

ELLIE GOULDING

Global success scores the singer more creative control on her latest

ELLIE GOULDING HIT THE GROUND RUNNING AFTER she released her debut album, *Lights*, two years ago, and she hasn't slowed down one bit. In her native England, she won a coveted Brit Award and was invited to play at the Royal Wedding. In the U.S., she scored an unexpected hit with "Lights"—which has been downloaded a whopping 3 million times. Now Goulding, 25, is ready to show a new side with her sophomore effort, *Halcyon*. "Even though people keep saying the second album is supposed to be the difficult one, I feel like *Lights* prepared me for a lot," says Goulding. "It really paved the way. *Halcyon* feels like my first album in a way."



Sandrine Lee

Though Goulding didn't take a dramatically new approach with *Halcyon*, as co-producer she stepped up the level of involvement in the writing and recording process. "I felt like I had a lot more control this time," she says. "There are still real elements of naiveté and simplicity in it because of that. It would have been easy to work with a big producer, where I just sang. But I really wanted to put a lot into this and know that it was my work."

At the urging of her manager, Goulding produced the record with Jim Eliot of electropop duo Kish Mauve. "I just clicked with Jim. He was conveniently ignorant of my old stuff, so we started fresh," says Goulding. Though initially unsure of the collaboration, the session proved very efficient. "He was living back in my hometown. It was pandemonium getting there," she continues. "I thought, 'This is gonna be a nightmare.' Then the next day when we actually made a song together, 'Anything Could Happen,' I was like 'This guy gets it!'"

Getting it meant paying particular attention to her vocals, which Goulding wanted to showcase. "I wanted it to be the birth of my voice because I felt like my voice was squeezed tightly into the music on the last record," she explains. "It wasn't distinct to the point where you go away from the track thinking, 'Wow, that voice!' I specifically wanted this one to be very vocal."

It's not just Goulding's vocals that stand out. The songs are marked by the maturity of a woman who's weathered a whirlwind couple of years. "I was in a very different place when I wrote this record," she says. "Since *Lights*, my life has obviously changed a lot. *Lights* is sort of a culmination of songs from my childhood and teenage years. It wasn't a fully formed document of me. *Halcyon* is more of a complete work. If I had to pick one song right now, I'd feel like I'd cut my arm off."

—Amanda Farah

