

Radio Gaga: Evolution of a Star

[Oscar Bentley](#) discusses Lady Gaga's changing style over her last decade of music

Tuesday 20 November 2018



Image: Warner Bros.

With the release of Bradley Cooper's Oscar hot ticket *A Star is Born*, Lady Gaga has been thrust back into the spotlight. Since she first appeared on the scene a decade ago, Gaga – real name Stefani Germanotta – has, safe for a few years where she buried herself away to work on her next record, stayed a relative constant in the public eye for her wacky, sometimes surreal ways. Not only her appearance, with her platinum hair and outlandish outfits, ranging from those shoulder pads to that meat dress, but her sound too, with her electro and dance-pop hits, beginning with breakouts “Poker Face” and “Paparazzi” from *The Fame*, and her slightly rockier album *Born this Way*.

In more recent years however, Gaga seems to have undergone a bit of a rebrand. Like Miley Cyrus (who admittedly changed in a much quicker timescale than Gaga and seemed to take influence from her), Gaga has shaken off her weirdness, and has adopted a bit more of a reserved image, with a country, blues, and ballad-esque sound. Ostensibly, one could argue this is as a result of her starring role in *A Star is Born* and its UK Number One soundtrack, which required her to pick up more of a country blues sound.

Yet one only needs to cast their eyes back to her 2016 album, *Joanne*, to see that this is a trajectory she's been on for some time. After the less critically and commercially successful *Artpop*, Gaga re-emerged with a jazz album with Tony Bennett, and eventually with *Joanne*, in which she ditched the sound – and image – that made her name. Inspired by her late aunt of the same name, *Joanne* presented a new Gaga, spanning genres. There's the blues “Come to Mama”, as well as the country-style title track. There's even

something there for the Gaga purists, with the poppy “Diamond Heart”. It was an altogether different record; discussing her family, it is a personal look inwards, unlike the outwards-looking, and fame-focused earlier records.

Almost as stark as the sound evolution was that of Gaga’s image. *Joanne’s* album cover revealed Gaga with a pastel pink hat against a pastel blue background, evoking not only a country, but a minimalist look – just like her sound. It’s an image that was stripped back right to her roots for *A Star is Born*, where Gaga embraced her natural brunette hair to play the character of Ally, who enters the industry as a nobody.

Ally’s journey in *A Star is Born* arguably is a critique of not only what the industry does to new “recruits”, but also of Gaga’s origins. Starting off in country, when Ally becomes famous, her meddling manager forces her to dye her hair and adopt a wackier look, alongside pop sound, which she eventually shuns and concludes with the ballad “I’ll Never Love Again” While the screenplay may be a product of Cooper, the songs are all Gaga. Does she want to return to her dance-pop beginnings, or is she much happier playing in the ballpark of the more reserved country ballad?

If it wasn’t for the global recognition of the Gaga brand, would she go back to performing as Germanotta? It’s unlikely, but given the personal nature of Joanne, she has arguably ditched Gaga already. Her upcoming fifth album may finally reveal the future of her artistry: a return to the old, a continuation of the present, or something new entirely.



Most Read

Discussed

1. [Review: Little Mix – LM5](#)
2. [Led Astray – The Case Against Greta Van Fleet](#)
3. [Review: Some Rap Songs – Earl Sweatshirt](#)
4. [Review: Simulation Theory – Muse](#)
5. [Live Review: Sigrid @ Albert Hall, Manchester – 8/11/18](#)
6. [Band of the Week: Magma](#)

Write for Nouse Music

[Get in touch with the editors](#)

[Join the Facebook group](#)

More in Music

[Review: Some Rap Songs – Earl Sweatshirt](#)

[Review: Little Mix – LM5](#)

[Live Review: Sigrid @ Albert Hall, Manchester – 8/11/18](#)

[Live Review: Within Temptation @ O2 Academy Birmingham 9/11/18](#)

[Review: Simulation Theory – Muse](#)

[Led Astray – The Case Against Greta Van Fleet](#)

[About Nouse](#)
[Who's Nouse](#)
[Website Credits](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Advertising](#)
[Archives](#)
[Student Discounts](#)
[Print Editions](#)
[Mini-Sites](#)
[Nouse on Twitter](#)
[Nouse on Facebook](#)
[Nouse on Google+](#)

© 1964-2018 Nouse

[Policies](#) |

