

GAVIN DEGRAW

MAKE A MOVE

Gavin DeGraw's powerful new album ***MAKE A MOVE*** is a victorious and creative musical return. On the follow-up to 2011's *Sweeter*, Gavin DeGraw has experienced a creative and commercial renaissance displaying his even more focused vocal and artistic talent, his assured energy, musically expanded palette, and sharp, detail-driven lyrics.

The first single, "Best I Ever Had," is the most up-tempo thing DeGraw has done yet, charging out of the gate with a galloping rhythm and lively horns. "I feel like this album is the strongest record I've made," DeGraw says. "It's a clear evolution from what I've been doing. I've taken more risks, like learning the value of having space in the writing. Silence is louder than the highest note."

"It's like being born again," he says. "It's crazy. I think very few people get to experience that sort of luck-of-the-draw moment." DeGraw is referring to the double-platinum success of his single "Not Over You," a "soulful, majestic ballad" (as *Billboard* put it) co-written with OneRepublic's Ryan Tedder that reached No. 1 on the Hot AC charts, was a top 10 hit at Top 40 radio, and was certified double platinum. The track helped propel *Sweeter* (which *Rolling Stone's* review called "taut, efficient and hook-packed," going on to praise DeGraw as "an excellent singer") to a No. 8 debut on the *Billboard* album chart, his second Top 10 album after his 2008 self-titled release. That album debuted at No. 1 on the digital sales chart and at No. 7 on *Billboard's* album chart, and spawned the hit singles "In Love With A Girl" and the gold-certified "We Belong Together." (The South Fallsburg, NY, native first broke through in 2003 with his platinum debut *Chariot*, which yielded three hit singles: the No. 1 Top 40 smash "I Don't Want To Be," "Follow Through," and the title-track.)

DeGraw points to co-writing every song (with Ryan Tedder, Benny Blanco, Busbee, Martin Johnson, Kevin Rudolf, and others) on ***MAKE A MOVE*** as another risk (though it paid off handsomely with "Not Over You.") *Sweeter* marked the first time DeGraw had collaborated with outside writers (on four out of its ten

songs). “I was apprehensive because my early success came from doing it alone,” DeGraw says. “But experiencing this other form of writing success opened my mind because I see that it’s possible to do something in a room with someone else and still have it feel completely personal. That changed everything. It has been a complete reawakening for me as an artist. It allowed me to approach this new album differently.”

The songs on ***MAKE A MOVE*** brim with confidence. “Best I Ever Had,” the album’s first single, co-written with Boys Like Girls’ Martin Johnson, is part pointed social commentary on the information age (with references to a “night sky full of drones” and a “neighborhood of clones...staring at their phones” and part love song (“I’m trying not to get stuck in my head / But I passed a lonely sign on the Interstate / Saying ‘find someone before it gets too late’ / You’re the best I ever had”). Along similar lines is “Finest Hour,” which is critical of the diminishing safe space for people to cut loose in the era of social media. “I think society doesn’t allow us to just let go anymore,” DeGraw says. “Everyone’s taking pictures of everybody at all times and recording what they say, even when they’re just blathering on with buddies and having a great time. Then you walk into work the next day and everyone’s talking about it. I think the reason I write a lot about letting loose is because I’m seeing people more and more uptight about doing it.”

On the other end of the spectrum is the raw, emotional ballad “Who’s Gonna Save Us” which DeGraw likens to “Not Over You” on steroids” and one of his favorite tracks on the album. Other favorites include the compelling and powerful “Everything Will Change,” as well as the slinky, sexy rock song “Every Little Bit,” which harkens back to DeGraw’s early years when he was barely scraping by. “I was picturing the things that I would do for entertainment. Because when you don’t have money in your pocket, you’re literally counting every cent. Still, you can still reflect on great times you had when you were making the most of being broke.” The album’s title track “Make A Move” celebrates the beginning stage of a relationship, or as DeGraw describes it: “the new feeling of being in love when you’re so consumed with it emotionally that all other levels of discomfort are not a concern.” “So much of songwriting is really just capturing a moment, and a picture is worth 1,000 words,” he adds. “I try to really visualize each moment and then sketch in the details.”

MAKE A MOVE has also been influenced by DeGraw spending much of his time in Nashville and Los Angeles while writing (as opposed to his previous home base of New York City), as well as by his participation in *Dancing With The Stars* in

2012. His appearances not only revealed some of his personal backstory, but also got him more comfortable with being more physical while performing. "A lot of artists have had movement or dance training and I have never done anything like that," DeGraw says. "I think I had been at a disadvantage. Even just a few weeks of training helped my moves onstage. It definitely made me more comfortable standing and singing instead of sitting at piano. The new album is still piano-heavy, but it gave me more opportunities to work the stage with the mic and still save the special moments for the piano, which added to the dynamic of the music and performance."

Those who saw DeGraw perform while on tours with Maroon 5, Train, and Colbie Caillat over the past two years have seen his growth and maturation as a performer occur before their eyes. "Making music is still what I'm most passionate about," he says. "It's the one thing I've always identified with. It's what I did when I got sent to my room as a kid, and what I did on the way home from a ballgame. You can't help it; it's just your thing. So I was lucky enough to have something that pulled me in so aggressively. It's either this or go to therapy," he says with a laugh.

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