

Larger than life? Katy Perry goes 3D

As music documentary *Katy Perry: Part of Me* lands in UAE cinemas this week, Rob Garratt asks if the precocious star is ready for the silver screen

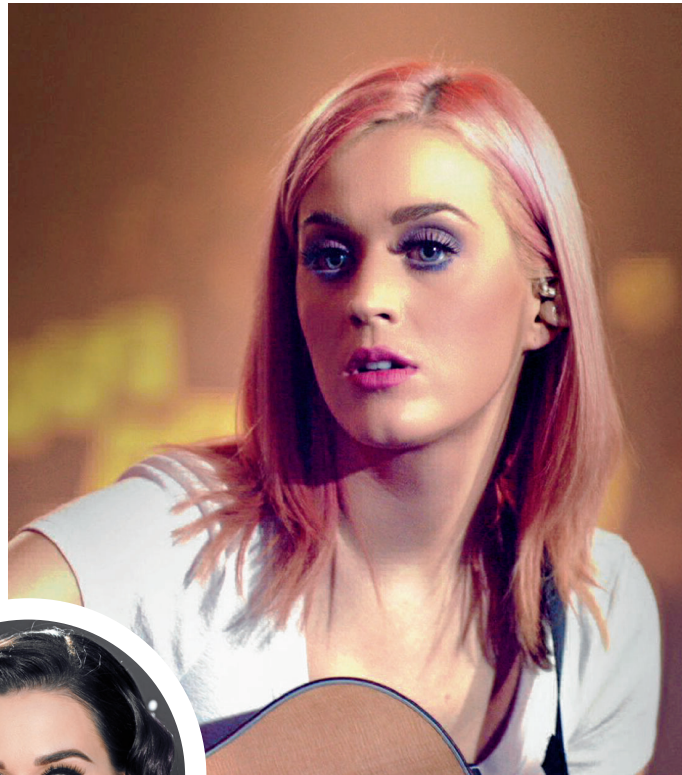
There are precious few personalities large enough to fill a big-screen documentary portrait. Movies are built on drama, invention, suspense – not the wonky camerawork and talking heads found in the kind of documentaries best suited to TV. To translate the one-person portrait onto the big screen, you normally need an epic life of Ghandi-esque proportions. So with little more to her name than a few years on the charts, how has Katy Perry done it? In 3D, too?

Katy Perry: Part of Me is like a postmodern statement. Rather than appreciating and dissecting the life and work of a great musician who's passed away (like, say, Kevin MacDonald's laudable portrait *Marley*, which brought the reggae icon to the big screen earlier this year), its release comes amid the turbulence of her rise – or at least at the crest of the wave (Perry was reportedly the world's third highest-earning musician of last year, taking home Dhs160 million).

Part of Me can offer no perspective because it is both a symptom and cause of her rise to stardom, feeding the very success it attempts to make sense of.

The film's trailer spends most of its first half justifying the film's existence. Slabs of bold text fill the screen to remind us of Perry's achievements. The screaming slogans 'WORLD TOUR: SOLD OUT' and 'FIRST FEMALE PERFORMER TO HAVE FIVE #1 SINGLES ON ONE ALBUM' are notably followed by 'MARRIAGE OVER'. Perry's real achievements are far more than just musical: they include gaining personal notoriety through a short-lived relationship with obnoxious British comedian Russell Brand. Tellingly, critics have rounded on the film's 'money shot': Perry crying in her dressing room following the split, which occurred little more than a year after the couple's wedding.

But what did we expect from Perry? We're not sure there's a subtle bone in her body: after all, it was



controversially titled breakout single 'I Kissed a Girl' (which was banned from UAE radio) that thrust her into the spotlight. Significantly, this post-Lily Allen quirk followed a sheltered upbringing in a Christian family, something the film doubtless makes a great deal of.

Since those first hits, just four years ago, Perry's rapid rise has been anything but low-key. Alongside her seven Billboard number ones, she's found time to put out two perfumes ('Purr' and 'Meow'), star in family movie *The Smurfs*, and launch her own computer game, *The Sims 3: Katy Perry's Sweet Treats*. A megalomaniac, myth-making 3D documentary/concert film was perhaps the only next logical step.

There's a telling moment midway through the film's stage footage where a coquettish Perry turns to thousands

of screaming fans and thanks them 'for believing in my weirdness'. The tautology is insufferable – smashing sales records with an appeal to the broadest possible fan base makes Perry anything but 'weird'. But as a

Katy: the essentials

- Perry is the **only female artist ever to score five US Billboard number ones** from a single album (2010's *Teenage Dream*) – and the first artist since Michael Jackson with *Bad* in 1987.
- She **met former husband Russell Brand in 2009** on the film set for *Get Him to the Greek*, in which Perry performed an intimate scene with Brand that was cut from the final movie.
- Perry's **real name is Hudson**, referenced in the title of her 2001 debut album, *Katy Hudson*. She took her mother's maiden name to avoid confusion with Hollywood star Kate Hudson.
- She has **written songs for artists** including Kelly Clarkson, Ashley Tisdale, Selena Gomez & The Scene and Jessica James.
- **Madonna was an early champion**, mentioning Perry in broadcasts, which helped her gain notoriety.
- She holds a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for the **'Best Start on the US Digital Chart by a Female Artist'** after her first two singles both sold more than two million digitally.

study in the cult of success, and the power of personality, we can't help but watch with fascination.

Katy Perry: Part of Me is in UAE cinemas from September 6. Read our review on the opposite page.

Musicians in the movies

These personalities were certainly large enough to carry the weight of the big screen...

Madonna

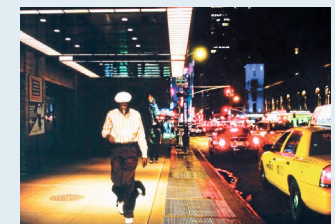
The Queen of Pop's warts-and-all documentary of her 1990 tour, *In Bed With Madonna*, is the highest grossing documentary of all time, banking Dhs106 million.

The Rolling Stones

Footage of 18-year-old fan Meredith Hunter being stabbed at the Stones' infamous 1970 Altamont gig cast a deep shadow over their best-known documentary, *Gimme Shelter*.

Buena Vista Social Club

Fame followed film – rather than vice versa – in the 1999 docu that thrust the spotlight on a crew of ageing Cuban musicians, assembled to perform in NYC as *Buena Vista Social Club*.



► **NEXT WEEK:** We count down the top ten comedies of all time