

Akon
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Akon Calls Lady Gaga His 'Franchise Player'

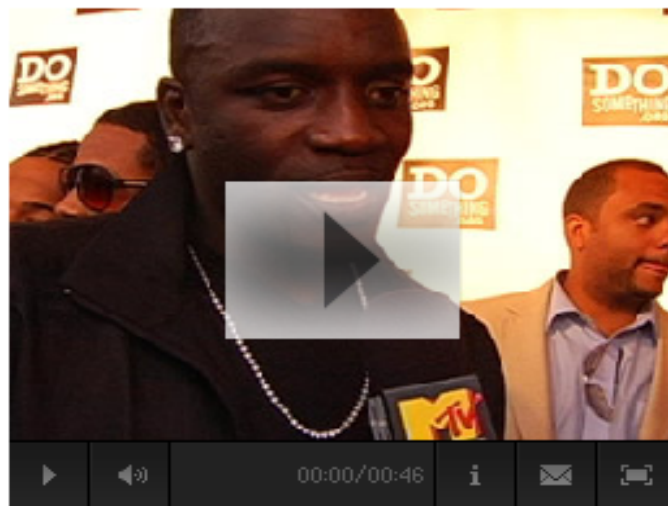
'She's like a sister to me,' 'Kon says of his label's pop star.

By Jocelyn Vena, with additional reporting by Sway Calloway

One of **Lady Gaga's** early supporters was **Akon**. Not only did he sign the reigning disco queen to his record label, Kon Live Distribution, but he has also lent his vocal talents to her breakout hit "Just Dance."

And now that Gaga is a household name, he couldn't be happier to see her ruling charts and dance floors throughout the world. "She's incredible," he told MTV News. "That's my franchise player at the moment. Gaga's been so incredible."

Akon says Gaga's rocket launch to fame is due to her industrious work ethic, and he thinks that every one of her hits is well-deserved. "At this point, she deserves every bit [of fame]," he said of the singer, who herself **credits the gay community** for helping make her successful. "If anybody went through grassroots, it was Gaga."



While the mainstream has been discovering Gaga via radio play and her appearances on "Dancing With the Stars" and "**American Idol**," the hip-hop community has also been tuning in, especially after **Kanye West reimagined her song "Poker Face."**

"I think she's a magnate to the industry in general," he said about Gaga's being embraced by the hip-hop world. "She's brave. She's fresh. She's different. She's bold. She don't give a damn. You gotta

take her as she is. That's the beauty of it. You're forced to like her the way she is without no extra stuff added."

And it's her no-nonsense attitude that makes Akon love her so much. "She's like a sister to me," he said. "That's like my girl. She's right here, in a headlock!"

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