



INSTITUTE

GAVIN ROSSDALE, CHRIS TRAYNOR, CACHE TOLMAN, CHARLIE WALKER

TO HEAR Gavin Rossdale put it, the last couple of years have passed fairly quickly...astonishingly so, he reveals with a small laugh. "Well," he begins, "I got married, I lost a band, and I gained a band."

This might be a tiny bit of oversimplification on Gavin's part. Best known for being the singer and songwriter for the multimillion-selling British rock band Bush, in recent years, he's been the subject of the international tabloids as part of a famous marriage, enjoyed roles in such movies as Constantine and The Game of Their Lives, and he has a new band with a new record.

Music is clearly Gavin Rossdale's original love, and he has returned in a rather big, loud way. Gavin had previously experimented being a solo artist - collaborating with the Blue Man Group on the song "The Current" on the album, The Complex; and also having success with the song, "Adrenaline" from the soundtrack to the movie, XxX. But this new project is something quite different.

INSTITUTE is a new group, and Gavin is eager to point out that the band's debut full-length album is very much a product of collaboration. "INSTITUTE is not a solo thing," he says, "because I didn't do it alone, just some of it" As he explains, the word "institute" refers to a "cultural collective": Far from being a "solo project," INSTITUTE was a product of everyone's input and suggestions. Although Gavin brings his distinctive vocals, guitar playing, and lyrics to the album, INSTITUTE also sparkingly showcases the New York-based talents of guitarist Chris Traynor (who had also played with Rossdale on the last Bush tour, also a member of Helmet and formerly of Orange 9mm), and

like the guys I'm working with now. I just feel like it's music for a different time, although I was never going to completely change the style of the music. I wanted to strip it down, but I didn't quite know where it was going to go. You never really do, you just have to do it."

The band hopes that it won't require any serious effort for fans to join their INSTITUTE. At the very least, says Gavin, it's a revealing look at his current concerns and the state of his happiness. "It has to be," he allows, "because writing songs is what I do. I find ways to express myself, and these songs are the best of the bunch. So, for whatever it's worth, this album represents me and the guys that are in the band INSTITUTE."

Sign up now ... enrollment begins this October.

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POP EYE

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Going down a new road, sort of

By STEVE HOCHMAN
Special to *The Times*

AFTER years of being known primarily as the leader of the band Bush and more recently to tabloid fans as Mr. Gwen Stefani, it's no surprise that Gavin Rossdale is using his new music project to make a name for himself.

That name is *Institute*.

Rather than make a solo album for his first post-Bush project, Rossdale has formed a new band. It's a conscious attempt to avoid what he sees as the common solo-project syndrome.

"Often the next thing people do after leaving a successful rock band is a mellow record, saying, 'This is the real me,' with string sections and girl background vocalists," he says. "I was thinking I wanted to do something that was the opposite."

To that end, he teamed with producer Page Hamilton, best known as the guitarist-composer of the dynamic hard-rock band Helmet, and assembled a band with guitarist Chris Traynor (also from Helmet), bassist Cache Tolman and drummer Charlie Walker to craft a set of new songs marked by sonic and emotional intensity for Institute's debut album, due Sept. 13. A single, "Bullet Proof Skin," will be released in July. Focused and hard-edged, it's anything but the kitchen-sink approach of many solo projects.

"Working with Page, the idea was to take it as far away from that as possible but not far from myself," he says. "The idea was how to make a big, groovy, powerful rock band with minimal elements rather than overdoing it and having some sort of sonic confusion in there."

But will fans see it as a real band or just a cover for a Rossdale release?



GEORGIA KOROLIS

AFTER BUSH: Gavin Rossdale says he didn't want the typical "this is the real me" solo effort so he launched a new collaboration.

"Somewhere in the middle," says a sanguine Rossdale. "It would be crazy to say it's a straight-up democracy of ideas. But at the same time, it is. I write the songs but really enjoyed working with these guys."

The album comes after a music hiatus for Rossdale, who disbanded Bush after a tour to support the 2001 album "Golden State." In the interim he spent most of his time at his and Stefani's homes in Engliand and Los Angeles and also, as did his wife, trying a hand at acting, with roles in last year's "Little Black Book" and this year's "Constantine" and the soccer-themed "The Game of Their Lives."

"Right now that's going on the back burner as my day job takes me home," he says. "I really enjoyed it and come back to music rejuvenated. I sort of missed music when I was on the set. But it was a challenge creatively to do those films and gave me some juice to go back and make music."

The off time also gave him too much chance to read about himself in a celebrity spouse context rather than in coverage of his music. That seems to color even some of the new album, with rampant technology and

media and a need for sanctuary as recurrent themes in the lyrics.

"It will be a relief having the record out and going back to doing what I love," he says, having just seen a photo of himself and Stefani while thumbing through a magazine in a doctor's office. "The hardest part of the tabloid coverage is it illuminates you in the downtime, when you don't want to be lit up."

"It's nice to go off the radar so when you come back it's refreshing. It can be frustrating to have that other stuff come into it. But once the record goes out and you're on tour and bringing out singles, you just steamroll over all that stuff."