

# 46

Gwen Stefani

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# A Sweet Escape

**GWEN STEFANI** continues her ultra-successful Las Vegas run

By **JOSH BELL**

When Gwen Stefani had her first hit songs as the front-woman for No Doubt, she didn't seem like the type of performer to headline a Las Vegas show. No Doubt came up in the punk/ska scene in Orange County, Calif., in the early '90s, and in the band's initial music videos, Stefani was rocking the skater-punk look, sneering and head-banging and challenging anyone who might think she was "Just a Girl." Stefani has retained plenty of that attitude even as her music has gotten slicker and pop-oriented, and she brings those roots into her Vegas show.

With No Doubt, Stefani led one of the most popular alt-rock bands of the '90s, moving from the guitar-driven rock of early hits "Just a Girl," "Spiderwebs" and "Don't Speak" to the more synth-heavy, beat-oriented hits like "Hella Good," "Hey Baby" and the Talk Talk cover "It's My Life," which reflected the increasing influence of '80s pop music on the band's sound. As the band's popularity grew, Stefani found herself in the spotlight more and more, collaborating on hit singles by artists including Moby and Eve.

By the time Stefani released her debut solo album *Love. Angel. Music. Baby.* in 2004, it was clear she was destined to be a pop superstar. On her own away from her bandmates, Stefani embraced dance-pop and hip-hop sounds, combined with her cheeky, upbeat attitude, and scored hits with "Hollaback Girl," "What You Waiting For?" and "Rich Girl," another collaboration with rapper Eve. Stefani has since become one of the biggest pop

singers in the world, with two more solo albums and later hits including "The Sweet Escape," "Baby Don't Lie," "Used to Love You," "Make Me Like You" and "Misery."

Stefani also joined the NBC singing competition series *The Voice* as a coach in 2014, which has elevated her to a whole new pop-culture level that goes beyond releasing albums and singles. Stefani has become one of the most recognizable personalities on TV, and she's collaborated musically with fellow *Voice* coaches Adam

Levine and Blake Shelton (who's also her partner in her personal life). Her most recent release is the 2017 holiday album *You Make It Feel Like Christmas*, featuring the hit title track, a duet with Shelton.

All of those experiences helped bring Stefani to Las Vegas, where the *Just a Girl* show launched at Planet Hollywood in June 2018, and was recently extended through November

2019. The set list includes a mix of No Doubt and Stefani solo songs, along with

select covers like Rihanna's "Umbrella." Stefani is a long way from her early skate-punk days, and the production features costume changes, back-up dancers and video interludes. Stefani keeps things loose, always singing live and frequently bantering with the audience. *Billboard* called Stefani "a talented girl in the world, uncompromising, giving it her all with little artifice" during the show's debut. Stefani was never "just a girl," and she's spent her entire career proving that.

## Planet Hollywood Resort

9 p.m. Dec. 27 & 29-31,  
starting at \$80 plus tax  
and fee. 800.745.3000  
Ticketmaster

