all the words and melodies, but this album was not like that. It was about being open to other people's ideas. I wanted to see if their talent might teach me something.

ELLEgirl: Did you ever expect to be where you are today?

and being different. My mom and grandma made me clothes before I learned how. It's in my blood.

ELLEgirl: So was it natural for you to do a clothing line.?

GS: Right after I first started L.A.M.B., I had big regrets. I knew it was going to be hard, but not this hard. Usually musicians put their name on a line and don't have control. I would never sell out like that. What's the point of having your name on something if you don't have anything to do with it? I look at the first collection and I see all the mistakes, but everyone else seems to really like it. Now I think about what I want to wear and know that soon I'll have a closet full of my dreams.

ELLEgirl: How do you connect fashion and music?

GS: In the past I was embarrassed to talk about fashion and my style, because I was always like, the music had to be the most important thing. I thought anyone could get dressed up and dance around, but writing songs takes something. It takes God to be like, "Here. You can write a song." It's not talent. It's like magic. But I think that fashion and music come from the same place of creativity. Once you write a song, you want to get dressed up and celebrate it. Music is so magical, it deserves some good outfit to go with it. □

To see more of our interview, go to ellegirl.com/gwen.

Gwen Answers Your Questions

How was high school for you? Do you have any tips for making it through alive? —Alexandra Kaul, 14, San Diego

GS: I don't even know that girl I was in high school, she was so different. I hated high school, not because of the social parts but because of the learning—you know, the part that you actually go to school for. Learning and focusing were really hard. I still have a hard time spelling and doing math, and thank God for spell-check. After high school I went to junior college and worked really hard and got a B average, and then I transferred to a four-year college and kept studying. As far as making it through, you should just focus on school, because learning is what is going to make you great, not getting caught up in drama.

How did you and Gavin meet? —Fiona Lake, 15, West Point, CA

GS: I remember the head of our then-label, Interscope, was always talking about Gavin and his band Bush. At the time, I was into a different kind of music. But the label wanted our bands to tour together. We knew that Bush didn't want to take us on tour, and we were like, "We don't want to go on tour with them." Then, at KROQ's Acoustic Christmas [concert in 1995], I met him backstage, and I got shot by some arrow. As soon as I looked at him, I started trying everything in my power not to like that guy. But sometimes with love you don't have a choice.

