



## GAVIN DEGRAW BY JENNIFER GARAM

THIS YEAR HE ENTERTAINED GRAMMY WINNERS. NEXT YEAR HE COULD BE ONE OF THEM

Ever since Clive Davis introduced him at his annual pre-Grammy party this year (an honor previously given to an unknown Alicia Keys), singer-songwriter Gavin DeGraw has been one busy 26-year-old. Despite recently hopping from New York to Los Angeles to Dublin and back, he's had no time to be a sightseer and take "tours with some guy wearing a duck hat." Next month's release of DeGraw's debut album, *Chariot* (J Records), makes his chances of just being a tourist even slimmer.

With his soulful vocals and lyrics that fearlessly explore life's pressing questions—plus a few tunes about love—DeGraw has spent the past few years building a local following in New York. The stage is where DeGraw, accompanied by a piano or his guitar, feels most at home, and he's itching to get back to it. "If you can't do it live, then you shouldn't be doing it," he reasons.

Audiences have compared DeGraw's timeless pop songs to those of Billy Joel, but the singer is grounded with honest-to-goodness

humility: "You're only as good as your audience thinks you are, that day," he says simply.

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Jennifer Garam is a writer living in New York City. Above: Gavin DeGraw wears a jacket by FRED PERRY. Shirt by LEVI'S. Jeans by POLO BY RALPH LAUREN. Styling: VICTOR ALEGRIA. Grooming: ROB TALTY/luxe. Special thanks: MONDRIAN HOTEL, West Hollywood. For fashion and photo details see page 103. Photographer: JUSTIN STEPHENS.