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NOT JUST A GIRL
NO DOUBT IN LOS ANGELES, STEFANI IN BALMAIN.

UNDERNEATH IT ALL

It's been eleven years since No Doubt released an album, and now the rock group is finally together again. We interviewed lead singer Gwen Stefani—who's on the cover of this month's issue—along with the rest of the band on their long-awaited reunion and what they've learned along the way.

BEST OF THE YEAR

PRETTY IN PRINT
EMMA ROBERTS
AND JAIME KING



They say you are nothing without your past, and as we begin a new year, what better time to look back at everything that happened in the last twelve months? From the most memorable parties to the standout trends to our favorite street-style photos, go to Vogue.com to see a roundup of the greatest moments of 2012. Plus: What we're looking forward to in 2013.

BRIGHT LIGHTS
A SHOWGOER
IN LONDON.
PHOTOGRAPHED
BY PHIL OH.



PLUS

VOGUE'S VIEW: COUTURE

Experience the haute couture spring 2013. Keep up with our exclusive coverage online: Read the reviews, rate the front row, and take a peek backstage at everything it takes to make this spectacular season come together.

TEN BEST DRESSED

Every week we select society's most stylish women. Find out if you made the cut.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Every issue, every page, from 1892 to today—explore the *Vogue* Archive online.

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LEADER OF THE PACK

Whether at home with her boys or on the road with No Doubt, Gwen Stefani proves she's still the first lady of rock. By Jonathan Van Meter. Photographed by Annie Leibovitz.

wen Stefani feels bad about her neck. Not in the strict, Nora Ephron sense. She's not wearing turtle-necks or anything. Far from it: Her neck is very much on display in her husband Gavin Rossdale's droopy black tank top. And like the rest of her body, it does

not look even remotely like that of a woman who just turned 43. (If you are feeling anything less than hella good about yourself, do not Google "Gwen Stefani's abs.") The reason she is bummed about her neck is that she can barely move it. After 26 years as the lead singer of No Doubt—a quarter century of whipping and snapping that pretty little head around onstage like a nunchuck—she is finally beginning to show some wear and tear. "I don't know what happened," she says. "A lot of muscles get used when we are playing. But sometimes I think, God, what did I do in my sleep? I slept too much. I slept too *hard*."

It's a chilly L.A. afternoon in late October, and Stefani and the boys in the band—bassist Tony Kanal, guitarist Tom Dumont, and drummer Adrian Young—are waiting around in a cavernous rehearsal space in Burbank, getting ready to run through an eighteen-song set. They have been holed up here rehearsing not only for an imminent European promotional tour for their first album in eleven years, *Push and Shove*, but perhaps more important, for a last-minute request from President Obama for a command performance on Jay Leno tomorrow. Who knew Barry was a fan? "He asked us once before," says Stefani, "but it was to do a whole set at a fundraiser in San Francisco and we were in the middle of rehearsals, and we just couldn't swing it. This is what happens: These opportunities come along and I'm like, 'But I don't know the new songs yet! I have to focus!'"

The other thing that's got Gwen rattled is that this is one of the few times that No Doubt has allowed a writer to watch them rehearse. And on top of all that, her voice is starting to

go. "It's not like I have that much control over it," she says. "It's what I was given. Sometimes I don't realize how much I'm straining. I have to be really careful because there's so much coming up."

Though she is dressed in black leggings and lace-up oxblood Doc Martens boots—in other words, ready to rock—the band has decided to take it easy and sit in chairs arranged in a circle for a quiet, almost acoustic run-through. As Stefani pulls up a folding chair and straddles it backward, she looks over at me leaning against a giant speaker and begins to dote. "Can we get him a headset and connect it to my mic?" A techie appears and wires me up. "Do we have a book of lyrics so he can follow along?" A notebook with lyrics is produced.

If one of the hallmarks of a great rock band is that you instantly know it when you hear it, then No Doubt clears that hurdle easily. It can be no one else. This is a No Doubt song, and that is Gwen Stefani's awesomely weird plucked-rubber-band voice: *bwouwayng-a-wayng-a-wayng!* Hers is not a subtle instrument, but there is so much character in it—she can effortlessly telegraph ironic brattiness or howling indignation or coy sweetness—that you don't mind its limitations. And when she is sitting still and singing softly, it can really stop you in your tracks.

What's also striking is how deceptively clever so many of those early songs are—how excellently they rock, how well they hold up. Stefani didn't start mining her life for material until the band's 1995 breakthrough album, *Tragic Kingdom*, which sold 17 million copies worldwide on the back of the smash hit "Don't Speak," which she famously wrote about the humiliation of being dumped after a seven-year relationship with Kanal while they remained together as bandmates. (For a while there, with all the florid melodrama laid bare in songs like "End It on This" and "Happy Now?," it felt as if they were vying to be their generation's Fleetwood Mac, *Tragic Kingdom* their *Rumours*.)

As the old familiar songs pile up, Stefani begins to sway in her chair—singing more forcefully, actually moving her head a bit—while her neuroses come into sharper focus through the lyrics: a fixation on the passage of time; regret over the paths not taken; a longing for a simpler life. The band plays a few of



ROCK STEADY

"What sets Gwen apart for sure from the Katy Perrys, the Taylor Swifts, is that she fronts a rock band," says No Doubt member Tom Dumont. Saint Laurent by Hedi Slimane silk blazer, scarf, blouse with ruffle detail, wool vest, trousers, and felt hat. Details, see In This Issue.

Fashion Editor:
Tonne Goodman.

the new songs, one called "Sparkle," which Stefani wrote years ago and is classic No Doubt, and another called "One More Summer," a wistful tune that verges on treacly soft-rock. Suddenly, Stefani decides they need to get out of their seats and go full tilt. The chairs are cleared away, the amps are turned up. "Are you ready?" she says to me. "This is going to be really loud." They lean into "Looking Hot," easily the best song on the album, one that reminds you that for all of her rock-star swagger, Gwen Stefani has always had a certain amount of existential angst about her life—questioning her pursuit of fame, her vanity, and even herself.

*I'm chasing it, I don't know why
I think about it a lot
Better hurry, running out of time
I think about it a lot*

During a break, Stefani's acupuncturist, Moses, has turned up at the studio to work on her neck, and so I head outside and sit in the sun at a round picnic table with Dumont, Kanal, and Young. When No Doubt's last album, *Rock Steady*, came out in 2001, there was no Twitter, no Facebook, no YouTube; people were still buying CDs at Tower Records on Sunset Boulevard. I ask the guys how things have changed for the band since those days, and Young says, "Kids." All four bandmates are married, with eight children between them. When they finally do tour again, sometime this year, it will be a "traveling *Romper Room*," says Stefani, complete with toys, strollers, nannies, and tutors. "That wasn't part of the dynamic before," says Young. "And Gwen is the only mom in the band, so it poses a different kind of challenge for her than it does for us."

Kanal, not surprisingly, seems more finely tuned to his ex-girlfriend's emotional frequency. "She thinks she's failing at everything. It's hard to manage that many things: She's got the band, her family, her husband, her clothing lines. To watch her being torn in different directions ended up being the push and shove that she almost needed to make the record. It provided a lot of the lyrical fodder. As much as she may feel challenged on a daily basis, I think when she looks back on it, she'll see she did incredibly well."

The other thing that's changed since 2001: Where have all the rock chicks gone? It's a dying art, Gwen Stefani among its last lonely practitioners. Sure, Joan Jett still tours with the Blackhearts. Chrissie Hynde is out there somewhere. Courtney Love attends a lot of parties. But the only true rock band fronted by a woman to make a real impression in the last decade is Paramore with Hayley Williams, not exactly a household name. "I think about that a lot," says Dumont. "What sets Gwen apart for sure from the Katy Perrys, the Taylor Swifts, is that she fronts a rock band. I can't think of any other female pop singer in my generation who does that."

Just then, Stefani reappears. She has changed into skintight black Rag & Bone jeans and platform stilettos from her own L.A.M.B. collection. Her hair, no longer in a ponytail, has been fluffed and feathered, and she's got her trademark cherry-red pout painted on. She drops her black-and-white-checked

Stella McCartney jacket on the bench and sits down. I had noticed earlier that, between the band, the horn section, the techies, the roadies, and the folks from the label, Stefani was the only woman in the room. "I was thinking that, too," she says. "It's been like that for the last 26 years!" I remind her that I interviewed her on the phone once in 1996, shortly after their song "Just a Girl" became a hit, and the 26-year-old Stefani said, "There have been some times where I have felt that really shitty feeling of being like, Gosh, do the men in this world even think that I'm on their level?"

The better question might have been, Are the men in this world on *her* level? With her iconic look and voice, Stefani had the whole package from the start: She's a tough-girl sex symbol with nice-girl appeal. And, despite the talent of her bandmates, she's always been the star of the show. Maybe that's why she can sometimes come across as a bit coddled—she's been the only girl in the room for a long time. As you can imagine, having a girl around, particularly one as ladylike as Stefani, has had an impact on the band, too. Dumont remembers a story from back in the day: "I don't think I ever told you guys this, but once we played a festival, this was years ago, and all the buses were parked backstage, and I met some other band and went on their bus and it was filthy. Liquor bottles, cigarettes, girlie magazines. It was disgusting. I remember thinking to

"Having kids takes the whole relationship to another place," says Stefani of marriage. "It is the ultimate collaboration"

myself, Our bus is supertidy and there are no vices going on. Gwen's kept us behaving like gentlemen." As if on cue, Young, who is sitting next to Stefani, picks up her jacket and drapes it over her bare shoulders. Gwen, whose So-Cal accent can sometimes come out as Southern-belle, says, "Oh, you are so sweet!"

I can't help noticing how happy they all seem, being together again. As Stefani tells me later, "We're really good at it now. We know that we all play a role. But there was a time when it was confusing. It was messy. The breakup, the new relationship, everyone recognizing *me*. All of that stuff feels like it's so far away now; it's just us as friends, so grateful to be doing what we're doing still." Before we all leave, Kanal nudges Stefani to tell the story of what inspired them to get back together and make a new album. "I was on tour for my second solo record in 2007, and I was playing Irvine Meadows in Orange County, which is basically where we grew up. I said, 'Why don't you guys come onstage as a surprise during the encore?' The audience was already so on fire because it's our hometown, and then these guys came out and it was just, like, *electric*. I'd never felt anything like it before. That was, I think, the moment when we were all like, *Arrrrgh*, let's *do* this already."

We are now in her brand-spanking-new black Porsche Panamera with a creamy white leather interior that goes perfectly with her blonde feathered hair and white manicure. It is one of Gwen Stefani's gifts that she can both participate in and wink at playing the part of the glamorous Hollywood rock-star mom, lustily chewing a piece of gum while maneuvering her \$96,000 car through the streets of Burbank. She's

explaining why it took five years for them to actually make the album. "I was really drained after doing both of those solo records and having a baby, and then being pregnant again," she says. (Her and Rossdale's sons, Kingston and Zuma, were born in 2006 and 2008, respectively.) "And I was supposed to write a record? It was a really challenging time because so many things were different: I was married, I was a mother, a lot of time had passed. It was a *huge* challenge."

Patrick Swayze's "She's Like the Wind" is playing on KOST 103.5 ("Southern California's Favorite Soft Rock"). "I hope you don't mind," she says, laughing. It is part of Gwen Stefani's cool that she is an unabashed fan of this kind of radio station. Indeed, fully half the songs on *Push and Shove* will sound right at home there. I mention that Tony Kanal told me that she feeds off having angst in her life. "There has to be some kind of saga going on," she says of writing music. "And for me, a lot of it was just being overwhelmed by trying to do everything at one time. Ten years ago, I had started L.A.M.B. because I was preparing myself, knowing that the music thing was going to end." Up until 2011, Stefani had a front-and-center role designing the collections for L.A.M.B., as well as for her two more recently launched labels, Harajuku Lovers, a teen line, and Harajuku Mini for kids, which is sold at Target. She stepped back, hiring a designer named Paula Bradley to do the heavy lifting for her once Kingston entered kindergarten. "Who knew that ten years later, I'd be doing a No Doubt record, be married, have two kids, have three clothing lines? All at one time! It would be ridiculous to do that. And it *is* ridiculous. It's impossible. So I think a lot of what I was going through on the record was wanting to be who I've always been, but now I'm somebody different. I am a mother. And if you don't do it right, there are serious consequences. That's what this whole record was: trying to balance it, trying to be my creative self but also be the new me."

It surprises her still that the album is not darker, given how tormented she was while writing and recording it. "Getting to the studio and not being able to make it happen, but missing out on being at home, missing out on putting the kids down. What's more important? I felt so guilty. I am letting everyone down in the studio right now; I'm letting down my kids; I'm letting down myself. Because time was so precious. So I didn't know what the album's tone would end up being in that kind of state, but it's really upbeat considering."

As we get to the top of Coldwater Canyon and cross Mulholland Drive, she points out the gates to the neighborhood where she and Rossdale have lived since Kingston, now six, was a newborn. "Amazing view of the valley," she says. "Complete opposite of the house we lived in before. It's an all-white box,

supermodern, 30-foot ceilings, marble floors. It's just so nice. I never thought I'd live in a house like this. Every day I'm like, Really? Are you serious? Thank you, God. This is too good." As we pass Zuma's school, she tells me a story about how she and the band, on a whim, played at a school fund-raiser for kicks. "We hadn't played in three years. And I was going to do an acoustic thing with Tom, just a couple songs. The night before, we were like, Why don't we all do it? And we got up there and we did these songs, and it was a very surreal setting. And it was kind of weird going to school the next day. Oooh, awkward! But it was so great. There's such a chemistry, this electricity between us, we can just do it. We can do it anywhere."

One of the ironies of Stefani's life is that she has inadvertently re-created the dynamic of her band in her family. "I have all these boys in my house!" she says. And when she talks about her relationship with Rossdale, it does not sound dissimilar to her feelings over No Doubt's staying power. "It's pride," she says of their sixteen-year relationship (the couple just celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary last September). "You feel proud. There are just so many rewards that come with it. You have to work at it. But, actually, it's fun to get to this point. Because you learn so much about somebody. It's like these wars that go on and then you kind of get through it to the other side, and it's like, Wow. And obviously, you get stronger. And then having kids takes the whole relationship to another place. It is the ultimate collaboration. Both of us have such strong opinions about how it should be, and it's really fun to do it together."

In 2011, Rossdale's band, Bush, released their first album in ten years, and then went on a nearly year-long tour to support it. For the first time since having children, Stefani was on her own. "I mean, he was there for me mentally, but physically? These boys are physical. They wake up and they start punching each other!" She laughs. "One thing we've had in our relationship the whole time is that we can have it both ways: together, not together, and it's fine. But when you have kids? It's not so great. They need him. Once you have a family, it's just so obvious how everyone needs each other. So it's really nice to have him back."

Not least of all because he helps her with her creative process. "He's the busiest person I know, always songwriting," she says. Stefani is a tortured writer, always procrastinating. "Gavin says, 'Oh, you're doing your thing that you do,' and I'm like, 'I don't have a *thing*. It's just hard: writing it, recording it, finishing it. I am not like Prince, where it just flows out and God comes through me.' I never write unless I have to. Gavin does. All the time. He's more of a genuine artist in that way."

We have finally arrived at the Polo Lounge at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Because it is chilly, we have the garden all to



FRONT AND CENTER

Stefani with her husband, Gavin Rossdale, and their sons Kingston and Zuma (IN FRONT) in Los Angeles, June 2012.

ourselves. Stefani orders a glass of red wine and a bowl of soup, both of which she sips very judiciously. We come back to the topic of motherhood. "It's superfun being a mom, but it's not what you think it's going to be. And it's really gradual. At first, your life is totally the same. You have this cute little thing that you get to drive around everywhere and you're so proud and it's amazing. And as they grow older, it really does start to change your life. Like, Oh, my God, they have school, they have to get through first grade, they have to learn to *read*." She laughs. "It starts getting so serious, and you're like, Aaaaaaah!" She takes a sip of wine. "And to do all that while sustaining this insane childhood of my own. . . . I've never had to grow up in a way. When you think about it, we were in college together, and then we made our first record, and then we just took off and stayed in this bubble. Time kind of stops when you're in a band. It's this suspended childhood, and it's really awesome, that part of it. But then when you have a family of your own, it forces you to go into the adult world a little bit more."

As usual, Gwen Stefani is totally on-trend: Like Marissa Mayer, the new president and CEO of Yahoo, who gave birth and was notoriously back in the boardroom two weeks later, launching a thousand essays and blog posts last year, she is struggling with trying to "have it all." One difference, perhaps, is how physically demanding Stefani's job is. "I did my first solo record and went on tour while I was pregnant. I would want to throw up during certain songs. Certain outfits would make me sick. It was torture. I toured until I was four and a half months pregnant, showing. I came home and had Kingston, and when he was eight months old, I went back on the road. I nursed him for fourteen months, so I would literally do my hair and makeup, go back to the bus, nurse him, put him down, and walk out onstage. And I did that for 100 shows."

Perhaps this is one of the reasons not everyone was thrilled with Stefani's solo projects: Her heart did not seem entirely in it. The other thing that bothered some people was the misguided Madonna-like cultural appropriation of her backup dancers, the Harajuku Girls, four Japanese women who often appeared alongside Stefani in zany costumes during this period. The comedian Margaret Cho went so far as to call the dancers a "minstrel show" that reinforced negative stereotypes of Asian women. The fact that No Doubt recently got called out again on this score—this time by Native Americans who objected to the campy cowboys-and-Indians theme of their video for "Looking Hot," which they immediately pulled off the Internet and apologized for—makes one wonder why this one area of tone-deafness prevails in someone otherwise known for being so spot on in her image-making.

Other than this tiny hiccup (the video's only crime as far as I can tell is that it looks like something Cher cooked up), Gwen Stefani's back. It's a relief to see her being a rock star again. The fact is, anyone can make disposable dance music—as Stefani says, "it's not supposed to be deep"—but a great rock band is forever. "I feel like we've always been in our own little lane," says Stefani. "Never fitting in. Never a nineties grunge band, never a pop girl band. And it's the same now. I did the solo thing, but I felt like I was trying to play a character in a way, this Alice in Wonderland pretend version of myself. But this, being in No Doubt, is really who I am." □

ELECTRIC COMPANY

"There's such a chemistry between us," says Stefani, with (FROM LEFT) No Doubt's Adrian Young, Tom Dumont, and Tony Kanal. On Stefani: A.L.C. top and black leather pants with white piping. Alexander Wang boots. In this story: hair, Jen Atkin for Clear Scalp & Hair Beauty Therapy; makeup, Aaron de Mey. Production design, Todd Wiggins for Mary Howard Studio. Shot on location at the Culver Studios. Details, see In This Issue.





WATCH OUR BEHIND-THE-SCENES VIDEO OF GWEN STEFANI AND THE REST OF NO DOUBT ON THE SET OF THEIR JANUARY SHOOT ON VOGUE.COM.