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Lady Gaga faces Q,  
Spring Studios, Kentish  
Town, London: it was all  
downhill from here.



# lady GAGA

## ROYAL FLUSH!

Body language expert Judi James on Gaga's meeting with our dear old Queen.



Judi James: "Superman fans will remember a character called Bizarro who was a grotesque parody of the hero himself, and it seems Her Royal Highness might worry she's met her own personal version here in the shape of the divine Lady G, with her pallid complexion, red-painted lips, crimped white-blond hair and fetishist Queen of Hearts dress.

"Gaga's low-slung bow mimics the simian rituals of submission, respect and deference but Her Majesty's body language suggests she's still checking for Kryptonite. Those roses are held a little higher than usual, suggesting the need for a barrier from all that rampant PVC, while the Queen's smile is stretched enough to look a little over-compensatory, hinting that any regal bonding might not have been on the menu."



and presented with a plaque (exactly one year previously, she'd supported New Kids On The Block alongside Natasha Bedingfield at the same venue). By January 2010, she was forced to upgrade her tour venues to accommodate the huge production (which she'd overspent on by £2 million), tweeting an apology to fans over "a serious error by my production staff". Delirious live reviews were now tempered by reports of onstage exhaustion and further open weeping at the increasingly overwhelming adoration of her fans. On 14 January, she finally collapsed, passing out minutes before a show in Indiana and was forced to cancel on doctors' orders (exhaustion, dehydration, dizziness, an irregular heartbeat).

The speed of her ongoing global success, notes her friend Lady Starlight today, is "completely unprecedented, and the industry is working her to death, everyone's trying to cash in". As the last producer to work with Michael Jackson, RedOne


has seen the madness up close. "This reminds me of the Thriller period," he surmises. "Even me, I get crazy emails, how Gaga and I have changed lives. People are feeling this emptiness and they feel like she describes their emotions. People are becoming obsessed with her, y'know?"

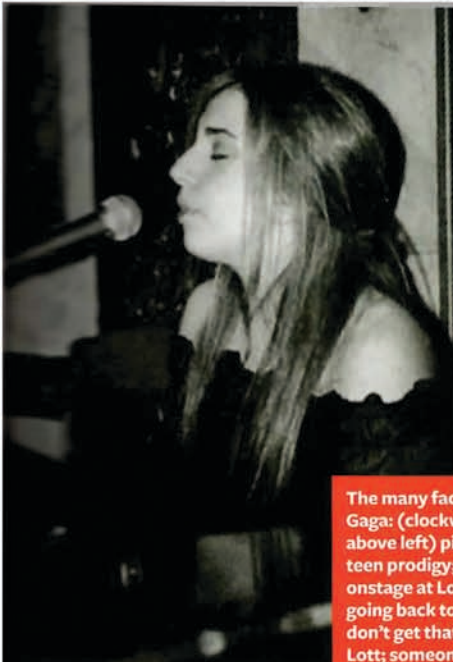
But Lady Gaga is far from your average pop star. Not everything she does succeeds, her creative ambitions sometimes too unfathomably berserk, but when she does, this is true pop genius at work. Exactly one month after Q's shoot collapsed, she performed on The X Factor in a giant bathtub dressed as a devil-horned industrial-bat-woman, hollering, "I'm a free bitch, baby!", captivated the Queen with a piano on stilts, took *Bad Romance* to Number 1 in the UK not once but twice, and on 31 January won two Grammys. Not bad for a 23-year-old goth with a complex over a weak chin.

Back on her silvery penthouse sofa before the ill-fated photo session, she had mused on the world's

greatest Gaga misconception: that she wears her persona like a cloak, discarded in relief after an exhausting day in artifice.

"No, it's just me and I'm not exhausted," she shimmered that day. "Y'know, we always laugh when we get to some major magazines and they're like [*high-camp voice*], So, the art direction of the shoot is: we want the world to see *the real you*. And I'm sitting there thinking, These fucking people don't get it at all. At all. It's mind-blowing to me. That's like saying [*whispers conspiratorially*], We know you're full of shit. But it's fine, we get it. So let's just cut out the bullshit for one shoot.

"But you don't really wanna get to know me or photograph my soul, you want to do some version of what you already think I am and then expose something that you believe is hidden. When the truth is, me and my big fucking dick are all out there for you. But I'm not angry, I'm laughing. The joke is not on *me*, it's on *you*." 



The many faces of Lady Gaga: (clockwise from above left) piano-playing teen prodigy; gyrating onstage at Lollapalooza; going back to the '80s; you don't get that with Pixie Lott; someone's had an accident with the ketchup; rocking the Courtney Love look; picking up an MTV award; auditioning for Twilight; and (centre) getting things off her chest.

