



Hot Tracks

GWEN STEFANI

I was so scared and insecure and thought it was over for me," says **Gwen Stefani** about being unable to write songs at the end of her 13-year marriage to British rock musician Gavin Rossdale. "I think the hardest thing I did," she adds, "was to get out of bed and go to the studio"—where she recorded her hit "Used to Love You." Now, 20 years after the debut of Stefani's band No Doubt and a successful solo career, the singer-songwriter has released her third solo album—*This Is What the Truth Feels Like*. She is also a judge on *The Voice*, and has a new love (country star and *Voice* colleague Blake Shelton). Here, she talks with **Lisa Robinson** about music, family, and love.

LISA ROBINSON: Reportedly, after you found out Gavin was allegedly having an affair with the nanny, you filed for divorce, and then you wrote "Used to Love You." Do you consider it a "revenge" song?

GWEN STEFANI: I went through a real period of anger, but I felt like this song was almost like a forgiveness song. It's admitting, I used to love you and now I don't. I opened this channel to writing again—it was me being honest, being real.

L.R.: Is it true that you'd only had two romantic relationships in your life?

G.S.: You have to understand where I came from. My parents fell in love in high school, and I grew up in a very conservative home—family was sacred. When I met Tony [Kanal, bassist for No Doubt and Stefani's first

boyfriend], I was only 17, and I instantly was obsessed. It was the only relationship I had really ever had. And when we broke up, I met Gavin. I was so naïve; I never even lived with a guy.

L.R.: Was it like *A Star Is Born*—No Doubt toured with Gavin's band, Bush, he was a big star, you opened for him, then your solo career surpassed his?

G.S.: Not really, because as soon as I started No Doubt, in my small pond, I always felt like I was a big star. We played shows, people were there, we were good, and there was a lot of confidence in that. No Doubt and Bush really came from different scenes. But because he was always touring, I was always touring, the most we ever spent together before we were married was like three weeks at a time.

L.R.: No Doubt was so successful; why did you want to do solo albums?

G.S.: I love being in that band and we're like a family. But sometimes I felt like I couldn't do other things I wanted to do—like costume changes and girl stuff that I was always interested in. Plus, I really loved a lot of Prince... and 80s dance music. So when the band took a break, I was excited to work with a lot of different people.

L.R.: How did you happen to go on *The Voice*?

G.S.: My baby [Apollo] was four weeks old, and the phone rang one day and it was my friend Shelli Azoff [managing partner of the L.A. Forum and wife of music mogul Irving], who said Christina Aguilera was pregnant, and would I ever consider doing the show in her place? And after you've had a baby, you can't wait to get your life back—to get back to *me*. When they told me Pharrell was doing it, I got excited about it.

L.R.: You have three children, a clothing line [L.A.M.B.], other businesses, and your music career. How do you balance your life?

G.S.: I don't. There's always been days when it doesn't really work out. Sometimes I'd get physically ill from the guilt of wanting to please everyone—that's my nature—I hate anyone to be unhappy. But I think my spiritual journey is to have had these weird relationships and write music that people can somehow relate to. I've never had a record that is almost all about being happy and in love.

L.R.: You're in love now?

G.S.: Yeah, for sure. I don't really want to go into that relationship, and God knows what's going to happen. But I feel like I'm in an amazing songwriting place; instead of being closed off, I'm thinking about positivity and how I can do something creative. I'm just doing what I want to do. It's so incredible to be in that zone. I'm always looking for the next song, and now I don't have to be insecure or write about heartache.