

make it together – all 6 billion of us.” —YOKO ONO, AT THE LENNON TRIBUTE

ROCK & ROLL

No Doubt's Party Music

Globe-trotting from L.A. to London to Jamaica, the band hooks up with William Orbit, Prince, and Sly and Robbie for its fourth album, *Rock Steady*

BY GAVIN EDWARDS

NO DOUBT BEGAN AS A GOOD-TIME ska-party band, full of California sunshine. But in the last few years, that's been obscured by smog: bruised egos within the band, gloomy lyrics and weak record sales for last year's *Return of Saturn*. The bad times are all gone on their upcoming album, *Rock Steady*, reports singer Gwen Stefani. "We're not taking ourselves so seriously," she says. "It's like, get over it. We're a fucking band and we're really lucky to be doing what we do."

Rock Steady, out December 18th, is a sweet pop confection, made with arrays of keyboards, a dance-floor sensibility and an all-star cast of producers, from Ric Ocasek to William Orbit to Prince. "We never met these people before," says Stefani. "I guess we're popular enough to

meet them now." To make the record, the band traveled from L.A. to Jamaica to London. But *Rock Steady* was born in the most propitious of locations: at a party. Or more precisely, a series of parties. Every night after the concerts on their *Return of Saturn* tour, No Doubt would slap Jamaican dance-hall CDs into a boombox and cram their dressing room full of sweaty dancing people.

So at a band dinner late in 2000, they decided they wanted to explore

IN THE STUDIO

McCartney Leads Benefits Effort

The Who, Macy Gray and others join him in a New York fund-raiser

IN THE MONTH FOLLOWING September 11th, musicians were unrelenting in their efforts to aid victims of the terrorist attacks. On September 28th, Paul McCartney announced he would help organize the Concert for New York. The event, to be staged at Madison Square Garden on October 20th and broadcast live on VH1, will also feature performances by the

Who, Eric Clapton, Mick Jagger, Bon Jovi, James Taylor, John Mellencamp, Goo Goo Dolls, Macy Gray, Melissa Etheridge and others.

Some of the best seats in the house are reserved for 5,000 rescue workers, as a way of showing thanks for their tireless work since the attacks. One hundred percent of the proceeds will go to the Robin Hood Relief Fund, which will distribute [Cont. on 28]



Adrian Young, Gwen Stefani, Tony Kanal and Tom Dumont (from left) in London

those dancehall grooves. As manager Jim Guerinot remembers it, "Everybody sat down and said, 'What would be the most fun thing to do?'" They decided to be experimental and to just enjoy themselves.

"Not to put *Return of Saturn* down – I'm proud of that record – but at a certain point, making it was like going to work," says guitarist Tom Dumont. That sense of toil came through in the music; *Saturn* sold only 1.4 million copies, 6 million less than *Tragic Kingdom*. On January 2nd, the band began gathering at Dumont's apartment. He outfitted his computer with Pro Tools and some synths – "fairly basic stuff," he emphasizes.

"We'd take a song we loved," says Stefani. "It could be anything – I know we used an Elastica song at one point. We'd try to put it in the computer, copying the drumbeat with our own drumbeat. But it would always come out different."

Stefani would often sit on the

couch, watching, until it was time for her to record her lyrics. She says, "I usually do this thing where I go read Sylvia Plath and get all depressed or find different words that inspire me. It was challenging for me to say, 'I'm gonna write it right now, we're gonna record it right now, and tomorrow we're gonna write a new song.'"

In February, Stefani had to leave Los Angeles; she was flying to London to visit her beau, Gavin Rossdale, lead singer of Bush. Unfortunately, No Doubt was in the middle of recording "Detective," which sets a tale of distrustful lovers over a thick wash of synthesizers. Bass player Tony Kanal objected: "Fuck, dude, you can't leave – we're going with you." So the band jetted to London and finished the song there.

While in England, they visited the home of Dave Stewart (of the Eurythmics) and wrote a song, "Underneath It All," with him. It's a lilting, bittersweet love song, [Cont. on 28]

Alicia Keys

Alicia Keys talks about her love of the piano, her love of the piano, Gaye and Biggie first rocked her in an exclusive multi-feature. Also, visit her at www.rollingstone.com/acliakeys, for exclusive photos and covers, videos, MP3s, and more.

The Next ... Now

Radio's newest station, where we play editors' picks twenty-four hours a day. Right now, you can hear the new music from the album *Stacy's Love* by the Enemy Eat World, the album *Stacy's Love* and more.

of a Down, the Dave and Weezer destined for the future? Is hip-hop on sampling? Who is the pop's next superstar? ACE BOARDS to weigh in on how music has changed with the recent rock star most needs.

Up Close

ed Greatest Band of the 21st Century, rock your socks off in an exclusive performance at the RS of the 21st Century. Jack Black and Kyle Gass also explain, in a special interview, why they dig 'em and why they hate record companies.

Bill

terrorist attacks of the 9/11 era, we asked, "Which is the scariest band in America?" From rock and pop, here are the bands you choose as the scariest.

38% **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**

4% **BOB DYLAN**

3% **MEY SPEARS**

the scariest band

tone.com
Rolling Stone

NO DOUBT

[Cont. from 27] with the chorus "You're really lovely/Underneath it all." "There's such experience behind that simplicity," says Dumont. "I would have way overthought those chord changes."

In March, No Doubt decided that if they were to record reggae tracks, they should do them right; they went to Jamaica to work with two pairs of producers, the legendary Sly and Robbie, and the recent hitmakers Steely and Cleve. "It's easy to move music around with Pro Tools - we just brought down the disks," says Kanal. "We would spend every morning drinking rum and Cokes or Red Stripes for breakfast, to get our heads in the right space. It's a wonder we got stuff done." Only one member of No Doubt passed out in the middle of recording a track: that would be Dumont, while adding a guitar coda to a new song.

Sly and Robbie produced "Underneath It All" and "Hey Baby," a tune about boys and girls hitting on each other backstage. They were content to tweak the demos, adding some drums and loops, and bringing in guest toasters Lady Saw and Bounty Killer. "Sly didn't get on the kit," says drummer Adrian Young. "But he showed me parts on his drum machine - that's his thing now."

Steely and Cleve produced "New Friend" and "Start the Fire." Dumont recalls, "They were really nerdy, with button-down shirts, like college music professors. But they were very particular about the sound of the drum and bass: They wanted it to hit hard sonically in the cars of Miami, which was something we had never thought about."

Other tracks got parceled out to appropriate producers: William Orbit, best known for his work on Madonna's *Ray of Light*, did "Making Out," while the band took two New Wave-flavored songs ("Don't Let Me Down" and "Platinum Blonde Life") to the New Wave wellspring, Ric Ocasek, formerly of the Cars. Nellee Hooper (Soul II Soul, Sinéad O'Connor) polished off five, including "Running," a chiming lullaby reminiscent of the Thompson Twins. Kanal wrote the music on his dinky, old-school Yamaha keyboard, a gift from his father when he was thirteen.

Some of these songs will not make the final cut; at press time, the band was in the middle of deciding *Rock Steady's* track listing. "We usually have fourteen songs on an album," says Dumont. "This time, we're getting it down to twelve. I wish we had the discipline to get it

down to ten." There were other, less successful experiments in collaboration. Stefani wrote lyrics over a Dr. Dre piano loop; the band diplomatically calls the track "unfinished." Similarly, the group spent some studio time with Timbaland and the Neptunes; "Hella Good," written with the Neptunes, ended up being produced by Hooper.

And the band pulled one song out of the vaults: "Waiting Room," which didn't make it onto *Return of Saturn*. Stefani had sung on Prince's *Rave Un2 the Joy Fantastic* record; he said that in return, he would do a track for the band. It sent him a rough version of the song; he then totally rearranged it, with exotic harmonies and jungle beats. "It's got all these crazy melodies," says Stefani. "It's so good. He's such a genius. We played it for somebody from the record company, and they couldn't believe that we had that track in our back pocket." The collabora-

tion may have been inevitable; Stefani says that when she first started dating Kanal in high school, "Tony thought he was Prince."

With an embarrassment of riches, the band headed to London in late August. Destination: the studio of star mixer Spike Stent (U2, Madonna), whom Stefani met when he was working with Bush. "I've been helping them put together all the different styles," says Stent. "And putting the icing on the cake." For example, the band decided that the chorus of "Hey Baby" came too late in the song, so it moved it up to the beginning but then had to tinker with the song so that all the pieces fit.

While Stent does the actual mixing work, the guys play doubles tennis on the studio's court: Dumont and Young normally team up against Kanal and the band's personal trainer. "Tom and Adrian will kill us every time," says Kanal, "but there's something

to be said for being the underdog." The members of No Doubt sound confident, upbeat and happy to be working together, an attitude that's coming through in their music. "You couldn't play *Return of Saturn* at a party," Dumont says. "This is upbeat, like *Tragic Kingdom*. And we love Devo-y bleeps and *Star Wars* noises, so there's lots of that."

Once, every No Doubt decision was made with lots of debate and dissent. No longer. "It's not a democracy anymore," says Dumont. "Artwork and videos, that's Gwen's area. Tony does the business thing. And Adrian is the testosterone guy who wants everything to rock. Me, I just want to be the DJ at the after-show party. I'm going to get a PA system and a DJ setup, and we can get anywhere from 30 to 150 people backstage. During the concert, I'll be thinking, 'What am I going to spin tonight?'"



TRIBUTE

[Cont. from 27] the money to a variety of other charities.

"We want to show New Yorkers we love them and their city," says the Who's Pete Townshend, who has already donated money to rescue workers and police in New York. "We also want to help the families of the poorer people affected by this terrorism, and Robin Hood is skilled at that kind of help. I'd prefer to stay home and hide, but I'm getting off my ass to show where I stand."

During the four-hour show - with hosts including Jim Carrey, Meg Ryan, Jerry Seinfeld, Gwyneth Paltrow and John Cusack - artists will perform short sets, and organizers say viewers can expect surprise duets and covers. "This will be an evening of

very loud rock & roll, to pay homage to the strength and power of New York City," says VH1 President John Sykes.

Goo Goo Dolls frontman Johnny Rzeznik says he's thrilled to share a bill with McCartney and Townshend, but he's more concerned with doing something selfless. "I'm still looking for the lesson in all of this," he says. "All of a sudden, all the things I was so concerned about are so trivial. To be able to sing in front of a worldwide audience to raise money for something other than ourselves is what this job is supposed to be about."

Donations will be accepted by phone and at a special Web site set up by AOL; Sykes says that the organizers, all of whom are donating their services, simply want to do their part to help the city get back on its feet. "You can't raise enough money to help

McCartney rallies for New York.

all these victims," he says. "The ripple effect will be incredible for years to come."

Artists across the world are chipping in however they can. In Montreal, Celine Dion staged a benefit for the American Red Cross on September 28th. The following day, Willie Nelson, Neil Young and John Mellencamp headlined the fourteenth annual Farm Aid concert; concertgoers were encouraged to give money to the Fund for World Trade Center Green Market Farmers, to assist five farmers' markets that were forced to shut down following the attacks. Sonic Youth and Television's Tom Verlaine planned to stage a concert at New York's Bowery Ballroom on October 7th, to benefit the families of Mexican and South American WTC victims, as well as low-income women who lost their jobs as a result of the attacks. And the massive September 21st TV spectacle, *America: A Tribute to Heroes*, raised more than \$150 million for the United Way's September 11th Fund. The majority of that money rolled in just after the broadcast, but organizers hope to raise the stakes with the *America: A Tribute to Heroes* album and DVD, including performances by Alicia Keys, Neil Young, Paul Simon, Tom Petty and Bruce Springsteen. "Entertainers are part of the glue that keeps America stuck together," Petty says. "I want to do everything I can to show our solidarity with the country and the people who have suffered so greatly." O