

# Huge? No Doubt!

No Doubt, the biggest band to come out of America for yonks, are now winning over folks on this side of the Atlantic...but who are they, eh?



Left to right: Tom Dumont, Tony Kanal, Gwen Stefani, Adrian Young.

**T**hey're the big, nay, huuuuuge States-side band that has had more heartbreak than every episode of *ER* put together. The Californian band that worships Camden Town's very own 'nutty boys' Madness, and that boasts a crazy Doc Marten-wearing front woman with a serious make-up obsession. They are No Doubt.

You may only be familiar with the current slowster *Don't Speak*, but No Doubt's quirky mix of ska-tastic pop and burning ballads has made them a household name back home in America. Their album, *Tragic Kingdom*, has already sold a squillion copies in the US, topping the

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charts over there for a boggling seven weeks. "The first week it was at number one we were so amazed. I can't even believe we have a song on the radio!" squeaks lead singer and blonde bombshell, 27-year-old Gwen Stefani. "All our dreams have been fulfilled!"

That they've scaled the dizzy heights of the American charts is amazing, considering what they've been through. So, what's the lowdown on the foursome who'll be on everyone's stereo in '97?

No Doubt hail from the super swank chunk of California called Orange County. Back in '87, Gwen's brother Eric and his college chum John Spence, the original lead

singer, teamed up with Gwen and bassist Tony Kanal and played a few parties. They were a local hit and seemed set for instant stardom. But no: the first blow came when, tragically, John killed himself, devastating the band. Drummer Adrian Young and guitarist Tom Dumont joined up, but the doomed first album sank without a trace.

It seemed things couldn't get worse when founder member Eric left the band for good. But on top of everything, Tony, the band's bassist and Gwen's longtime boyfriend, suddenly got the "seven year itch" and broke her heart. Gwen, who wouldn't hurt a fly (officially), wreaked the ultimate rock revenge - she wrote an album about the split! Most of the tracks follow the 'Tony-how-could-you' theme and *Don't Speak* is the ultimate break up weepy. A tough way to deal with the ex, which got even stickier as their fans analysed the lyrics in detail. Tony's still in the band though, and both say they're over it: "We've become really close again," says Gwen. "Yeah, I think we're both healthier now," agrees Tony.

All in all, a pretty rocky history for No Doubt, but the band are stronger than ever. They are now so huge in the States that they get mobbed by lookalike fans ("Gwennabes") the second they step out of the door. "A lot of our following are little girls, but the audience keeps changing - now there's a much wider range." And it's sure to get wider now they've hit Britain. Will they reach the same dizzy heights over here? It's a cert, Tony sums up: "The whole year has been a complete shock. *Tragic Kingdom* was a long time in the making, so we just set ourselves this main goal. Everything after is just icing on the cake." That's one heck of a lot of icing...

## FACTS

■ Gwen is dating Gavin Rossdale, lead singer of Bush. They spent Christmas together and are reported to be 'mad' for each other.

■ When Gwen was a youngster she was so chubby her Mum put her on a diet on doctor's orders! She had to lose a whole ten pounds - so she decided to join a soccer team.

■ The video for *Don't Speak* is about the band breaking up, and features Gwen getting up to strange tricks with an orange! (oo-er)

■ Although No Doubt are one of the biggest bands in America, Tony still lives with his parents!

■ One of Gwen's fave films is *The Sound Of Music*.

■ Billy Idol (aging punky bloke and one of their heroes) actually requested to meet them.

■ Tony Kanal grew up in India, but was actually born here in England and still has family here. He is not a man-made waterway either!