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THE  
WOMEN  
WHO  
SHAPED  
2020

STARRING

THE FIRST FEMALE 007

LASHANA  
LYNCH

PLUS: DAISY EDGAR-JONES ELIZABETH DAY FLOELLA BENJAMIN  
GILLIAN ANDERSON HARRIS REED HILARY MANTEL  
IMAAN HAMMAM JANE FONDA KILEY REID  
MICHAELA COEL SARAH GILBERT SONIA FRIEDMAN



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Lashana Lynch wears Celine by Hedi Slimane in this month's cover story

ON THE COVER

From 125 The women who shaped 2020: starring Lashana Lynch. Plus: Daisy Edgar-Jones, Elizabeth Day, Floella Benjamin, Gillian Anderson, Harris Reed, Hilary Mantel, Imaan Hammam, Jane Fonda, Kiley Reid, Michaela Coel, Sarah Gilbert, Sonia Friedman

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THIS PAGE: Lashana Lynch wears taffeta and tulle dress, £2,295, Simone Rocha. Leather heels, £445, Max Mara. White gold and diamond ring, £5,500; matching earrings, from a selection, all Chanel Fine Jewellery. OPPOSITE: silk dress, £2,650; white gold and diamond earrings, £6,750, both Giorgio Armani. Felt hat, £430, Awon Golding



*Lashana Lynch*  
makes HISTORY  
as the first Black  
female 007

*Photographs by* RICHARD PHIBBS

*Styled by* LEITH CLARK

*Artwork by* ROSANNA WEBSTER

As she prepares to star in the 25th Bond film, the actress is on a mission to use her voice for good and represent her race and sex with pride





White gold and diamond necklace, from a selection, Chopard. White and yellow gold, and diamond hoop earrings, from £2,950, Jessica McCormack. White gold and diamond ring, from £3,200, Annoushka

RICHARD PHIBBS

ARTWORK BY ROSANNA WEBSTER



By YRSA DALEY-WARD

The first time I saw Lashana Lynch on screen in 2012, I felt the very distinct thing that Black women artists watching other Black women artists doing their thing are apt to feel:

a deep and perceptible sense of encouragement, as though we too belong there. At the time, we weren't

seeing much evidence of this in UK cinema, so Lynch's appearance as an Olympic athlete in Noel Clarke's feel-good film *Fast Girls* – complete with runner's physique and incredible smile – was a heartening moment. We were not to meet in person until years later, when she came to surprise me at my book reading in New York City; afterwards, we discussed our common Caribbean-woman rituals over a late-night dinner.

When any Jamaican you know says 'Let's talk the things', sit down, because they're going to tell it exactly like it is. Today, on a still Saturday morning in August, Lynch is doing precisely that, chatting to me warmly and directly about her latest – and surely career-defining – role in *No Time to Die*, the Bond franchise's 25th release, in which she stars as Nomi, the secret agent who inherits the 007 title while Bond himself is in exile. She responds thoughtfully to each of my questions, getting right to the heart of the matter to tell me what she *really* thinks. 'While we're not being hijacked or muted,' she says, 'when we have the opportunity to talk, I'd always rather speak to you as though it could be the last time we get to say these things.'

Since 2012, I have watched Lynch imbue her characters with the very same quality – the fierce power and urgency of the present. An instinctual and deliberate artist, she is focused on the true story of the Black woman, on communicating her honestly and with purpose. We saw this in her nuanced, solid performance as the single mother and pilot Maria Rambeau in last year's *Captain Marvel*, in which she successfully stretched the bounds of what a hero is meant to be, and we will see it again in her outing as the first ever female 007.

Initially, when the Bond opportunity came about, Lynch had reservations about joining another franchise – about getting lost

'behind the man', as she puts it – but on speaking with the producer Barbara Broccoli and the director Cary Joji Fukunaga, she understood that their intentions ran alongside hers. Before filming began, she sat down with Phoebe Waller-Bridge, who was there to infuse the script with a fresh female perspective. Lynch wanted to ensure Nomi was subtly drawn, believable, perhaps even a little awkward. She set out to portray the truth of being a Black woman – someone she might know; someone in her family – avoiding the two-dimensional view that can be so easily conveyed on screen or written in scripts.

'A character that is too slick, a cast-iron figure? That's completely against what I stand for,' says Lynch. 'I didn't want to waste an opportunity when it came to what Nomi might represent. I searched for at least one moment in the script where Black audience members would nod their heads, tutting at the reality but glad to see their real life represented. In every project I am part of, no matter the budget or genre, the Black experience that I'm presenting needs to be 100 per cent authentic.'

Given that Lynch and I are both children of Jamaican immigrants, I am interested in what the experience of filming a Bond movie in her parents' homeland gave her. 'A deeper understanding,' she says, 'of what I've chosen to do, of the people I do it for. Understanding the privileges as a British-born Jamaican that my parents and grandparents gave to me because they came to England. In a way, it serves as a "thank you" to them for making the sacrifice.'


There is, however, clearly still progress to be made when it comes to cultural integration here in Britain. When, on a Sunday afternoon in April of last year, the news leaked that a Black woman would be inheriting the 007 mantle, Lynch immediately experienced an onslaught of outrage. For a week, she deleted her social-media apps, meditated and saw no one but family, while comforting herself with the knowledge that the aggressive comments were ultimately not personal. 'I am one Black woman – if it were another Black woman



ARTWORK BY ROSANNA WEBSTER

RICHARD PHIBBS



A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark hair, looking downwards. She is wearing a highly textured, shimmering gold dress with intricate beading and sequins. Her large, ornate gold earrings are prominent. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic sheen of the dress and jewelry against a plain white background.

THIS PAGE: beaded dress, £11,000; white gold and diamond earrings, £6,750, both Giorgio Armani. OPPOSITE: fil coupé dress, £2,090, Michael Kors Collection. White gold, pearl and diamond earrings, from a selection, Chopard

Embroidered silk dress, from a selection, Celine by Hedi Slimane. Earrings, from left: gold, opal and pavé diamond, £560; gold, opal and diamond, £542; gold and diamond, £3,215, all Maria Tash

cast in the role, it would have been the same conversation, she would have got the same attacks, the same abuse,' she says. 'I just have to remind myself that the conversation is happening and that I'm a part of something that will be very, very revolutionary.'

Since starting out in the film industry, Lynch has developed certain coping strategies. 'As I have come more into myself, I have found ways to remain respectful of others but still true to myself,' she says. 'If something felt misrepresented or inaccurate – for example, the dynamic between a mother and her child, or the way we might wrap our hair to sleep at night... I had to learn to speak up. I've been cast to tell an authentic story, so that's what I'm going to do.' Lynch's main business is, as she puts it, 'her culture's fight'. 'As a newcomer to some of these spaces, on a Monday morning you're speaking up, making your point heard on set, and by lunchtime you've got to get on with the job, energy pure and intact so you can give your best work,' she says.

In this veiled age of social media and performative activism, Lynch involves herself in private, behind-the-scenes community projects and filters how much emotion she displays on Instagram and Twitter. 'Then again, recent events and their effects *are* personal,' she says, referring to the spike in support for the Black Lives Matter movement, following the killing of George Floyd. 'I think we're really beginning to eradicate the shiny, well-established hierarchy of celebrity. Some companies are consistently speaking out and working to educate themselves and do what is right; but then you have those others' – and her voice immediately changes – 'the ones using it as an opportunity. We see who they are. It's very clear.' Lynch has no time for so-called allies who are inconsistent in their support. 'It infuriated me,' she says, of certain brands that jumped on the bandwagon. 'Now suddenly you've found archives of Black films to release on your platform? Now you're gonna use Black models in your adverts? Suddenly everyone's decided we exist. Where was this before?'

We share our frustrations about how many people claimed ignorance of cultural and diversity issues. 'That "Oh, I didn't know" runs way too deep,' says Lynch. By contrast, she points out, Black people 'have to make it their daily responsibility to understand another racial experience in order to navigate the world.'

She sees her role in *No Time to Die* as a step in the right direction – a way of confronting stereotypes around race and gender that have persisted for far too long. 'I feel very grateful that I get to challenge those narratives,' she says. 'We're moving away from toxic masculinity, and that's happening because women are being open, demanding and vocal, and calling out misbehaviour as soon as we see it.' Indeed, one thing Lynch is sure about is that as artists in the public eye, we must remain consistently honest and outspoken about our experiences, even when it is frightening. Even when we feel vulnerable. Even if we are among the first to be *talking the things*. 'We are not stick figures,' she says. 'Now we're in a time when artists have enough collective energy to evoke change. There's real work to be done, there are frank conversations to be had. A magazine cover is already pretty, the words don't have to be.'

*'No Time to Die' is in cinemas on 2 April 2021.*



ARTWORK BY ROSANNA WEBSTER



THIS PAGE: silk satin dress, £2,595, Roksanda. White gold and diamond studs, £1,190; matching hoops, £1,900, both Annoushka. OPPOSITE: taffeta and tulle dress, £2,295, Simone Rocha. White gold and diamond earrings, from a selection, Chanel Fine Jewellery

ARTWORK BY ROSANNA WEBSTER

RICHARD PHIBBS





THIS PAGE: satin dress, from a selection, Halpern. White gold and diamond earrings, from a selection, Chopard.  
OPPOSITE: fil coupé dress £6,500; leather sandals, from a selection, both Alexander McQueen. Earrings, from top: white gold and diamond, from a selection, Cartier. Gold and diamond, from a selection, Vanleles. See Stockists for details. Hair by Earl Simms at Caren. Make-up by Alex Babsky at Premier, using Giorgio Armani. Manicure by Robbie Tomkins at Premier using BioSculpture Evo. Stylist's assistants: Holly Gorst and Eden Hurley. With thanks to Lucy Watson Productions and Gillian O'Brien. Courtesy of Universal Pictures UK

ARTWORK BY ROSANNA WEBSTER

RICHARD PHIBBS



BAZAAR

# WOMEN *of the* YEAR



*Lashana Lynch*



*Gillian Anderson.  
Below: Michaela Coel*

## *lessons from* **LEADING** *ladies*



Enjoy exclusive video masterclasses with five of our award winners: Lashana Lynch teaches us the secret of smashing stereotypes; Gillian Anderson offers tips on getting into character; Michaela Coel reveals how to perfect the art of storytelling; Jane Fonda explains why anyone can be an activist; and Daisy Edgar-Jones shares advice on pursuing the career of your dreams



*Daisy Edgar-Jones*



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