

Not all pop tarts created equal?

Famous media harlot and drama queen butt heads, but the Post's entertainment reporter sees only one in a league of her own

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Over recent months internet and entertainment TV trash talk has been generating over an alleged feud going on between pop veteran Christina Aguilera and the latest mainstream maverick Lady Gaga.

The controversy arose when fashion and culture critics began making comparisons between the stars' sense of style leading to an implication of Aguilera pirating Gaga's image.

On the surface the evidence was sound, as with the release of Aguilera's greatest hits album *Keeps Getting Better*, she was sporting a new look, undeniably akin to Gaga's platinum fringe, 80s glam tailoring and mod make-up. Aguilera added fuel to the publicity fire when asked about the un-



canny likeness to the trendy electro-pop dance queen in an L.A Times interview stating that she had no idea who Gaga was or even if it is a man or a woman.

Whether it was a low blow or truly a plea of ignorance, Aguilera sparked an offensive of media excitement that would see her reputation suffer.

Her apparent lack of awareness of Gaga's existence brings to light the question: who is this neoteric new-

comer that is threatening the repute of seasoned divas like that of Aguilera? As it turns out Lady Gaga's background is not that of your typical mainstream singing sensation.

Rather than picking up fame on a silver platter from national singing competitions and Disney programming, Gaga worked her way up by performing in every seedy nightclub that would let her. This not only set her apart from the sugar pop pack but

also lends some credibility to her Queen-inspired name.

Lady Gaga may appear to be a new face in the pop music realm but she has been a shadow in the backdrop of the New York music club scene for quite some time now.

Cutting her teeth on the lower East Side, Gaga would take part in and produce theatrical pop and shock art performances along with appearances in burlesque shows.

Performance was high on the agenda for Gaga, as a major component of this sphere was her personal designs, comprised of eccentric glam-rock. This is the aspect that distinguishes her from other pop princesses today. But these downtown club days were only at the midpoint of her career as she learned to play the piano by ear at the tender age of four, wrote her first piano ballad at 13 and could be found at open mic performances at 14.

Combining her natural musical chops with performance experience, Lady

Gaga became, by the age of 17, one of the few esteemed individuals to gain early admission to the music program at the Tisch School of Arts at NYU. She carried on to be signed by Interscope Records in 2008 where her songwriting talents were lent to the likes of Fergie, Britney Spears and The Pussycat Dolls.

It wouldn't be until the release of her debut album, *The Fame*, that the world would experience the fullness of her creative forces.

Laden with synth and inspired by the rock n roll geniuses of the late 1970s and early 80s such as Queen and David Bowie, this album broke ground with dance club tracks *Just Dance* and *Pokerface*.

Although it is questionable as to whether Lady Gaga will have an extensive shelf life in mainstream music she is one artist that is bringing something fresh to the table. A starlet that writes, plays an instrument, has an education in music, designs, puts on creative performances and of course has a killer voice is not the norm. If you want to experience a stripped-down vocal performance of Lady Gaga, her acoustic version of *Pokerface* on Youtube is an unassuming delight.

She appears like some kind of eccentric creation of a bigbox label, but the road she has travelled to here tells a different story, a story that proves not all pop tarts are created equal.

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