

*From nepo
breakout
Gracie*

*baby to
artist:
Abrams'
rise.*



Story by
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Gracie Abrams, a young singer-songwriter from Los Angeles, has experienced a meteoric rise to fame in the past year. Her journey from an emerging artist to a mainstream name in the pop scene is a testament to her talent, hard work, and the complex interplay of factors that contribute to success in the modern music industry. Despite initial skepticism surrounding her “nepo baby” status, Gracie Abrams has become a legitimate and compelling art-

ist in her own right, leveraging her songwriting talent, strategic collaborations, and high-profile opportunities—like opening for Taylor Swift’s *Eras Tour*—to transcend her family background and establish herself as a rising star on the pop stage.

Early Life and Family Background

Gracie Abrams was born and raised in Los Angeles, California to a family deeply embedded

in the entertainment industry. She is the daughter of renowned filmmaker J.J. Abrams and producer Katie McGrath. Growing up in this environment undoubtedly influenced her artistic inclinations from a young age.

Abrams began writing songs at the tender age of eight, coinciding with her interest in journaling. This early start in songwriting was a comfort for her, although performing in front of people was not something she initially aspired to do. Her

upbringing in a creatively rich environment laid the foundation for her future music career.

Musical Journey and Artistic Growth

Gracie Abrams' entry into the professional music scene came in 2019 when she decided to take a break from her studies at Barnard College in New York to focus on her music career. She signed with Interscope Records and released her debut single "Mean It."

Her career gained momentum with the release of her debut EP *Minor* in 2020. This initial offering set the tone for her artistic style, characterized by introspective lyrics and minimalist production that highlighted her emotive vocal delivery. The EP's success laid the foundation for her growing fanbase and established her as a promising new voice in the indie pop genre. Notably, *Minor* was produced by Blake Slatkin, who at the time was a relatively unknown talent working as an intern for renowned producer Benny Blanco. Since then, Slatkin has become a prominent figure in the music industry, producing hits for artists like Lizzo, The Kid LAROI, and Charli XCX. The success of both of the main collaborators on *Minor* highlights Abrams' long but steady trajectory to fame and her early ability to leverage emerging artists as collaborators.

tions to future industry powerhouses.

Building on this momentum, Abrams released another EP titled *This Is What It Feels Like* in 2021, further cementing her reputation as a poignant songwriter capable of capturing complex emotions with simplicity and grace. This continued growth and consistency in her musical output played a crucial role in maintaining and expanding her audience. Notably, her song "I miss you, I'm sorry" gained significant traction on TikTok during this time, contributing to her rising popularity. This viral success further amplified her reach and solidified her connection with fans. A significant milestone of Abrams' career came with the release of her debut album *Good Riddance* in February 2023. The album features twelve tracks that delve into themes of love, loss, and self-discovery, which resonated deeply with her young audience, and allowed her to develop a small cult follow-

ing despite her lack of mainstream prominence. The true pinnacle of Abrams' career is happening now with the release of her sophomore album, *The Secret of Us*, in

June 2024. This album marks a significant leap forward in her artistic evolution and commercial success. *The Secret of Us* quickly garnered critical acclaim, featuring twelve main tracks that explore themes of heartbreak, personal growth, and relationships. The album's notable collaboration with Taylor Swift on the track "Us." showcases the mentorship and support she has received from established artists. Further cementing her position among pop's elite, Abrams recently featured on Selena Gomez's single "Call Me When You Break Up," released in February 2025, which debuted at #28 on the Global Spotify charts with 3.09 million streams in just three days. This wave of collaborations demonstrates Abrams' growing appeal and her ability to contribute meaningfully to high-profile projects. Her recent success has culminated in a Grammy nomination for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance. A deluxe edition

of *The Secret of Us*, released in October 2024, delivered Abrams' first number one hit, "That's So True." Originally, *The Secret of Us Tour* was set to play at venues with smaller capacities, but *The Secret of Us Deluxe Tour*, a collection of additional shows, has elevated Abrams to major arenas like Madison Square Garden and the

Kia Forum. Abrams has rapidly ascended from indie nepo baby to full-fledged pop star. The success of *The Secret of Us* demonstrates Abrams' growth from a promising newcomer to a critically acclaimed artist capable of crafting deeply resonant and commercially successful music.

The "Nepo Baby" Label

Gracie Abrams' rise to fame has not been without controversy, particularly regarding her family background and her "nepo baby" label. The

term "nepo baby" has gained traction in recent years, referring to children of celebrities who are perceived to benefit from their parents' fame and connections.

In an interview with *Rolling Stone*, Abrams directly addressed the topic of her industry privilege, stating, "There are a million visible and even more invisible advantages to having family members who are in any entertainment industry." This acknowledgment demonstrates her awareness of the benefits her family connections have provided in the music industry. However, Abrams also em-

phasized her efforts to establish her career independently, noting, "I know how hard I work, and I know how separate I've kept [my parents] from every conversation about anything career-wise." These statements reflect Abrams' nuanced understanding of her position and her commitment to forging her own path in the music industry.

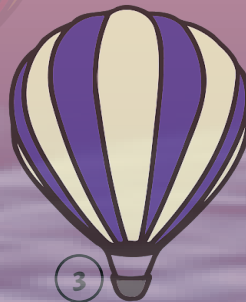
It's important to note that, while family connections may open doors, they do not guarantee success in the highly competitive music industry. Despite the undeniable influence of Abrams' father, she would not be where she is today without talent, hard work, and dedication to her craft. To overcome the "nepo baby" label, Abrams has consistently emphasized her independent artistic journey and commitment to authenticity. In interviews, she has highlighted her personal songwriting process, often describing how she writes in her bedroom and journals, creating a deeply intimate connection with her music. This focus on her individual creative process helps to distance her work from her family's influence.

Opening for Taylor Swift: A Career-Defining Opportunity

One of the most significant catalysts in Gracie Abrams' rise to fame has been her role as an opening act for Taylor Swift's record-breaking stadium spectacular: *The Eras Tour*. This opportunity provided Abrams with an unparalleled platform to showcase her music.

Opening for world-renowned concerts is familiar territory for Abrams, who performed at Olivia Rodrigo's *Sour Tour* in 2022. *The Eras Tour*, however, became the highest-grossing concert series in history, grossing over \$2 billion, and offering Abrams immense exposure and the opportunity to perform in front of tens of thousands

of people each night. The tour has been noted for its ability to spotlight new talent, with a significant percentage of artists who opened for Swift, including Abrams and Sabrina Carpenter, being recognized by prestigious institutions such



as the Recording Academy.

Abrams' selection as an opener for the *Eras Tour* was likely influenced by her proximity to Aaron Dessner. Dessner has been the primary producer for all of Abrams' music, including her 2024 album *The Secret of Us*. He has also emerged as one of Swift's most significant collaborative partners, co-producing and co-writing dozens

of tracks on her critically acclaimed albums since 2020. This shared creative influence has created a musical kinship between Abrams and Swift, with Dessner's distinctive production style serving as a bridge between their artistic worlds.

The impact of Abrams' participation in the *Eras Tour* can be observed through the evolution of her performances and audience reception over time. I attended multiple of Swift's concerts, from April 2023 to November 2024, and witnessed this transformation in real time. In April 2023, when

Abrams opened for Swift a month into the tour, the audience's familiarity with her music was noticeably limited. By November

2024, Abrams' set was met with overwhelming enthusiasm—at least two-thirds of the stadium was full during her performance, with fans singing along to every word, waving flashlights, and holding up signs in support, a testament to how quickly she had won over Swift's audience. Beyond the exposure, being part of the *Eras Tour* also offered Abrams the chance to receive mentorship from Swift, who is known for her

keen ability to spot and nurture talent. As evidenced by their joint Grammy nomination, this mentorship can be invaluable for young artists navigating the complexities of the music industry.

Conclusion

Gracie Abrams' rise to fame in the past year is a result of a combination of factors: her undeniable talent as a songwriter and performer, the support and exposure gained from high-profile collaborations, and her ability to connect authentically with her audience.

While her family background has undoubtedly played

a role in her journey, Abrams has worked hard to establish her own identity and career path.

Her success story illustrates the changing landscape of the music industry, where authentic storytelling, strategic collaborations, and the ability to leverage opportunities like opening for established artists can propel an artist to stardom. As Gracie Abrams continues to evolve as

an artist, her journey serves as an inspiring example of how talent, hard work, and smart career moves can lead to success in the competitive world of music.

As she moves forward in her career, Gracie Abrams stands as a promising figure in the indie pop landscape, with a growing fanbase, critical acclaim, and industry recognition. Her ability to navigate the complexities of fame, family expectations, and artistic integrity will undoubtedly continue to shape her journey in the music world.

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