

SPIN

# FEATURES

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## The Innovators, Part 2

Anyone for seconds? As our commemoration of *Spin's* 20th anniversary continues, we present conversations with 12 more artists who made music, movies, action sports, and alternative culture rock.

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## Punk Floyd

Led by Coheed and Cambria and the Mars Volta, a hairy new breed of spaced-out prog rockers want to blow your eardrums...and your mind.

*By Will Hermes*

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## Lost It at the Movies

Canadian power poppers the New Pornographers have been an indie cult success for years. Could their third album, *Twin Cinema*, finally make them a mainstream attraction?

*By Jon Dolan*

### On the Cover:

Franz Ferdinand photographed by Jason Bell in Paris. Styling by Grant Woolhead. Grooming by Terry Saxon for Jed Root, Inc. Suits, shirts, and ties by Dormeuil, except black shirt by Dior Homme by Hedi Slimane and black suit with black tie by Raf Simons.



"I was the girl who got bored in the record store. I like hits."

—Gwen Stefani, page 69

## Robert Smith

**with *Disintegration*, which was, it could be argued, more of a revolution than the one Nirvana get credit for leading. Do you think your band has been denied critical respect?** I realized very early on that if I was serious about not wanting critical acclaim, then I was going to have to forgo all the rewards you get if you're a critically acclaimed band. In a strange way, we've been more of a populist band, although that has kind of fluctuated up and down over the years. Who we are and what we represent, where we stand culturally, has never genuinely bothered me because I feel it's something that will be resolved after we've finished. When we were doing the *Disintegration* tour, we played Texas Stadium, and I can remember being backstage and there being something darkly funny about what we were about to do.

**What music has most excited you during the past 20 years?** Dinosaur Jr. and Pixies.

**You're someone who's been fairly forthcoming about your experimentation with drugs over the years. In hindsight, have drugs had a positive or negative effect on the last two decades of pop culture?** Well, heroin is quite an absurd drug. I've never quite understood it. I've never known anyone who's been addicted to heroin that's

**"People who insist I wear white face paint—that little pin still pricks me."**

ever turned into a better person, if they managed to survive at all. Coke abuse is a pretty rubbish way to live. I think it's ludicrous to preach to people. You can point out the obvious pitfalls, which I do to my own family and friends based on experience and having watched what happens to others. I actually think that drink is the biggest killer—of minds, of people I know. All I've ever tried to get across is that if you're artistic or creative, using drugs to a degree can allow you to step outside of yourself, and it's an interesting experiment as long as you don't depend on it. But it's absolutely essential to understand that creativity does not come from drugs. It's a myth. Unfortunately, there are movements that portrayed drugs as the heart of what was going on. Dancing for hours to the same bpm [beats per minute], I think you have to take some kind of drug to do that, but it's not a very creative act. It's good fun, I suppose. Or used to be. — MARC SPITZ



"My voice is nasally and piercing, and I have no range."

# Gwen Stefani

**Do you remember what you were doing in 1985?** I remember *exactly* what I was doing. I was in high school and in love with this guy named Matt. He was on the drum line. I had a bob haircut and wore black-and-white tights and little mod-style outfits, listening to Madness or the Specials. I was hard-core into ska and thrift-store shopping, and making my own shit—trying not to be like everyone else.

**How would you like to be remembered?** The Greatest Hits tour we did last year? Every song we played every night was a hit. And until you have a hit, you don't know what it feels like to play a song like "Just a Girl" or "Don't Speak" and have a crowd of 14,000 singing it back at you. So I think we're just proud to have been able to sustain a career and move with the times and still be on the radio. That 15 minutes of fame is real, and so to be able to have anything longer than that is totally a blessing.

**Even though your solo record was so successful [*Love. Angel. Music. Baby.* spawned four hit singles, including "Hollaback Girl"], do you still think of things in the context of No Doubt?** Completely. Because Tony [Kanal, No Doubt bassist and Stefani's ex-boyfriend] was such a huge part of that record creatively, even though I only did three songs with him. So I feel like the band hasn't really gone away. This year went like a flash, and before I know it, I'm going to be sitting with those stinky boys trying to write a record.

**Which song are you most proud of?** I wrote "Simple Kind of Life" [on 2000's *Return of Saturn*] completely on my own, so I was really proud of it. I wrote it on guitar, and that was a big deal for me.

**What are your favorite records of the last 20 years?** I don't have records in order like that. I'm not a collector. My older brother was the kind of guy that would buy every version of a single, so I didn't need to. We lived in the same house. I was the girl who got bored in the record store. I like hits. I like things that stick in my head. So for me to get into a whole

album, that doesn't happen all the time. There are a few. I listen to Prince's *Under the Cherry Moon* [soundtrack] a lot. UB40's *Rat in the Kitchen*. The Police.

**Any regrets?** I regret not really learning how to play an instrument. I regret that I have to rely on other people to write songs with me. I can play guitar well enough to write a song, but not enough to be free. I guess it's not too late to learn, but you can't teach an old dog new tricks.

**But your voice is your instrument.** Definitely. If you said to me, "Would you rather be able to play piano or write lyrics and melodies?" I'd say I'd rather be able to write lyrics and melodies. I've never considered myself a great singer. I think my voice has become so familiar that people have just come to accept it for what it is. To be honest, it's kind of nasally and piercing, and I have no range.

**What's been your biggest thrill?** Being free—not having a job, but still working all the time. That freedom of creativity, and getting paid for it, so you don't have to worry if you want extra guacamole. You can afford it.

**In 1996 *Spin* ran a story on No Doubt with just a photo of you on the cover [the band tension it caused inspired the video for "Don't Speak"]. Now's your chance to talk about what you thought of that.** Having four people in a picture is hard to shoot and make look good. It really is. One person with blonde hair and lipstick really stands out on the shelf. We all understand it now. But when we got the call, we didn't think we were going to get that chance again, because we thought we were at number 15 in our 15 minutes. So we were really upset, and it pulled us apart. But we've been able to travel the world and take a million pictures together, so it seems kind of funny now. [Laughs] But I still feel bad about it. — MARC SPITZ

She can never remember what to do with decanters filled with liquid