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# instinct

SWEET SCOOP!

## GWEN STEFANI

WIGS OUT & WINDS IT UP!

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DEBBIE WAS RIGHT!  
WHY WE'RE DOING DALLAS



# THE ESCAPE ARTIST

New album? New tour? The possible return of No Doubt in the near future? No problem. But this time around, **Gwen Stefani's** got a baby on board

G

wen Stefani wanted to be sure that her return from a between-albums hiatus was going to be, well, a *windup*. “I was thinking about how you disappear and come back, and I’m kind of coming back from being gone a minute,” Gwen hollas back over dinner at hip London eatery Nobu. “The idea was to focus on the word ‘escape.’ I started thinking about the idea of Houdini. His whole gimmick was that his wife used to kiss him and pass the key through her mouth to him, and he would escape from his traps.”

Pry as we might, we can’t exactly confirm whether Gwen and husband Gavin Rossdale [Ed: *Swoon!*] are well-practiced in such techniques themselves, but we do know one thing she can’t escape from: her status as the coolest California Girl in popular music.

While we here at *Instinct* don’t throw the term “gay icon” around lightly, loyal readers know that not only is Gwen one of a total of three females to grace the cover of our prestigious circular, she’s the only one to do so twice. Draw from that what you will.

But thrilled as she is with this honor, Gwen’s got a crowded laundry list of chores to busy herself with after dinner—Album promotion! L.A.M.B. fashion shows! Baby Kingston! The Harajuku Girls!—so let’s get to the inquiries. →

Between its nod to Japanese fashion culture and retro, leg-warmer beats and melodies, Gwen Stefani's first solo album, 2004's *Love. Angel. Music. Baby.*, seemed to hit shelves—and iTunes—at the right time. Not only did it go on to sell seven million copies, but its pom-pom-shakin' sass anthem, "Hollaback Girl," became the first million-selling digital single. But Gwen's not one to go down the same road twice.

"All my inspirations were completely different on this record," she says. "On the last one it was all about the '80s-inspired dance music—the music I danced to growing up. But this time, I was over all that and felt like I was in a whole different place. I called the record *The Sweet Escape*, which is basically a song on the album. But it was a perfect name for the album because the music takes you away, and it's definitely a dancey, poppy, sugarcoated set of just delicious ear candy."

**INSTINCT:** Somehow, a wig seems to have found its way atop your head lately.

**GWEN STEFANI:** The visual theme is all inspired by Michelle Pfeiffer's character in *Scarface*—very glam, straight-angled-cut blond bangs with the big eye gear. Also, my new logo is basically a "G" that looks like a windup key. It also kind of looks like a guitar. We kind of play on that whole [Houdini] story, with it basically being the key to getting off the dance floor.

**Speaking of glam gear and accessories, where's the love with L.A.M.B., your fashion line, Gwen? There's not a darned thing for us boys to wear!**

You can't forget the boys! I didn't mean to leave the boys out. I will definitely speak to my team about that. You'll be the first to know. Look out!

**Hmmm. Anyway, you worked with the incredibly dashing Tim Rice-Oxley—the keyboardist from Keane—on *The Sweet Escape*. How was that?**

I wrote "Early Winter" with Tim, who I love. I discovered [Keane's] first record when it was given to me. I was actually sent a couple tracks from them for my last record. *Do I want these tracks?* I was kind of like, *I don't know*. At the time, it just didn't feel right. But this time around, I just really wanted to have a *ballad* on this record, you know? I know this sounds funny, but I wanted to write "Eyes Without A Face" by Billy Idol or, like, "Killing Me Softly" or "Time After Time" by Cyndi Lauper. So I got together with Tim, who'd never written outside

**NUTHIN' BUT A "G" THANG**

Gavin Rossdale: "The wig looks better on me, mates."



of his group before. I can describe him like Superman. He *looks* like Clark Kent. He's really handsome, but in a subtle kind of way. And then he's super-crazy, over-the-top talented—like, Superman-talented. It was scary, though, because you go in and you meet each other, then you have to sit down at the piano and write a song. It's awkward, but he was so sweet. When I talked to him the night before we were going in, he was taking my order for what I wanted, and writing it down. "Okay, so you want Cyndi Lauper, 'Eyes Without A Face'..." We wrote three or four songs together, and "Early Winter" was the one that I liked. It's beautiful and it's so addictive. I'm very lucky to have worked with him.

**Let's talk about this sample of "The Lonely Goatherd" on your new single, "Wind It Up."**

It's just a dream I've always had. *The Sound Of Music* is one of my favorite, favorite movies of all time, and one of my biggest inspirations is Julie Andrews. I don't know, something about that film, it's just touched me over the years, and so I've referenced it a million times for other things. I did a whole session with [producer] Pharrell [Williams] about a year ago, and we wrote four tracks that were

all amazing. The first one was "Wind It Up." I took the track and, against his will [laughs], had a friend of mine do a remix with a mash-up between *The Sound Of Music* and "Wind It Up." I actually cried! I know that sounds ridiculous, but it was so good and so fresh and amazing.

**And now you've single-handedly introduced a new generation to the von Trapps!**

I know a lot of people probably don't know *The Sound Of Music*, and hopefully this is my way of sharing something that I think is really great. Maybe people will go out and watch it. It's a really good film.

**S**tefani, along with No Doubt—the Anaheim-based band she fronts—leapt out of the O.C. and into the homes of ten million record buyers a decade ago. Their biggest hit implored us not to speak, but really we just couldn't stop talking about how varied the group's sound was.

"I grew up listening to a lot of different styles of music—everything from the L.A. punk scene to the local ska scene," Gwen remembers. "Ska was a major part of No Doubt's sound. I also remember bobbing along to pop or dance

ditties I'd hear on the radio. I work really hard to try and reach into different genres, so I hope that comes through."

Around the time of No Doubt's early success, Stefani met Gavin Rossdale, lead singer of Brit-rock act Bush. The two eventually married in 2002, and this past May, little Kingston James McGregor Rossdale was born in Los Angeles.

"I just really wanted to have a ballad on this record. I wanted to write 'Eyes Without A Face' by Billy Idol or 'Killing Me Softly' or 'Time After Time.'"

Shortly after, as all brand-new mothers do, she made a beeline to the studio to finish her sophomore solo album.

"I didn't have the luxury that I had before, where I would just stay up all night," Gwen says of the sessions. "I would go in to record and have the nanny there. She had to sit right there with the baby while I did this. I am very blessed because he's such a chilled little guy. He's seen me do my makeup four thousand times! He's been in every studio in L.A., every studio in New York, every studio in London. He's been on a jet. He's been on a helicopter. He's been everywhere!"

And as jet-setting Kingston racked up frequent-flier miles, Mom finished the album and is now preparing to hit the road yet again this April (her 2005 *Harajuku Lovers* tour was chronicled on a recently released live DVD). "We're going all over the U.S. and the rest of the world," she says. Then, smiling toward Kingston, she adds, "This time around I'm going to bring something along that I didn't have on the last tour."

**Let's face it: Your husband is hot! Please tell us he's got at least one flaw.**

Oh, you don't have to tell me! He is amazing and supportive...not to mention gorgeous! Also, he's a wonderful father. What more could I ask for?

**It's been nearly six years since the last No Doubt album came out. Is there any truth to the rumors of a new project with the band in the next year?**

A girl's gotta have some secrets—wink, wink! I'm sure at some point we'll be doing something. Right now all I can focus on is *The Sweet Escape* and the upcoming tour.

**The last tour was your first one without the rest of No Doubt by your side. Did that affect you in any way?**

Definitely! It was a real adjustment in the beginning. I mean, I had the same guys beside me for 20 years, so it's a totally different experience. And to some extent, it's a different energy that you give as well as receive from the

audience. But I started to find my ground and a whole other level of confidence in myself as the tour progressed. It was a real challenge, but it was also a great learning curve for me as a performer.

**What can we expect from this new tour?**

Complete mayhem! A lot of costume changes, of course, and just a great party. I've upped the crew, so there are a lot more people onstage dancing with me. I had a lot of fun auditioning the new dancers—four girls and four yummy boys! It's really energetic and up. The production design is going to be quite elaborate.

**Speaking of performing: Say, for instance, you woke up one morning and realized you're actually a drag queen, and you've got 10 minutes before you go onstage. What would your name be, and how would your act go?**

[Laughs] Hmmmm. How about Anna Heim?

My act would cover a wide range of styles, from early ska/reggae classics to Broadway classics and a few '80s dance tunes. Don't forget the red lipstick and platinum blonde hair. Oh, and great backlighting! *Always* great backlighting.

**D**espite her hectic life, apparently flawless husband and that whole business of being a "superstar," we still can't shake the feeling that, at the heart of it, Gwen's the kind of down-to-earth girl we'd love to pal around with. This leads us to wonder, *Had we been BFFs roaming the halls of high school together during the '80s, in that fair land known as Orange County, what kind of naughty shenanigans would we get up to?* "Oh, maybe hit a few clubs in the neighborhood, or maybe hang out at the house and watch one of my favorite movies," she ponders, while we imagine *Sound Of Music* slumber parties. "I used to enjoy dancing and checking out new music while growing up. I don't get to do that as much. Now I just love to hang out with Kingston."

Ah, yes, Kingston—the small, cuddly reminder that Gwen Stefani is, after all, just a girl in the world. "I dedicated the album to him," she points out, gathering her son up to leave. "I just want him to grow up and look back and to know how important he is. He's just, like, the most delicious...I can't even—See, I have no words for him. Isn't he yummy?" instinct

*Both The Sweet Escape album and the Harajuku Lovers Live DVD are out now.*

## SHE'S SO UNUSUAL GWEN ON ONE OF HER BIGGEST INFLUENCES GROWING UP:



"I would have to say **Cyndi Lauper**. She just blew me away. She really was unusual and unique. Aside from the great songs and the look, she gave you something that came from an outsider's point of view. She knew what was left of center, and she made it okay for young girls like myself at that time to connect with that within themselves. I got the chance to meet Cyndi six years ago. She came to one of the No Doubt concerts at Irving Plaza in New York. *Wow!* What an experience!"