

Gwen's **NEXT**

Superstar **Gwen Stefani** is making a big life change with her latest venture

Grammy winner, fashion mogul, TV star — **Gwen Stefani** thrives on new challenges, and now the 48-year-old is tackling yet another: Vegas, baby! Her Just a Girl residency kicks off June 27 at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino, and she says it'll be a game changer for both her career and her life with her three sons and beau **Blake Shelton**.

Did you discuss doing a Las Vegas residency with your sons?

Honestly, my kids don't have too much of a say on the schedule. But touring is hard with them, because you can't pull



LOVE STORY

Gwen says she and her love of two and a half years, Blake — leaving church in April with her sons, Kingston, 12, Zuma, 9, and Apollo, 4 — “share everything.”



CHAPTER

them out of school — it's not fair. I did my last tour because I had this life crisis [splitting from husband **Gavin Rossdale** in 2015], and the music came pouring out of me. It was such a lifesaver, and I went on a summer tour with the kids. They love it, but it isn't realistic. And touring takes so much out of me as far as focusing on the rest of my life.

It sounds like your priorities have shifted.

Yes. The residency will really work for me as a mom, because it's these little chunks of time where you can fly in

and out. It also works creatively — it's a new challenge. It feels like the perfect next chapter for me.

What do you love about performing?

I always think it's fine if I never do it again. Then when I get on stage, I'm like, "Oh my God, I love this!" I love my music, I love being up there. It's my gift — it's what I'm here for. I'm obviously at the end of my journey of being a musician...

Why would you say that?

Well, because of my age, and I've been doing it for thirtysomething years. A Las Vegas show is a way to express myself and do my whole catalog of music that defines every period in my life, all the crises and all the joys. Creatively, I couldn't have done it sooner; I had to have all these songs.

Has Blake had any input into the show?

Obviously, he's my best friend, so I'm bouncing stuff off him all the time. He's supersupportive and gets me

motivated. There are a bunch of songs about him in the show, so that's fun.

What's your routine before you go onstage? Do you meditate or pray?

We do a group prayer circle. But first I do my makeup! [laughs] I have a song called "War Paint," and makeup is like getting into character for me.

You named your show after your early hit "Just a Girl." Is there a message in that song that keeps you grounded?

If you really knew me or saw how I grew up, I am 100 percent the same person I have always been. When I wrote that song, I was 25, going to college, living at my parents'. I guess I wanted to say, "This is my DNA." I'm just a girl from Anaheim [Calif.], and I've never been anything else. But at the same time, I've gotten this far. And for a song like that to be relevant 20 years later? In a way, it's more relevant now, with so much going on with female empowerment. I thought I'd be too old to say "just a girl," but it still works! **OK!**

WHAT J.LO KNOWS

When she was putting together her Vegas show, Gwen looked to an old friend, **Jennifer Lopez**. "We've known each other through the years; she's always invited me to her kids' birthday parties," says Gwen, who caught J.Lo's All I Have residency in March. "I'd never seen her do a performance live. The show was incredible, and she is a crazy hard worker. It was so inspiring to see... and scary!" Even more awe-inducing? Backstage, Gwen says, J.Lo "came out of her dressing room looking like a Barbie doll. She was breathtaking on stage, but when you see her up close, it's like, 'What?! It's not possible. You are so gorgeous!'"



SIN CITY SIZZLE

After 100 shows, J.Lo told her pal "she's really enjoyed it, but she said it is challenging," says Gwen.