

Can Bradley Cooper really sing in A Star Is Born?

By Maddy Shaw Roberts – 28 January 2019

Bradley Cooper took on 18 months of vocal training to achieve his character's **gravelly register** in 'A Star Is Born'. But did it **pay off**?

A Star is Born, a remake of the 1954 musical film, stars Bradley Cooper as the fictional country star Jackson Maine. The film tells the story of his romance with Ally, an aspiring artist played by Lady Gaga, which becomes **strained** when her career **takes off** and Jackson's internal demons show no sign of **letting up**.

As well as making his directorial debut, Cooper plays his first major role as a musician. And not only are the actor's vocals all his own: they are also completely live and **untampered with**.

Cooper told Vulture: "[Lady Gaga] said right from the beginning: 'I'm going to rely on you to get a performance that's honest out of me [...] and I'm going to make sure that you're going to turn into a musician. Because we're going to sing everything live.' And I went, 'Wait, what?'"

According to Cooper, Gaga didn't like movie stars lip-synching to a pre-recorded track in films. "She's right!" said Cooper. "[Singing live] was terrifying, and I really relied on her. I spent about a year and a half taking vocal lessons and preparing."

It's clear that Cooper fully embraced the role of the country singer – the actor seems to do all the singing and piano playing in the film himself. Cooper's vocals are remarkably authentic. As an alcoholic and addict, Jackson Maine's vocals should tell a dark personal narrative. And for Cooper, that also meant changing his speaking voice.

"I knew that I couldn't play me as this guy — I had to change everything," Cooper told Entertainment Weekly. "I knew I wanted to lower my speaking voice an octave. So I hired [dialect coach] Tim Monich early on — I mean, like, a year before we shot the movie. He moved to L.A. and we worked five days a week, four hours a day on exercises and lowering my voice."

Cooper described the experience as 'brutal', as was the process of learning to sing well enough to pass for a world-famous country singer on screen. But he didn't need to look far for inspiration: the actor modelled his **gruff** voice on the deep and resonant vocals of his co-star Sam Elliott, who plays Maine's brother.

"It took months and months and months," Cooper said about getting his voice just right. "The person that I used was Sam Elliott because I didn't want [Jackson] to be only a country musician and I didn't want him to have an accent. Sam grew up in California and his mother is from Texas, so it's kind of this great hybrid voice."

The movie took 42 days to shoot, but Cooper said it took three years for him to fully get into character. And the result is pretty spectacular. From 'Maybe it's Time' to 'Shallow', his vocals throughout are so consistent, believable and beautifully gravelly that you almost forget you're watching Bradley Cooper.