Follow All Leads... or How I became a Lady Gaga Impersonator

Hi!  I’m Athena Reich.  I’m a singer/songwriter, actress, arts teacher and all around creative entrepreneur.  I’ve been indie my whole life, from working as a street performer, to singing in cafes, to Theater, to teaching arts to Special Needs populations.  People often ask me how I juggle so many projects.  One of my secrets is that I follow all leads.

In the fall of last year, I received an email from a woman who found me online.  She said she was looking for a Lady Gaga for her New Year’s Eve event, but that most of the impersonators she came across lip synced.  She said she loved my voice, and asked if this was something I could do.

Now I did not consider myself a Lady Gaga fan.  Sure I had heard her music, but I wasn’t too familiar with it.  I could have said, “No, I am not a Lady Gaga impersonator”.  Instead, I said, “Tell me more.  What kind of performance do you need?  What’s the budget?”  We worked out the details and I soon realized it was a gig worth taking.

Not soon after our contract was signed, did I realize I was in for a lot of hard work.  I had to select 9 of her songs, learn them, teach myself her choreography, create 3 costumes, and immerse myself in all things Gaga.  Whenever I got overwhelmed or frustrated, I reminded myself that only good things could come from it.

I researched her most outrageous outfits and decided I was going to recreate Lady Gaga’s bubble dress as the final outfit of the performance.  I can’t tell you how many hours it took of shopping, sewing and glue gunning.  All I can say is that in the months leading up to the show, when I wasn’t busy teaching music, I was singing, dancing and sewing with a vengeance.

When New Year’s Eve finally came, I was ready.  There were over 3000 people in attendance!  I was surprised at how much fun it was to be a pop sensation for one night.  The crowd was dancing and singing along to my performance.  Afterwards, it seemed like everyone wanted a picture with me.  It was surreal.  It gave me a little taste of the “Fame Monster”, which I discovered was thrilling, exhilarating, satisfying, and exhausting, all at once.

Since I had put so much work into creating a Gaga personae, and had had so much fun at the show, I decided to pursue more work as an impersonator.  I contacted agencies, and am now in high demand at festivals, bridal showers, holiday events and more.  I even got selected to appear in Lady Gaga’s “The Edge of Glory” Google Chrome commercial on TV!  (I’m the girl with the ukulele).  I never imagined I could have so much fun performing as another artist.  But the fact is, I get to sing, dance, and entertain.  And I get paid for it!  All because I followed a random lead.  You just never know where your next opportunity will come from.