

= Love . Angel . Music . Baby . =

Love . Angel . Music . Baby. is the debut solo album by American singer Gwen Stefani . It was released on November 12 , 2004 , by Interscope Records . Stefani , who had previously released five albums as rock band No Doubt 's lead singer , began recording solo material in early 2003 . She began working on Love . Angel . Music . Baby. as a side project that would become a full album after No Doubt went on hiatus . Stefani co @-@ wrote every song on the album , collaborating with various songwriters and producers including André 3000 , Dallas Austin , Dr. Dre , the Neptunes and Linda Perry .

Designed to sound like a 1980s record , Love . Angel . Music . Baby. was influenced by artists such as the Cure , Depeche Mode , Cyndi Lauper and Madonna . The album incorporates a diverse range of genres , including electropop , dance @-@ rock , new wave , R & B , hip hop , soul , and disco . Most of its songs are about fashion and wealth . Promotion of the album included the release of six commercially successful singles and the North American Harajuku Lovers concert tour . While promoting , Stefani was often accompanied by back @-@ up dancers called the Harajuku Girls .

Love . Angel . Music . Baby. received generally positive reviews from music critics , and the album and its songs were nominated for a total of six Grammy Awards , including Album of the Year , winning none . It peaked at number five on the American record charts , received multi @-@ platinum sales certifications in several countries and sold over seven million copies worldwide .

= = Background = =

During her time with the band No Doubt , Stefani began making solo appearances on albums by artists ; including Eve and Moby . In the production of its fifth studio album , Rock Steady (2001) , No Doubt collaborated with Prince , the Neptunes and David A. Stewart and had Mark " Spike " Stent mixing the album . While the band was on tour to promote the album , Stefani listened to Club Nouveau 's 1987 's single " Why You Treat Me So Bad " and considered recording material that modernized 1980s music . No Doubt 's bassist and her former boyfriend , Tony Kanal , introduced her to music by Prince , Lisa and Cult Jam , and Debbie Deb , and they talked about producing songs from Kanal 's bedroom .

In 2003 , Stefani began recording solo material . She stated she was considering recording singles to be used on soundtracks , continuing her collaborations or releasing an album under the pseudonym " GS " . Jimmy Iovine (chairman and co @-@ founder of Interscope) convinced Stefani to work on this album . On the second day of her sessions with Linda Perry , the two wrote a song about Stefani 's writer 's block and fears about the solo album . This became the track " What You Waiting For ? " . which was released as the lead single for the album .

When the two began working on a song that Stefani stated was too personal , she left to visit Kanal . He played her a track on which he had been working and which became " Crash " , the album 's final single . The two tried to write new material , but gave up after two weeks . They did not return to work until six months later , when Stefani began collaborating with other artists , commenting , " If I were to write the chorus of ' Yesterday ' by the Beatles , and that 's all I wrote , that would be good enough to be part of that history . " Stefani resumed work with Linda Perry , who invited Dallas Austin , and many other artists , including Outkast 's André 3000 , the Neptunes , and Dr. Dre . Stefani announced the album 's release in early 2004 , marketing it as a " dance record " and a " guilty pleasure " .

= = Composition = =

= = = Music and lyrics = = =

Love . Angel . Music . Baby. takes influence from a variety of 1980s genres to the extent that one reviewer commented , " The only significant ' 80s radio style skipped is the ska punk revival that No

Doubt rode to success ". Several songs employ synthesizer sounds characteristic of music from the 1980s . The album combines music genres such as electropop , dance @-@ rock , soul hip hop , R & B , and disco . New wave , present in some of No Doubt 's later work , continues to be incorporated into Love . Angel . Music . Baby . , drawing comparisons to The Go @-@ Go 's and Cyndi Lauper . Stefani cited Club Nouveau , Depeche Mode , Lisa Lisa , Prince , New Order , The Cure , and early Madonna as major influences for the album .

Like pop albums of the 1980s , Love . Angel . Music . Baby. focuses primarily on money , with songs such as " Rich Girl " and " Luxurious " that feature descriptions of riches and wealth . The album contains several references to Stefani 's clothing line , L.A.M.B. , and alludes to contemporary fashion designers such as John Galliano , Rei Kawakubo , and Vivienne Westwood . Stefani also released a series of dolls named the " Love . Angel . Music . Baby . Fashion Dolls " , designed after the costumes from her tour . Although Stefani intended for the album to be a light dance record , she stated that " no matter what you do , things just come out . " The album 's opening track " What You Waiting For ? " discusses her desire to be a mother and in 2006 , she and her husband , Bush singer Gavin Rossdale , had a son named Kingston Rossdale . The fourth track " Cool " discusses Stefani 's friendship with Kanal after he ended a romantic relationship with her in 1995 .

Love . Angel . Music . Baby. introduced the Harajuku Girls , an entourage of four Japanese women whom Stefani referred to as a figment of her imagination . The Harajuku Girls are discussed in several of the songs , including one named after and entirely dedicated to them . They appear in most of the music videos produced for the album and those for Stefani 's second album The Sweet Escape (2006) . Love . Angel . Music . Baby. includes various styles of music . Many songs are influenced by electro beats designed for club play . Producers Austin and Kanal incorporated R & B into the song " Luxurious " which contains a sample of The Isley Brothers ' 1983 single " Between the Sheets " . Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis incorporate new jack swing , a fusion genre of R & B that the pair had developed and popularized during the mid @-@ 1980s .

= = = Songs = = =

The album opens with " What You Waiting For ? " , an electropop , new wave , dance @-@ rock , and funk song . Lyrically , the song discusses Stefani 's fears of beginning a solo career . " Rich Girl " , a collaboration with rapper Eve , is a dancehall and reggae reworking of the English duo Louchie Lou & Michie One 's 1994 song " If I Was a Rich Girl " , which itself interpolates the song " If I Were a Rich Man " from the 1964 musical Fiddler on the Roof . The Neptunes @-@ produced track " Hollaback Girl " combines 1980s hip hop with dance music . It was written as a response to a derogatory comment that grunge musician Courtney Love made , referring to Stefani as a cheerleader .

The fourth track " Cool " chronicles Stefani 's previous relationship with Tony Kanal , featuring a new wave and synthpop production . The song was compared to Cyndi Lauper and Madonna songs from the 1980s . " Bubble Pop Electric " , the fifth track , is an electro song featuring André 3000 's alias Johnny Vulture . It tells of the two having sex at a drive @-@ in movie , and it was generally well received by critics , who drew comparisons to the 1978 film Grease and its 1982 sequel Grease 2 . " Luxurious " is a 1990s @-@ inspired R & B song that lyrically talks about the desire to be rich in love , simultaneously comparing Stefani 's lover with luxuries . The seventh track , " Harajuku Girls " , is a synthpop song that was described as a tribute to Tokyo 's street culture , produced by Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis .

" Crash " is an electroclash song that uses automobile metaphors to describe a relationship . " The Real Thing " was described as a vintage Europop song , and features guest appearances from New Order vocalist Bernard Sumner and bassist Peter Hook . The next track , the synthpop song " Serious " , drew comparisons to Madonna 's work during the early 1980s . A music video was produced for the song , but it was never officially released , although a snippet of the video surfaced on YouTube in October 2006 . " Danger Zone " , an electro @-@ rock song , was widely interpreted to be about Stefani 's husband Gavin Rossdale having an illegitimate daughter ; however , the song had been written before the discovery . The closing track " Long Way to Go " is an outtake from

André 3000 's album *The Love Below* (2003) . The song discusses interracial dating and uses a sample of Martin Luther King 's " I Have a Dream " speech .

= = Promotion = =

Stefani embarked on the *Harajuku Lovers Tour* on October 16 , 2005 to promote *Love . Angel . Music . Baby .* The tour consisted of only one leg , running for 42 dates across North America , ending on December 21 , 2005 . The hip hop group *The Black Eyed Peas* , rapper M.I.A. , and singer Ciara accompanied Stefani as opening acts for her tour . The tour was met with varying responses from contemporary critics , who despite praising Stefani 's vocals , were critical of other aspects of the show such as its musical material . According to *Billboard* , the tour grossed \$ 22 million from 37 shows , 20 of which sold out . A video album of the concert titled *Harajuku Lovers Live* was released on DVD on December 4 , 2006 .

= = = Singles = = =

" What You Waiting For ? " was released as the lead single from *Love . Angel . Music . Baby .* on September 28 , 2004 . The single peaked at number 47 on the *Billboard Hot 100* , and was commercially successful overseas , topping the chart in Australia and reaching the top 10 in several countries including France , Netherlands , New Zealand , Sweden , and the United Kingdom . " Rich Girl " , featuring Eve , was released as the album 's second single on December 14 , 2004 , becoming Stefani 's first top @-@ 10 hit as a solo artist in the US when it peaked at number seven on the *Billboard Hot 100* . Elsewhere , the song performed equally as successfully as " What You Waiting For ? " . " Hollaback Girl " was released as the third single on March 15 , 2005 . It became the album 's best @-@ selling and most popular single , while also becoming the first single to sell one million digital downloads in the US . The song topped the *Billboard Hot 100* within six weeks of its release , earning Stefani her first number @-@ one single on the chart .

" Cool " was released as the fourth single from the album on July 5 , 2005 . The song fared moderately on the charts , reaching the top 10 in Australia and New Zealand , as well as the top 20 in Denmark , Germany , Ireland , Norway , the UK and the US . " Luxurious " was released as the fifth single in October 2005 . The single version features rapper Slim Thug . The song was less successful than the previous singles from the album , peaking at number 21 on the *Billboard Hot 100* . " Crash " was not originally planned as a single , but due to Stefani 's pregnancy , her second solo album was delayed , and the song was released as the sixth and final single from the album on January 24 , 2006 .

= = Critical reception = =

Love . Angel . Music . Baby . received generally positive reviews from contemporary pop music critics . At *Metacritic* , which assigns a weighted mean rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , the album received an average score of 71 , based on 22 reviews . Stephen Thomas Erlewine of *AllMusic* called the album " intermittently exciting and embarrassing " , concluding that it is " stranger and often more entertaining than nearly any other mainstream pop album of 2004 . " Jennifer Nine of *Yahoo ! Music* praised the album as " the hottest , coolest , best @-@ dressed pop album of the year " and found it to be " sleek , shimmery , and dripping with all @-@ killer @-@ no @-@ filler musical bling " . *Stylus Magazine* 's Charles Merwin opined that Stefani was a contender to fill Madonna 's role , " [b] ut not enough to get seriously excited about her as the next great solo female careerist . " Lisa Haines of *BBC Music* was more emphatic , stating that Stefani rivaled Madonna and Kelis , while dubbing the album a " stunning and stylish effort that showcases Gwen 's credentials as a bonafide pop goddess . "

Despite stating that Stefani " shamelessly plunders " 1980s music , Krissi Murison of the *NME* referred to the album as " one of the most frivolously brilliant slabs of shiny retro @-@ pop anyone 's had the chuzpah to release all year . " John Murphy of *musicOMH* found the album " enjoyable , if

patchy ", but commented that it was too long . Rolling Stone 's Rob Sheffield described the album as " an irresistible party : trashy , hedonistic and deeply weird . " The magazine later placed the album at number 39 on its list of the top 50 albums of 2004 . Robert Christgau gave the album a three @-@ star honorable mention () and wrote , " Turns out the problem wasn 't ska per se ? it was No Doubt . " Edna Gundersen of USA Today called the album " [f] un , fizzy , frivolous " , while noting that Stefani 's " caffeinated electro @-@ pop amounts to little more than sly channeling of Lisa Lisa at a disco revival . " Kelefa Sanneh of The New York Times viewed it as a " clever and sometimes enticing solo debut that doesn 't quite add up . "

The album was generally criticized for its large number of collaborations and producers . The Guardian 's Caroline Sullivan argued that although " others lend a hand [...] it 's very much Stefani 's show " ; however , most others disagreed . Jason Damas of PopMatters compared the album to a second No Doubt greatest hits album , and Pitchfork Media 's Nick Sylvester felt that the large number of collaborators result in sacrificing Stefani 's identity on the album . Anthony Carew of Neumu expressed that the album 's fragmentation kept it from being " a bright @-@ and @-@ shiny pop @-@ music tour @-@ de @-@ force " . Most reviewers held that the collaborations prevented the album from having a solidified sound . Eric Greenwood wrote for Drawer B that " Stefani tries to be all things to all people here " , but that the result " comes off as manipulative and contrived . " Entertainment Weekly 's David Browne shared this opinion , stating that the album " is like one of those au courant retail magazines that resembles a catalog more than an old @-@ fashioned collection of , say , articles . "

Many reviewers focused on the album 's light lyrical themes . Entertainment Weekly called the references to Stefani 's clothing line " shameless " and stated that " each song becomes akin to a pricey retro fashion blurb " , and Pitchfork Media quipped that " the Joker 's free @-@ money parade through Gotham City was a much more entertaining display of wealth , and he had Prince , not just Wendy & Lisa . " Sal Cinquemani of Slant Magazine commented that the album 's " fashion fetish [...] gives the album a sense of thematic cohesiveness " but that the " obsession with Harajuku girls borders on maniacal " . The Guardian disagreed with this perspective , arguing that " her affinity with Japanese pop culture [...] yields a synthetic sheen [...] that works well with the other point of reference , hip @-@ hop . "

= = = Accolades = = =

At the Billboard Music Awards , Stefani won the Digital Song of the Year award for " Hollaback Girl " and the New Artist of the Year Award , and she performed " Luxurious " with Slim Thug at the event . At the 2005 Grammy Awards , Stefani received a nomination for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance for " What You Waiting For ? " and performed " Rich Girl " with Eve . At the next year 's awards , Stefani received five nominations for Record of the Year , Album of the Year , Best Female Pop Vocal Performance , Best Pop Vocal Album , and Best Rap / Sung Collaboration .

= = Commercial performance = =

Love . Angel . Music . Baby. debuted at number seven on the Billboard 200 , selling 309 @, @ 000 copies in its first week . On the issue dated June 18 , 2005 , the album climbed to a new peak position of number five with 83 @, @ 000 copies sold . The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) certified the album triple platinum that December , and had sold four million copies by May 2009 .

The album had similar success in Europe . After entering the UK Albums Chart at number 14 with sales of 45 @, @ 484 copies , Love . Angel . Music . Baby. peaked at number four in its 25th week on the chart , on May 15 , 2005 , selling 21 @, @ 271 copies . The album was certified triple platinum by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) on September 16 , 2005 , and has sold 1 @, @ 068 @, @ 242 copies in the United Kingdom as of March 2016 . The album was listed as the 20th best @-@ selling album of 2005 in the UK . It also reached the top 10 in Denmark , Finland , Ireland , Norway , and Sweden , and the top 20 in Austria , Belgium , France , Germany , Netherlands , and

Switzerland . The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) certified the album platinum in May 2005 , denoting sales in excess of one million copies across Europe .

In Australia , Love . Angel . Music . Baby. topped the ARIA Albums Chart for two consecutive weeks in February 2005 and spent 56 weeks on the chart . It ended 2005 as the fourth best @-@ selling album , and was certified quadruple platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) for shipments of 280 @,@ 000 copies . The album peaked at number three for two non @-@ consecutive weeks on the Canadian Albums Chart , and was certified five @-@ times platinum by the Canadian Recording Industry Association (CRIA) in April 2006 for sales of over half a million copies . Love . Angel . Music . Baby. had sold seven million copies worldwide as of November 2006 , and became the 12th best @-@ selling album globally of 2005 .

= = Impact = =

The success of the album 's urban contemporary @-@ oriented songs in the adult contemporary market allowed for the success of other artists while Stefani was pregnant and later recording The Sweet Escape . Nelly Furtado 's third album Loose was released in June 2006 and was primarily produced by and written with hip hop producers Timbaland and Danja . Furtado 's reinvention from a worldbeat singer @-@ songwriter was to Stefani 's previous forays into urban contemporary music . In his review of Loose , Rob Sheffield of Rolling Stone stated that Timbaland aimed to " produce an omnipop multiformat blockbuster in the style of [Love . Angel . Music . Baby .] ? but without Gwen . " The Black Eyed Peas member Fergie released her solo debut album The Dutchess in September 2006 . The cholas that accompanied Fergie in some of her music videos were viewed as derivatives of the Harajuku Girls and Stefani 's " Luxurious " music video . The album 's lead single " London Bridge " was paralleled to " Hollaback Girl " and the third single " Glamorous " to " Luxurious " . Fergie refuted accusations of piggybacking on Stefani 's music , stating that " this is all so ridiculous [...] The Peas and I make music we love , and for others to speculate is their problem . "

= = Track listing = =

Notes

^ a signifies an additional producer

= = Personnel = =

Credits adapted from the liner notes of Love . Angel . Music . Baby .

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =