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MAS spouts double shot of pop with Gavin DeGraw and Andy Grammer

By DEREK HALSEY For The Herald-Dispatch
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Submitted photo Gavin DeGraw performs Friday, Oct. 21, at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center as part of the Marshall Artists Series.

Singer-songwriter Gavin DeGraw was lucky enough to get noticed with his first album "Chariot" back in 2003.



DeGraw's music career leading up to that project, however, was typical of a musician finding his way in a hard business. From busking on the streets to playing at various open-mic nights in the clubs, it took a while before DeGraw found "overnight success."

"Chariot" sold over a million copies and spawned hits such as "Follow Through" and "I Don't Want To Be," the latter of which became the theme song for the then-hit TV show "One Tree Hill."

Then, DeGraw's second self-titled album really put him on the map, climbing to the Top Ten of the Billboard Magazine charts and producing more hit singles such as "We Belong Together" and "In Love With A Girl."

Last month, DeGraw, who will perform at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 21, with Andy Grammer with special guest Wrabel, released his latest album called "Something Worth Saving," which harkens back to the sound of his earlier recordings.

While DeGraw now tours the world, appears on national TV and continually shows up on the music charts, in an interview with The Herald-Dispatch, he remembers the days before fame when life was fun yet he still had to find side jobs to keep himself afloat.

"This (playing music and writing songs) is not a job," DeGraw said. "I've had real jobs, and this isn't one of them. This is cake. This is a hobby that worked out. As for my worse real job, I've had jobs that should have been good jobs but you had a bad boss. And, I've had crap jobs but had a great boss, so it wasn't as bad. So, it depends. I like dogs a lot, so I had a job walking dogs. I like being around dogs, I just didn't like walking behind the dogs. The worst one was a lady that must have been made out of money. I got a job walking her dogs. She had a show dog and a retired show dog. The current show dog was the grandson of the retired show dog. You can't make this stuff up."



Even though DeGraw appreciated the income from walking the wealthy lady's dogs, it soon got a little strange.

"I can't remember if this was during the time when I was living with my brother in a one-bedroom place and we were sharing a bedroom, or if I was living with four people in a one-bedroom apartment," DeGraw said. "I can't remember which one it was, but it was in that era in New York City. So, I showed up, and this lady's dogs had a beautiful bedroom. It was giant, dude. Her dog's bedroom was three times the size of our apartment. I remember showing up there, and it was pouring rain one day. I didn't want to spend the dollar and a half on the subway, so I figured I would just run up to work in the morning. I was wearing a pair of sneakers. She answers the door and says, 'Hey, I know this may sound silly, but these are show dogs, and I know it is raining outside. But, if you could do your best not to get their paws wet, I'd appreciate it.' "

DeGraw's personality could not resist responding to the request in sardonic way, and the reaction was not positive.

"I said, 'What do you mean, ma'am? Don't get their paws wet?' " said DeGraw. "She said, 'You know, if you get their paws wet, you have to use a brush to get the knots out of between their claws.' Even though one of them had retired, it was a 'once a show dog, always a show dog' kind of mentality. She said, 'I know it may sound a bit much.' I said, 'You know, it doesn't sound like a bit much. What it sounds like is that you're flippin' crazy.' So, that was my last day on the job. But I did take those dogs out for a good run, and I let them run through every mud puddle I saw. I let them be dogs, and I let them act like dogs."



Those days are in the rear-view mirror now for DeGraw. Currently, he plays concerts around the country and gets to experience the magic that is an arena or a theatre full of people singing his own songs back to him. DeGraw's songs have made an impact on people, and they in turn know the lyrics by heart.

"That is magic, man. It is magic," DeGraw said. "It is the idea of taking that private time you had when you were coming up with the song, whether you are writing the song at your house or sitting in a room or hanging out in a living room, in-between talking to your brother and going out for a beer, and you get a song idea. Then, you get out to a venue and see strangers from all over the world sing the lyrics to that song back to you, sometimes even when you know English is not their language, and it is not like anything you can imagine. It is a crazy feeling, man."

As the adage goes, music is the universal language.

"I often think about the miracle of music," DeGraw said. "It is something that you cannot see and cannot touch, but you can feel it. That is called magic."

If you go

WHAT: Multi-platinum recording artists Gavin DeGraw and Andy Grammer are performing with special guest Wrabel.

WHERE: The Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center, 925 4th Ave., Huntington.

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 21.



GET TICKETS : \$73.55, \$57.50, \$46.80 and \$30.75. Contact the Marshall Artists Series Box Office at 304-696-6656 or order tickets online at www.Ticketmaster.com. You can also visit the box office located in the Joan C. Edwards Playhouse on the Marshall University campus. Box office hours are noon to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

SPONSORS: Gavin Degraw and Andy Grammer are sponsored by Student Activities, City National Bank, ZMM Architects, Glockner Auto, Ransbottom Law Office, Dr. Jeff and Mrs. Brooke Leaberry, Jeff and Amber Biedeman, KEE 100, WSAZ, The Herald-Dispatch, Marshall University and the Marshall Artists Series.

ON THE WEB: www.marshall.edu/muart

On deck at the Marshall Artists Series

>> The Fall International Film Festival will take place over four days - Oct. 27-30 - at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center. Featured films include "Mustang" (Turkey); "Prescription Thugs" (USA); "The Lady in The Van" (UK); "VIVA" (Cuba); "A War" (Denmark); and "The Last Diamond" (France). Tickets are \$8 per film.

>> Making a stop on its 20th anniversary tour, the smash hit Broadway phenomenon "Rent" returns to the stage of the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 10. Tickets are \$94.95, \$78.90, \$68.20 and \$61.78.

>> Direct from South Africa, The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Choir comes to the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 17. Tickets are \$68.20, \$52.15, \$36.10 and \$26.47.

>> Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra present Big Band Holidays at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8, at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center. Tickets are \$84.25, \$73.55, \$62.85 and \$52.15.

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Keep it Clean. Please avoid obscene, vulgar, lewd, racist or sexually-oriented language.

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Don't Threaten. Threats of harming another person will not be tolerated.

Be Truthful. Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.



Be Nice. No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.

Be Proactive. Use the 'Report' link on each comment to let us know of abusive posts.

Share with Us. We'd love to hear eyewitness accounts, the history behind an article.

