



Lady Gaga's reputation as the Royal Society performance in December 2009 was one of the most thrilling, audacious and unexpected moments of pop history. In front of the Queen, Gaga sang 'Speechless' while sitting at a surreal, 13-foot-high, spindle-legged piano. Perhaps even more outrageous was the outfit she wore while playing in a neon sapphire Queen Elizabeth's for the S&M latex number, complete with chis high-heeled and comedy 20-foot train. From once-in-a-lifetime photos of Lady Gaga meeting the current Queen show that Her Majesty was definitely amused.

Today, though, she has a more muted, staid idea for her increasingly subversive crusade.

"I want to wear a dick strap to my vagina," she announces cheerfully, putting on a Marlboro Light in the penthouse suite of London's May Fair hotel. "We all know one of the biggest talking points of the year was that I have a dick, so why not give them what they want? I want to comment on that in a beautiful, artistic way. How? (wanna show it. And I want to call this piece Lady Gaga Dies I Hard."

In the 16 months since Lady Gaga released her debut album, *The Fame*, she has outlasted the mores of contemporary pop by wearing, variously, a coat made of Kermite the frog skin, a slightly-faded, patterned tank and a face of the same black PVC-gimp mask. But what's unusual here is not that Lady Gaga is about to wear a strap-on penis for her first Q cover shoot - itself a response to the rumours that she's either a hermaphrodite or an actual bloke - but that she has, at 24, become so artistically confident that she intends to comment on it with not only her own photographs but also the title of the story itself.

"It'd be a real fucking story, right?" she says with a smile. "Come on, come see me try to persuade everyone to let me wear a penis."

Since her debut single, *Just Dance*, crashed to Earth with the force of a meteorite in 2008, Lady Gaga has become both the biggest and the most extreme pop star on the planet. With more than eight million albums sales and three global Number 1s to her name, she is mainstream culture's most controversial "starlet", a sexually-provocative cartoon amalgam of a 1950s Madonna, Salvador Dalí, Marilyn Manson, David Bowie, Francis Bacon and the special effects department of Doctor Who on hallucinogenic narcotics. She's friends with Beyoncé and Kanye West, been shot by stellar photographers Mario Testino and David LaChapelle, and influenced fashion itself, from Jean Paul Gaultier's sex 66-themed collection to the increasingly outcast styles of Rihanna and Lily Allen.

But none of this would have happened without those euphoric, globe-throwing singles, each eclipsing the last, until she became an undisputed pop music royalty. A que-theoretical feminist about falling in love with your best friend and celebrating the human "inner psyche", its dramatic high-pitched notes, and Gaga goes to... (caption)

how the mainstream industry simulates human trafficking, the woman as commodity".

Right now, the Disc of Dada sits cross-legged on a shiny, upholstered velvet sofa, as serene as an abstract sculpture. Today is our first meeting; the plan is to follow it up by going on the road with her on her Monster Ball tour. She wears nothing on her head but a wig (a bouffant '70s disco-meets-Marilyn Monroe marvel). She stares straight at you with enormous brown eyes, bewitchingly Jewish and prettier in the flesh, with a glorious Jewish nose. Her black silk dressing gown continually edges apart, exposing her small, real and undeniably female bare breasts. We are discussing the "Lady Gaga is a hermaphrodite" rumours. It is, she decides, an example of an old story, namely the public savaging of highly sexual women - something that happened before with Madonna.

"When a guy says, 'Oh, I fucked all these chicks this week, there's a high-five and giggling,'" notes Gaga, puffing away on her cigarette. "But when a woman does it and it's publicised or she's open about her sexuality or she's free, or liberated, it's, Oh, she must have a dick. There's a threat. I also carry myself onstage in a masculine way and sing in a low register. This is not out of nowhere, right?"

Lady Gaga is mental, in every sense of the term: cerebral, earnest, comically pretentious, unapologetically cryptic and continuously in deference to "my beautiful fans", more befitting a 70-year-old showbiz veteran. But then she's been a star-in-waiting for most of her life. Born Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta to a middle-class New York Italian-American family (her dad Joseph, 53, a sometime long-haired rock 'n' roll bar musician, became a wealthy internet entrepreneur), she was a prodigiously talented child who learnt piano by ear at the age of four. She was educated at a Catholic high school, the Convent Of The Sacred Heart, where she was a straight-A student, albeit one who defied the nuns' strictures by wearing her skirts "really high" and worshipping Judy Garland, David Bowie and Led Zeppelin.

"I wanted to be Boy George," she notes. "I was a freak, a little bit insecure, my personality just didn't fit it - and I guess that's what I'm all about."

By 15 she was already singing and playing piano in nightclubs, and at 17 was accepted into the prestigious Tisch School of the Arts (alumni: Woody Allen, Angelina Jolie, Martin Scorsese), one of only 30 students in its 45-year history to enrol early. At 19, determined to make her own money, she waitress and go-go-danced in New York dive bars, had sexual relationships with women (although she says she only fell in love with men) and developed a cocaine habit. This involved having "bags and bags of cocaine" delivered to her apartment, where she'd snort the drug alone for hours, listening to The Cure and making herself up as classic David Bowie.

By 2006, she had signed a publishing deal with Interscope (the same deal with Def Jams, when she was 19, ended when she was dropped) to write songs for other people, including Britney Spears, Pink, Jay-Z and Prince of The New Power Generation.

But she was still supplementing her earnings performing as one half of burlesque cabaret Lady Gaga And The Starlight Revue. Her artistic partner was Lady Starlight, a philosophy graduate and metal-obsessed DJ. Gaga had suggested the pair create a pop/metal hybrid, combining Gaga's pop spectacle with Starlight's heavier rock sensibility. Gaga performed in front of howdy rock crowds, dressed in \$10 cheetah-print bikinis and native American head-dresses, wielding hatchets as she flailed along to Iron Maiden's *Rain To The Hills*.

"She was in the commercial pop world, which didn't encourage risk," Starlight tells Q, "but she has absolutely a rock 'n' roll mentality. So I encouraged her. If you have an idea, however ridiculous, do it. All the way. Rock 'n' roll is supposed to stun. And appeal. She wanted to shake up the industry, and I'd compare her to Bowie way before Madonna in terms of bringing alternative culture into the mainstream. She is a sashco-punk!"

By 2007, she'd given up both go-go dancing and cocaine to focus on writing music and to appease her beloved father, who'd stopped talking to her, convinced she was insane ("I was panicking more on the drugs than I was sober"). Interscope signed her as a fully-fledged artist, and she decided that her future lay in electronic pop. "I thought, if I wanna be really revolutionary, I'll make pop music."

In 2008, after playing "every club in New York, hustling my life forward", her manager introduced her to producer RedOne, who worked with Gaga on three of the singles that would make her name: *Just Dance*, *Poker Face* and *Bad Romance*. "Every part of *Bad Romance* has a hook, like The Beatles," marvels RedOne today. "My brain is so fast it has magic inspirations."

Gaga, meanwhile, was "finally free". Of course, there's nothing quite like a self-assured woman who purports to embody freedom to cause thundering subconscious resentment in those who somehow have none. In September 2009, she performed at the MTV Music Video Awards, hanging herself from the roof and dripping fake blood as she sang *Paparazzi*, and dedicating her Best New Artist award to "God and the gays" while wearing a real lace body stocking, matching face-seck and spiky hell crown. It unleashed a torrent of vicious mockery, which proved just what Lady Gaga intends to expose through her shock-art provocation. One male host on *50* (streamline website theyoungturks.com was particularly appalled, deeming Gaga "an instant vehicle" with "a busted face" who "garnt attention for her brilliant songs by putting herself on her face") "It's the way she expresses herself" commented his female co-host, "and I know exactly against that." "The way she expresses herself" came the withering response. "Oh, please."

It's a few hours after the interview, and in an empty White North London photo studio, Lady Gaga is challenging "carnal" mezzanine.

Several people are sitting on an elongated sofa. Six of these are part of The House Of Gaga, the creative team. >>>

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Q magazine uses the exact same style as NME and Kerrang of having one image take up the whole of a double page spread. This is a common theme and I think I should definitely be considering using it for my own music magazine. The layout of this requires a large image taking up the whole page due to the huge amount of text on the other page. Q have tried to make it look less daunting to read by including a reserved colour scheme L. It is the same colours as the Q logo, but of course the L is in red and the outside is white in this case. There is a small Q icon at the bottom of the right hand page showing the page number.

Analysing the text on the right hand page, it is clear that this magazine has a very niche feel to it. It includes very specific and genre related information throughout the text and therefore appeals to a certain demographic only. While this could potentially limit the magazine's sales, it helps to create repeat buyers and generate subscriptions to the magazine.

The main image of this page is a high quality image of Lady Gaga holding her breasts. This helps to show her uniqueness in the music industry and her "crazy" style. This also fits in with the niche idea of Q magazine.