



Platinum Cinderella

Grammy nominees No Doubt go from rags to red hot

BY STEVE APPLEFORD

Pop stardom may look like fun, but you can forget those fantasies about sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. The members of No Doubt just want to get some sleep.

Not that the band, together for 10 years, is complaining about the spectac-

ular "overnight" success of their latest release, *Tragic Kingdom*, a *Billboard* chart-topper that has turned them into MTV royalty. It's their time off-stage that's got them down. If only they could get back on the road, away from the unexpected duties of stardom—business decisions, awards ceremonies, and inter-

She's with the band: **Stefani** with (from left) **Kanal**, **Young**, and **Dumont**.

views like this one—they might actually catch some z's on a cramped tour bus.

"We've been off this entire month, and it's been like a whirlwind," says guitarist Tom Dumont, 28, at the end of a long day of meetings at Interscope Records' offices in Los Angeles. "I can't think of any days where I just hung around."

It's the day after the American Music Awards, where No Doubt's perky resurrection of '80s new wave via hit singles like "Just a Girl" and "Spiderwebs" earned them a best new artist nomination (the trophy went to neo-folk singer Jewel). Next, they'll perform at the Grammys, where the band is nominated in the same category.

"I'm a fan of those shows," admits singer Gwen Stefani, 27, sharing a couch with the band, which also includes bassist Tony Kanal, 26, and drummer Adrian Young, 27. "You make fun of everyone you hate, and you wait for your favorite person to come on for one second: 'Oh, my God! Drew Barrymore, she's rad!'"

The foursome is a casual, friendly presence today, with Stefani dressed in what she calls "the grunge version of myself." Her platinum hair is pulled back, and there's no sign of the bare midriff or beauty mark between the eyes that have made her a distinctive presence on MTV.

"Now, I can't be bothered," she jokes of her glamorous retro image. "I get to

the shows and all the girls look better than me: 'Wow, good hair!' It's become work, because I have to compete."

As for competing for the title of best new artist, the label itself is a misnomer: *Tragic Kingdom* is actually the band's third album, released in October 1995, capping a decade of struggle on the Southern California club circuit. No Doubt's bright pop, mixed with danceable elements of ska, won an early cult following but is now viewed dimly by critics seeking more emotional weight.

"I never claimed to be doing more than expressing my own life," says Stefani, who collaborates on the band's material with the other members. "If everyone wants to say my life has no meaning or depth, that's fine. But to me, those songs are real."

No Doubt was founded in Anaheim, California, in the mid-1980s by Stefani's older brother, Eric. He quit the band to work as an animator on Fox's *The Simpsons* after recording *Tragic Kingdom*, but he's since returned to full-time songwriting. "He's very happy and proud for us," Gwen says.

Any conflict within the band stems from the media's increased focus on their blond frontwoman. No Doubt addressed the issue with their video for the ballad "Don't Speak," which depicts a group coming apart over the attention lavished on the singer. "That was therapeutic," says Stefani of the video. "There were all these exciting things happening, yet everybody wasn't being included."

The quartet gets back to its roots in April with a three-month arena tour of the United States and Canada; a new album is due out next year. In the meantime, the band members are aiming to enjoy their success. "It's important to savor it," says Kanal, "because it's not going to last forever. This is just our time right now. It's going to go away, and when it does, it's going to be awesome to have these memories." ■

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