



New Kids on the Block's Hangin' Tough (33 1/3)

By Rebecca Wallwork

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Hangin' Tough, the second album by the New Kids on the Block, has sold more than seventeen million copies worldwide since it was released in 1988. But the album and the band have also been dismissed, derided and deemed uncool by the music establishment.

Almost thirty years later, the New Kids still perform the songs from *Hangin' Tough*. Hundreds of thousands of grown women still flock to their concerts to hear-and go bat-shit crazy for-the songs they first heard when they were teenagers. Is this mere nostalgia or can the science of music help explain the enduring success of *Hangin' Tough*? What is it about this album that made it so special? Is the music any good or are there other factors at play too?

Journalist and New Kids fan Rebecca Wallwork sets out to analyze the quality of *Hangin' Tough* with the help of music cognition experts, critics, producers and music industry pros. This is not a story about crazy fans, boy bands and truckloads of cheesy merchandise; it is an exploration of a watershed album and moment in pop culture history. It is a glimpse into the brain of not just New Kids fans, but into the minds and hearts of anyone who loves music.

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