

IN THE STUDIO



ROCK STEADY

Young, Kanal, Stefani and Dumont (from left) at Spike Stent's Santa Monica studio

No Doubt Blast Back With 'Catchy and Addictive' New LP

Gwen Stefani and crew prepare to rule radio with first disc in a decade

GWEN STEFANI HATES it when people point out that No Doubt haven't released an album in 10 years. "A lot of stuff happened during that time period," she says. "Marriages, babies and, for me, two records and two

Album Title TBD
Due Out TBD

clothing lines. So if you really worked out the math, you'd be like, 'Wow, you guys are going *fast*.'"

Their sixth album, still untitled, is about two months from completion, but they give a visitor to producer Spike Stent's sleek Santa Monica studio a taste: "Settle Down" is a party-ready reggae blast featuring Stefani's toasting skills; "One More Summer" updates the band's ska-pop sound with pounding dance beats, arena-size guitars and a beyond-catchy chorus — "One more summer/One more weekend/I'm your lover/You're my weakness." Drummer Adrian Young tells his bandmates he can't wait to play the song live: "I might lose control and shit all over myself."

During No Doubt's hiatus, Young drummed for Maroon 5 and Scott Weiland; bassist Tony Kanal focused on production work, including Pink's smash single "Sober"; guitarist Tom Dumont did some producing of his own, including Matt Costa's debut album. Stefani released two hit albums, *Love. Angel. Music. Baby.* and *The Sweet Escape*. "Those come from my girl side and theatrical side." With No Doubt, Stefani says, she's "heels off."

No Doubt started working on this album in 2008, but Stefani was pregnant with Zuma, her second son with Gavin Rossdale, and was having trouble focusing on songwriting. She remembers her frame of mind: "I'm already creating something — I have nothing left." Instead, the band hit the road in the summer of 2009. According to *Pollstar*, the tour sold 781,615 tickets and grossed \$34 million over 57 shows. "We had so much fun," Stefani says. "Backstage, we had all the nannies and the babies and the blowup swimming pools." (The four members of No Doubt now have eight children between them. Dumont remembers his son Ace, then three, acclimating to life on the road. "He'd say, 'Daddy, where's catering?'")

The band reconvened in November 2009, writing from around 4 p.m. to midnight in Kanal's studio (featuring a view of Hollywood that Dumont describes as "distractingly gorgeous" — Kanal had to install curtains). Working together again just felt right. "I had gone on my tortured journey of working with outside songwriters," Stefani says. "I would throw up if someone made me do that again."

"Writing with other people is a learning experience," Kanal adds, "but when you come back, and you're sitting in a room together, it feels like home."

No Doubt obsessively polished each song, Kanal says. "We would say, 'OK, the B section isn't good enough, let's rewrite that,' until we felt the song was great." After laboring through 2010, they had nine songs ("Ten if we write the chorus for that last one," says Kanal), and have spent 2011 recording them with Stent.

"It's so exciting to have a record coming out," Stefani says, almost vibrating with glee. "And we all want the same thing: for it to be modern and catchy and addictive. Once you make music that connects with people, it's like you taste blood — you can't go back." **GAVIN EDWARDS**