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Fearless Lives Forever 20th Century FoxNew RegencyGK FilmsQueen Films United KingdomUnited States Bohemian Rhapsody is a 2018 dark comedy/biographical drama film about the British rock band Queen. It follows singer Freddie Mercury's life, leading to Queen's Live Aid performance at Wembley Stadium in 1985. The film is a British-American joint venture produced by 20th Century Fox, New Regency, GK Films, and Queen Films, with Fox serving as distributor. Directed by Bryan Singer, it is written by Anthony McCarten, and produced by Graham King and former Queen manager Jim Beach. It stars Rami Malek as Mercury, with Lucy Boynton, Gwilym Lee, Ben Hardy, Joe Mazzello, Aidan Gillen, Allen Leech, Tom Hollander and Mike Myers in supporting roles. Queen members Brian May and Roger Taylor served as creative and musical consultants on the film. Bohemian Rhapsody was announced in 2010, with Sacha Baron Cohen cast as Mercury. After Baron Cohen left the project in 2013 following creative differences with producers, the project languished for several years before Malek was cast in November 2016. Principal photography began in London in September 2017 with Singer as director. In December 2017, Singer was fired for absence and clashing with the cast and crew, and Dexter Fletcher was hired to complete the film. Singer retained sole director credit as per DGA guidelines, while Fletcher received an executive producer credit. Filming concluded in January 2018. Bohemian Rhapsody was released in the United Kingdom on 24 October 2018 and in the United States on 2 November 2018, and has grossed over $540 million worldwide on a production budget of about $50 million. It is the highest-grossing musical biographical film of all time, surpassing 2015's Straight Outta Compton. The film received mixed reviews from critics; its portrayals of Mercury's life and sexuality and of the other band members were criticised, but Malek's performance and the music sequences received praise.The film also contains a number of historical inaccuracies. Plot[] Spoiler Warning: The following contains important plot details of the entire film. In 1970 London, Farrokh "Freddie" Bulsara, an Indian Parsi refugee from Zanzibar, works as a baggage handler at Heathrow Airport. After seeing the band Smile perform at a pub, Freddie encounters Mary Austin, and meets the drummer, Roger Taylor, and guitarist, Brian May. Learning their lead singer, Tim Staffell, has quit, Freddie offers to join and demonstrates his vocal ability. Freddie and Mary begin dating. With Freddie as lead singer and bassist John Deacon, the band sells out gigs across Britain. Freddie urges them to think bigger, selling their van to book Trident Studios[10] to record their debut album. An A&R rep from EMI Records, watching the band experiment, asks sound engineer Roy Thomas Baker for their demos. Freddie changes the band's name to Queen, and legally changes his own name to Freddie Mercury. The band signs with John Reid, Elton John's manager, and receives a contract with EMI. An appearance on Top of the Pops gives Queen a hit record, "Killer Queen". After touring to promote the album, Mary and Freddie become engaged. The album hits the charts in America and the band embarks on a sold-out U.S. tour, where Freddie questions his sexuality. In 1975, Queen records their fourth album, A Night at the Opera, but leaves EMI when executive Ray Foster refuses to release the operatic "Bohemian Rhapsody" as the album's lead single due to its six-minute length; Foster also derides the single for its lyrics and melody, to which Freddie retaliates by throwing a rock through Foster's window, as the band has placed extensive effort in writing and performing it. Freddie has DJ Kenny Everett debut the song on the radio; despite mixed reviews, it becomes a smash hit. On Queen's world tour, Freddie begins an affair with Paul Prenter, the band's day-to-day manager. Confronted by Mary, Freddie comes out to her as bisexual, although she assures him he is gay. They end their engagement, but they continue to remain as friends and she moves next door when he purchases an extravagant house in 1980. Tensions arise in the band as Freddie sinks into debauchery with the manipulative Paul. After throwing a lavish party, Freddie flirts with Jim Hutton, a waiter, who tells Freddie to find Hutton when he learns to like himself. Meanwhile, Brian May writes "We Will Rock You" as a song the audience can play along to, and following a successful show performing it, Paul enlists Reid to propose that Freddie pursue a solo career and disband Queen, prompting Freddie to fire Reid without consulting the band, furthering their strain. Also, Freddie's desire to branch into other genres of music, like disco and party music, creates an additional conflict with the band, but John Deacon, who is the most open-minded to the idea, writes an upbeat bass rift that ultimately leads to Queen's next hit "Another One Bites the Dust". At a press conference promoting Queen's 1982 album Hot Space, Freddie is bombarded with questions about his personal life, causing Freddie to be furious. Freddie's relationship with his bandmates further sours after their music video for "I Want to Break Free", in which the band appears in drag, is banned from MTV. He announces his $4 million solo deal with CBS Records, effectively breaking up the band. In 1984, Freddie moves to Munich to work on his first solo album, Mr. Bad Guy, finding himself lost in drugs, alcohol, and gay orgies with Paul, and becomes increasingly ill. Mary, now pregnant by her new partner and concerned about Freddie, urges him to return to the band, as they have been offered a spot in Bob Geldof's benefit concert, Live Aid at Wembley Stadium. Discovering that Paul withheld this news from him, Freddie severs ties with him, having finally had enough of Paul's lies and behaviour, but Paul retaliates by going public about Freddie's sexual escapades. Freddie returns to London and reconciles with his bandmates after they agree that their songs will now be credited by Queen as a whole, while their new manager Jim Beach asks them for their answer about participating in Live Aid. They agree and are given a last-minute slot. With HIV/AIDS spreading worldwide, Freddie discovers that he has contracted the virus; he reveals this to his supportive bandmates. The members are shocked to hear this, but Freddie told them that pitying him is only a waste of time. On the day of Live Aid, Freddie reconnects with Jim, Mary, and his family. The band performs "Bohemian Rhapsody", "Radio Ga Ga", "Hammer to Fall", "Crazy Little Thing Called Love", "We Will Rock You" and "We Are the Champions", helping increase donations and turning the event into a massive success. The film ends with inter-titles, stating that Freddie died on 24 November 1991 at 45 from AIDS-related pneumonia, remaining close with Jim and Mary for the rest of his life, and that the Mercury Phoenix Trust was founded in his honour to help those living with AIDS. Spoiler Warning: All spoilers have been stated and have ended here. Cast[] Rami Malek as Freddie Mercury / Farrokh Bulsara, lead vocalist of the rock band Queen Lucy Boynton as Mary Austin, Mercury's girlfriend Gwilym Lee as Brian May, Queen's lead guitarist Ben Hardy as Roger Taylor, Queen's drummer Joseph Mazzello as John Deacon, Queen's bass guitarist Aidan Gillen as John Reid, Queen's manager Allen Leech as Paul Prenter, Mercury's personal manager Tom Hollander as Jim Beach, Queen's lawyer turned manager Mike Myers as Ray Foster, an EMI executive Aaron McCusker as Jim Hutton, Freddie Mercury's boyfriend Meneka Das as Jer Bulsara, Mercury's mother Ace Bhatti as Bomi Bulsara, Mercury's father Priya Blackburn as Kashmira Bulsara, Mercury's sister Max Bennett as David, Mary's new boyfriend Dermot Murphy as Bob Geldof Dickie Beau as Kenny Everett Jack Roth as Tim Staffell, vocalist of the rock band Smile Neil Fox-Roberts as Mr. Austin, Mary's father Philip Andrew as Reinhold Mack Michelle Duncan as Shelley Stern Adam Rauf as young Farrokh Bulsara Jess Radomsky as Cheryl Archived studio vocal recordings of Mercury, May, Taylor alongside recordings from live performances with the three with also Deacon were also used for the singing voices of the band members in the film. Mercury sound-alike Marc Martel also contributed vocal recordings. Adam Lambert appears in a cameo role as a truck driver.[20] The film's editor John Ottman also cameos as a live TV director. Production[] Development[] Bohemian Rhapsody was announced in 2010. In a BBC interview published on 17 September 2010, Queen guitarist Brian May spoke about a film project concerning the history of the band. According to the interview, Sacha Baron Cohen was set to play Freddie Mercury, with Graham King acting as a co-producer, and Peter Morgan (known for award-winning biopics The Queen and Frost/Nixon) writing the screenplay. May confirmed in April 2011 that the production was moving forward. He strongly approved of the casting of Baron Cohen, but also had certain reservations about the possible direction the project might take. The band's concerns focused on avoiding any harm to Mercury's legacy. In July 2013, Baron Cohen left the project due to creative differences. Allegedly, he had wanted a "gritty R-rated tell-all" focused on Mercury, while the band hoped for a PG-rated film about the band. May confirmed later in 2013 that Baron Cohen had left the project on good terms. Comments by May and Roger Taylor suggested that Baron Cohen was too well known as a comedian and prankster (due largely to his fictional personae Ali G and Borat), and that his presence in the film would be distracting. In March 2016, Baron Cohen spoke about misunderstandings with the surviving members of the band about the intended subject and events of the film, in particular whether the story ought to continue past Mercury's 1991 death. He also mentioned artistic disagreements with the band over the composition of the production team, referring specifically to the involvement of Morgan, David Fincher, and Tom Hooper. Following Baron Cohen's departure, in December 2013, Ben Whishaw was mentioned as a possible replacement to play Freddie Mercury. Also at this time, Dexter Fletcher was selected as the film's director. Fletcher removed himself from the project early the following year, amid reports of creative disagreements with King. In August 2014, Whishaw suggested that the film was not progressing well and that there had been scripting problems. Whishaw exited the project seven months later. Rumours followed in 2015 that Baron Cohen had rejoined the project, or that Whishaw might return. In November 2015, screenwriter Anthony McCarten became attached to the project, which now had the working title of Bohemian Rhapsody after Queen's song of the same name. Developing a fresh take on the story from his interviews with May and Taylor, he delivered his first draft in February 2016. A year later, director Bryan Singer was in talks to take over the direction of Bohemian Rhapsody, Rami Malek was cast to play Mercury, and the film was being fast-tracked by 20th Century Fox and New Regency. It was reported elsewhere in 2015 that Johnny Flynn was due to play Roger Taylor, and that Gemma Arterton would play Mercury's partner Mary Austin. In May 2017, Malek confirmed that he had conducted recordings at Abbey Road Studios and had consulted Taylor and May directly. The same month, Entertainment Weekly reported that Taylor and May were serving as the film's music producers. In August 2017, Justin Haythe was revealed to have penned another draft of the script. Casting[] On 4 November 2016, it was announced that Rami Malek would star as Freddie Mercury. On 21 August 2017, additional cast members were announced, including Ben Hardy as drummer Roger Taylor, Gwilym Lee as lead guitarist Brian May, and Joseph Mazzello as bass guitarist John Deacon. On 30 August 2017, it was reported that Allen Leech had been cast in the film to play Mercury's personal manager, Paul Prenter, who worked for him from 1977 to 1986, when he was fired for betraying Mercury by selling his personal information to UK newspapers. On 6 September 2017, Lucy Boynton was cast to play Mercury's long-term girlfriend, Mary Austin. Lindsey Stirling, Bryce Dallas Howard, Maria Bello and Ashley Johnson were also considered. On 11 September 2017, Mike Myers joined the cast to play EMI executive Ray Foster, and on 22 September 2017, Aaron McCusker was added to play Mercury's long-term boyfriend Jim Hutton. On 26 September 2017, it was announced that Aidan Gillen had been cast as John Reid, Queen's second manager, from 1975 to 1978, who took over from Norman Sheffield of Trident Studios; while Tom Hollander was set to play Jim Beach, Queen's third manager, who took over from John Reid in 1978. Filming[] Pre-production began in July 2017 in the United Kingdom, with principal photography beginning in London in September 2017. An exact replica of the 1985 Live Aid set at Wembley Stadium was created and brought to Bovingdon Airfield near Hemel Hempstead, where it was set up for rehearsals on 7 September 2017, with extras on set. Queen archivist Greg Brooks was instrumental in helping recreate each scene to make it as true to life as possible. He worked daily with Fox for months from the beginning, providing answers to questions. When Malek was contacted about playing Mercury, he had only a casual knowledge of Queen. To become Mercury, Malek had to work many intense sessions with a movement coach (as well as learn to talk with prosthetic teeth). Malek said, "I had to re-create things he did on the fly, onstage. There were many days I said to myself, 'This is a lost cause.'" After finishing the film, Malek said that he became a "Queen super-fan", saying, "I see Freddie as the best performer of all time... I never ceased to be astonished by this man." While Malek sang some parts in the film, producers inserted vocal stems from Queen songs as well as filling in parts with Canadian vocalist Marc Martel, a winner of the Queen Extravaganza Live Tour auditions. On 1 December 2017, The Hollywood Reporter reported that 20th Century Fox had temporarily halted production due to the "unexpected unavailability" of director Bryan Singer, with sources saying that Singer had failed to return to the set after the Thanksgiving week, leaving producers nervous about the state of production and started discussions about potentially replacing him, at which point cinematographer Newton Thomas Sigel had to step in and direct during Singer's non-showings. Singer's absence was reportedly due to "a personal health matter concerning Bryan and his family". Other sources, however, claimed that star Rami Malek and the crew had grown tired of Singer's behaviour, the director reportedly showing up late to set and repeatedly clashing with Malek. On 4 December 2017, Singer was fired as director, with about two weeks of scheduled principal photography remaining. On 6 December 2017, Dexter Fletcher was announced as Singer's replacement. On 15 December 2017, the film had resumed filming in and around London after replacing Singer with Fletcher. Fletcher estimated two-thirds of the principal photography had been completed when he joined the production, saying, "I came into the last few weeks of principal photography and editing and the bits and pieces like that... I was looking at two complete [acts] in a good film, and [I had to] not let it down." On 16 January 2018, Brian May uploaded a photo on his Instagram account on the set of the film and said: Today, under the auspices of our new supreme pilot, Dexter Fletcher, I got my own directorial chair! I was very touched. So! My first day on the set of Bohemian Rhapsody the Movie for more than 6 weeks, and the atmosphere is massively warm and joyful. The entire BR company has been through storms which would have sunk many a ship, but they're all still on board, full of optimism – and with a team spirit stronger than ever. There's such a great feeling of pride in this movie. I wish I could show you pictures ! But for now it's good to protect the surprises. The Bohemian Rhapsody ship is on course !! With full steam up ! Bri. On 29 January 2018, several cast members posted to social media that the filming had finished. Directing credit[] According to the Directors Guild of America, only one director can be named for a film, and the DGA has sole control over who that will be. Although Fletcher replaced Singer on the set before filming was completed, producer Graham King announced in June 2018 that Singer would receive the directing credit on the finished film. Fletcher received executive producer credit. Music[] John Ottman, a frequent collaborator of Singer, composed the film's score. An official soundtrack album was released by Hollywood Records and Virgin EMI Records on CD, cassette, and digital formats on 19 October 2018. The album contains several Queen hits and 11 previously unreleased recordings, including five tracks from their 21-minute Live Aid performance in July 1985, which have never before been released in audio form. A release on vinyl is set to follow in February or March 2019. Historical inaccuracies[] Rolling Stone, while acknowledging the need for dramatic licence, noted several historical inaccuracies in the film: Regarding the band[] The formation of Queen was not as simple as portrayed in the film. Mercury met Tim Staffell at London's Ealing Art College, where they studied graphic design. Staffell even taught him some chords on the guitar. "We were both part of the same social circles, which happened to revolve around bands at the time," said Staffell. "Freddie had his own band. I remember going to one of Freddie's bands (Ibex) in Liverpool at the time. And he used to come and see Smile." Smile keyboardist Chris Smith recalled, "I think Freddie was there in the wings when we first played. He was full of suggestions, full of ideas. I said to Brian, 'Fred is desperate to be in this band, you know.' But Brian was like, 'No, no, no, Tim is the lead singer. He'd never wear it.'" Mercury sang with the short-lived bands Ibex (which he renamed Wreckage), and Sour Milk Sea from the summer of 1969 to the spring of 1970. Brian May and Roger Taylor joined Ibex on stage for an encore on 9 September 1969, marking their first known live appearance together. It was during Wreckage's final show that Mercury attempted to lift a microphone stand above his head when the upper shaft broke away from the base. Freddie used the staff as a prop, whipping it around or pretending it was a guitar, and it became a trademark. Mercury, May, Staffell and Taylor eventually lived together in Barnes, a Thames-side village in London. Taylor and Mercury opened a tiny stall together in Kensington Market and sold art, clothing and antiques. When Staffell quit Smile to join the band Humpy Bong early in 1970, Mercury, who'd been lobbying to join the band for months, was finally accepted by May and Taylor as their vocalist. May told Mojo in 1999, "Tim gave up in disgust and he was within his rights to leave us. ... Roger and I were left with no group. We wondered if we should give up." Roger Taylor added, "Freddie sort of got us and said, 'C'mon on, you can't give up. I want to sing.'" At Mercury's suggestion the band changed their name to "Queen." About this time he also changed his name to "Freddie Mercury" (not, as depicted in the film, shortly before the band's first meeting with John Reid). Queen performed their first gig on 18 July 1970. John Deacon was not the original bassist, but the fourth. He joined the band in February 1971. Queen were on Top of the Pops before the "Killer Queen" appearance depicted in the film. They lip-synced to "Seven Seas of Rhye" on 21 Feb, two days before the single was released. "Killer Queen" was performed on 10 October 1974, before the band's association with John Reid and Paul Prenter. The film suggests that John Reid secured the band its first American tour. However, Reid did not become their manager until mid-1975. By then, Queen had been to the U.S. twice, in the spring of 1974 in support of Queen II and early in 1975 in support of Sheer Heart Attack. The character of Ray Foster is fictional and loosely based on EMI chief Roy Featherstone. While Featherstone and others (including Elton John) thought that "Bohemian Rhapsody" was too long to be released as a single, Featherstone was a fan of the band. Mercury was not the first or the only member of Queen to release a solo album. Taylor released Fun in Space in April 1981, and Strange Frontier in June 1984. May released Star Fleet Project in October 1983. Mercury's Mr. Bad Guy was not released until April 1985 and did not cause a row within the band. Queen never split up, so Live Aid was not a reunion. Queen had recently toured in support of their album The Works earlier in the year, playing Brazil, New Zealand, Australia and Japan. The last gig of the tour, in Osaka, occurred eight weeks before Live Aid. The band were not a last-minute addition to Live Aid; they were listed in the event's first public announcement to the press, prior to manager Jim Beach's knowledge of ever agreeing to have the band perform. Queen did rehearse for three days prior to Live Aid, working out their medley of hits, because every act had a strict 20-minute time limit. Mercury was suffering from a severe throat infection prior to Live Aid, and a doctor declared he was too ill to perform at the concert. However, Mercury went ahead with the show. A member of the Live Aid team recalled, "He wasn't well enough at all, but he absolutely insisted." Regarding Mercury's personal life[] Mercury did not meet Mary Austin on the same night he joined the band. They met in 1969 when she was working as a receptionist at Biba, a fashionable clothing store. [66] Brian May explained, "Strangely enough, Mary was the girl that I picked out as somebody fabulous, and I was kind of going out with her. And Freddie came up to me one day and said, 'Are you serious with Mary? Can I ask her out?' And he did, and they were lovers for a long time." Austin recalled, "It took Freddie nearly six months to finally ask me out! I thought he fancied my best friend, so I used to avoid him. One night we were at one of his gigs, and after it had finished, he came looking for me. I left him at the bar with my friend to go to the loo, but I actually sneaked out. He was furious!" Jim Hutton was not a servant at one of Mercury's parties; he was an Irish-born hairdresser who first met Mercury at a gay nightclub in London late in 1983. Mercury offered to buy him a drink but Hutton, who was out with his lover, politely declined. He did not recognize Mercury. They crossed paths again in another club in March 1985 after Hutton had split with his boyfriend. A few weeks before Live Aid, Freddie contacted Hutton again. He introduced Hutton to Mary Austin and her new boyfriend, Joe Bert, weeks before Live Aid. Hutton, now living with Mercury, recalled watching Live Aid — his first concert — from backstage: "I was gobsmacked. You could feel the effect his stage presence had on the crowd. Afterwards Elton [John] came and said, 'Bastard, you've stolen it.'" The film's treatment of Mercury's HIV diagnosis received particular criticism. Mercury did not learn that he was HIV-positive before Live Aid. He may have already suspected that he had contracted the virus, but an AIDS test in late 1985 delivered a negative result. Mercury remained well enough to perform for over a year after Live Aid, which included one of the band's biggest ever tours, the Magic Tour, in 1986. He was not diagnosed as HIV-positive until 1987, and did not raise it with the band until 1989. The film also received criticism for its portrayal of Mercury's homosexual relationships; particularly its depiction of his relationship with Paul Prenter as a corrupting influence, and the lack of development on his relationship with Hutton. In a 2016 interview, John Reid said, "He [Prenter] became a nightmare and he became divisive between Freddie and the band." Roger Taylor agreed, "He was a very, very bad influence on Freddie, hence on the band, really. He very much wanted our music to sound like you'd just walked in a gay club. And I didn't." Further inaccuracies[] Several songs are presented out of chronological order. "Fat Bottomed Girls" is played over a montage of clips from the band's first America tour in 1974, but May did not write the song until 1978. When the band creates "We Will Rock You" (for the 1977 album News of the World), Mercury appears with his moustache and "clone" look, which he did not adopt until 1980. "Another One Bites The Dust" was recorded and released for the 1980 album The Game, while the film portrays the song's formation as during the Hot Space sessions. The band's performance at Rio de Janeiro did not occur until January 1985, during the first-ever Rock in Rio festival. Prenter did not neglect to give Mercury messages concerning Live Aid. He was still in Mercury's employ until 1987, and didn't "out" Mercury on TV; instead he sold personal information about Mercury to The Sun for £32,000. This resulted in Prenter's firing. Queen's manager John Reid was not fired on Mercury's decision in a limousine during the early 1980s. The band felt he couldn't devote the time to manage both them and Elton John. Reid explained, "Jim Beach came to me and said, 'Thank you very much, the band really appreciate what you've done but they want to manage themselves.' And we had a three-year contract and it had a bit to run and I said, 'Well, okay,' because when an artist tells you that, you're not going to fight it, so we made a deal and they paid me a lot of money and I kept my rights. I still get royalties from them, so I kept my commission from the records that were made under my tenure and after that individually, particularly with Freddie, we were able to spend more time together as friends." Jim Beach became manager of the band in 1978, not during the Hot Space sessions as portrayed in the film. Release[] Bohemian Rhapsody was released in the United Kingdom on 24 October 2018 in IMAX and the United States by 20th Century Fox on 2 November 2018. The film was previously scheduled for release on 25 December 2018. The world premiere took place in London at the SSE Arena, Wembley on 23 October 2018. Marketing[] Mural to promote the film on the side of Mercury's former art college in west London The teaser trailer for the film was released on 15 May 2018 and with more than 5 million views in the first 24 hours, it was the top trending video on YouTube. Television writer and producer Bryan Fuller argued that the trailer favours Mercury's relationship with women as opposed to his ones with men while also highlighting the absence of the singer's AIDS diagnosis from the synopsis. Instead, it's simply referred to as "a life-threatening illness". Executives have stated that the film will still acknowledge Mercury's gay relationships. With the recent release of the trailer, Queen had three of the top 20 positions on Billboard's Hot Rock Songs chart: "Bohemian Rhapsody", "Another One Bites the Dust" and "We Are the Champions". On 11 June 2018, at CineEurope, a showing of the film Bohemian Rhapsody closed the show with appearances by Rami Malek, producer Graham King, and special appearances by Brian May and Roger Taylor, who were playing a concert of Queen + Adam Lambert in Barcelona. It was announced on 6 September 2018 that the film would receive a PG-13 rating in the United States by the MPAA. Reception[] Box office[] As of 3 December 2018, Bohemian Rhapsody has grossed $165 million in the United States and Canada, and $375.7 million in other territories (including $54.7 million in the UK and $36.2 million in South Korea), for a total worldwide gross of $540.7 million, against a production budget of about $52 million. On 11 November, it surpassed Straight Outta Compton ($201.6 million) to become the highest-grossing musical biopic of all-time worldwide. In the United Kingdom, the film had preview screenings on its opening night of 24 October 2018, grossing £1.62 million ($2.08 million) from 575 venues, with a per-screen average of £2,817 ($3,612). It went on to gross $12.5 million from 1,250 screens in its opening weekend, finishing first at the box office. It grossed another $7.4 million in its second weekend, remaining at number-one and grossing £20.4 million ($26.15 million) through 12 days.[89] In its second weekend of international release, the film topped the worldwide box office, grossing $72.5 million in international markets. New markets included France ($7.7 million), Mexico ($5.8 million), Germany ($5.7 million) and Australia ($5.7 million). By its fourth weekend the film was still holding strong, adding an additional $45.5 million from 78 markets, for a running total of $256.4 million. Through four weekends of international release, the film's largest markets were the UK ($45.3 million, passing La La Land), followed by South Korea ($24.5 million), France ($18.38 million), Australia ($16.8 million) and Mexico ($15.5 million). In the United States and Canada, Bohemian Rhapsody was released alongside The Nutcracker and the Four Realms and Nobody's Fool, and was originally projected to gross $26–30 million in its opening weekend. By the week of its release, weekend estimates had reached $35–40 million. It made $18.4 million on its first day, including $3.9 million from Thursday night previews. It went on to debut to $51.1 million, topping the box office and marking the second-best opening ever for a musical biopic behind Straight Outta Compton ($60.2 million in August 2015). The film made $31.2 million in its second weekend, finishing second behind newcomer The Grinch, and $15.7 million in its third, finishing behind Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald and The Grinch.In its fourth weekend the film made $13.8 million (including $19.3 million over the five-day Thanksgiving frame), finishing fifth. Critical response[] Rami Malek received critical praise for his performance as Freddie Mercury. On review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes, the film holds an approval rating of 62% based on 321 reviews, and an average rating of 6.1/10. The website's critical consensus reads, "Bohemian Rhapsody hits a handful of high notes, but as an in-depth look at a beloved band, it offers more of a medley than a true greatest hits collection." On Metacritic, the film has a weighted average score of 49 out of 100, based on 45 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews". Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "A" on an A+ to F scale, while PostTrak reported filmgoers gave it an 88% positive score and a 75% "definite recommend". Owen Gleiberman of Variety wrote, "Rami Malek does a commanding job of channeling Freddie Mercury's flamboyant rock-god bravura, but Bryan Singer's middle-of-the-road Queen biopic rarely lives up to the authenticity of its lead performance." Glieberman also stated that the film "treats Freddie's personal life – his sexual-romantic identity, his loneliness, his reckless adventures in gay leather clubs – with kid-gloves reticence, so that even if the film isn't telling major lies, you don't feel you're fully touching the real story either." Paul Whitington, writing for the Irish Independent, gave the film 3/5 stars, saying, "Bohemian Rhapsody is not big on subtlety: it tells Freddie's story loudly, taking dramatic shortcuts, over-neatly conflating events and reducing most of the surrounding characters to single dimensions. Some of the dialogue's a bit heavy-handed too, but I must say I was thoroughly entertained." For the Evening Standard, Craig McLean wrote, "Bohemian Rhapsody is triumphant entertainment. The post-production special effects have done their job: the Live Aid scenes are convincingly epic. The actors have done their job, too, notably Malek, who oozes pure Mercury." Chief Guardian pop critic Alexis Petridis described the portrayal of Mercury as "sanitised", writing: "Bohemian Rhapsody is a film that plays so fast and loose with the truth, it ends up seeming faintly ridiculous: you start out nitpicking about minor chronological errors... and end up with your jaw on the floor." Guardian film critic Steve Rose described it as a "rock slog with a troubling moralistic subtext". Although he praised Malek's performance, David Ehrlich of IndieWire gave the film a grade of "D+", criticising Singer's direction and calling the film "royally embarrassing". He wrote: "Queen's music may have been unclassifiable, but their movie is as trite and textbook as it gets... It's par for the course in this terrible and self-indulgent piece of revisionist history, where the legend is always prioritized over the truth, even when the truth was surely far more interesting." For The Spectator, Jasper Rees described Bohemian Rhapsody as "a succession of predigested clichés", writing, "you are overcome by the sapping impression that almost nothing happened the way it's being presented," citing in particular the timing of Mercury's AIDS diagnosis. He concluded: "The costumes and wigs are splendid, and the songs are still up to snuff. But this homage to a showman is more famine than feast." Accolades[] See also[] Bohemian Rhapsody/Gallery External links[] Videos[] Main article: Bohemian Rhapsody/videos Trailer[] Bohemian Rhapsody Official Trailer HD 20th Century FOX Official Trailer 1975 single by Queen For other uses, see Bohemian Rhapsody (disambiguation). "Bohemian Rhapsody"Artwork for UK and some other European singlesSingle by Queenfrom the album A Night at the Opera B-side"I'm in Love with My Car"Released31 October 1975 (1975-10-31)Recorded24 August–September 1975[1][2][3]Studio Rockfield, Monmouthshire Roundhouse, London Sarm, London Scorpio Sound, London Wessex Sound, London Genre Progressive rock hard rock progressive pop art rock Length5:55LabelEMISongwriter(s)Freddie MercuryProducer(s) Roy Thomas Baker Queen Queen singles chronology "Now I'm Here" (1975) "Bohemian Rhapsody" (1975) "You're My Best Friend" (1976) Music video"Bohemian Rhapsody" on YouTube "Bohemian Rhapsody" is a song by the British rock band Queen, released as the lead single from their fourth studio album, A Night at the Opera (1975). Written by Queen's lead singer Freddie Mercury, the song is a six-minute suite,[4] notable for its lack of a refraining chorus and consisting of several sections: an intro, a ballad segment, an operatic passage, a hard rock part and a reflective coda.[5] It is one of the few progressive rock songs of the 1970s to have proved accessible to a mainstream audience.[6] Mercury referred to "Bohemian Rhapsody" as a "mock opera" that resulted from the combination of three songs he had written. It was recorded by Queen and co-producer Roy Thomas Baker at five studios between August and September 1975. Due to recording logistics of the era, the band had to bounce the tracks across eight generations of 24-track tape, meaning that they required nearly 200 tracks for overdubs. The song parodies elements of opera with bombastic choruses, sarcastic recitative, and distorted Italian operatic phrases. Lyrical references include Scaramouche, the fandango, Galileo Galilei, Figaro, and Beelzebub, with cries of "Bismillah!" Although critical reaction was initially mixed, retrospective reviews have acclaimed "Bohemian Rhapsody" one of the greatest songs of all time, and it is often regarded as the band's signature song. The promotional video is credited with furthering the development of the music video medium.[7][8] It has appeared in numerous polls of the greatest songs in popular music,[9] including a ranking at number 17 on Rolling Stone's 2021 list of the “500 Greatest Songs of All Time”.[10] A Rolling Stone readers' poll ranked Mercury's vocal performance as the greatest in rock history.[11] "Bohemian Rhapsody" topped the UK Singles Chart for nine weeks (plus another five weeks following Mercury's death in 1991) and is the UK's third best-selling single of all time. It also topped the charts in countries including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and the Netherlands, and has sold over six million copies worldwide. In the United States, the song peaked at number nine in 1976, but reached a new peak of number two after appearing in the 1992 film Wayne's World. In 2004, the song was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.[12] Following the release of the 2018 biopic Bohemian Rhapsody, it became the most streamed song from the 20th century.[13] In 2021, it was certified diamond in the US for combined digital sales/streams equal to 10 million units, and is one of the best selling songs of all time. In 2022, it was inducted into National Recording Registry by the Library of Congress being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant". It was basically three songs that I wanted to put out, and I just put the three together. — Freddie Mercury[14] According to Mercury's friend Chris Smith (a keyboard player in Smile), Mercury first started developing "Bohemian Rhapsody" in the late 1960s; Mercury used to play parts of songs he was writing at the time on the piano, and one of his pieces, known simply as "The Cowboy Song", contained lyrics that ended up in the completed version produced years later, in 1975, specifically, "Mama ... just killed a man."[15] Producer Roy Thomas Baker, who began working with Queen in 1972, related how Mercury once played the opening ballad section on the piano for him in Mercury's flat: He played the beginning on the piano, then stopped and said, "And this is where the opera section comes in!" Then we went out to eat dinner. Guitarist Brian May said the band thought that Mercury's blueprint for the song was "intriguing and original, and worthy of work".[16] According to May, much of Queen's material was written in the studio, but this song "was all in Freddie's mind" before they started.[17] 1975 publicity photo of Queen Queen spent a month rehearsing at Ridge Farm Studio in Surrey in mid-1975, and drummer Roger Taylor recalled that "Bohemian Rhapsody" was one of the songs the band worked on while they were there.[18] Recording began on 24 August 1975 at Rockfield Studio 1 near Monmouth, South Wales, after a three-week rehearsal at Penrhos Court, near Kington, Herefordshire. During the making of the track, four additional studios – Roundhouse, Sarm Studios, Scorpio Sound, and Wessex Sound Studios – were used.[19] According to some band members, Mercury mentally prepared the song beforehand and directed the band throughout.[17] Mercury used a C. Bechstein concert grand piano, which he played in the promotional video and the UK tour. Due to the elaborate nature of the song, it was recorded in various sections.[20] The piano was allegedly the same one Paul McCartney had used to record the Beatles' song "Hey Jude",[4] as well as the same one Rick Wakeman used on David Bowie's 1971 album Hunky Dory.[21][dubious – discuss] Baker recalled in 1999: "Bohemian Rhapsody" was totally insane, but we enjoyed every minute of it. It was basically a joke, but a successful joke. [laughs] We had to record it in three separate units. We did the whole beginning bit, then the whole middle bit and then the whole end. It was complete madness. The middle part started off being just a couple of seconds, but Freddie kept coming in with more "Galileos" and we kept on adding to the opera section, and it just got bigger and bigger. We never stopped laughing ... It started off as a ballad, but the end was heavy.[22] Recording track sheet (replica) May, Mercury, and Taylor reportedly sang their vocal parts continually for 10 to 12 hours a day.[17] The entire piece took three weeks to record, and in some sections featured 180 overdubs.[20] In multiple interviews, May recalled how Mercury's vocal overdubs were so exquisitely precise that he would create a natural phasing effect.[23][24] Since the studios of the time only offered 24-track analogue tape, it was necessary for the three to overdub themselves many times and "bounce" these down to successive sub-mixes. In the end, eighth-generation tapes were used.[19] The various sections of tape containing the desired sub-mixes had to be spliced (cut and assembled in the correct sequence). May recalled placing a tape in front of the light and being able to see through it, as the tape had been used so many times.[25] A similar story was told in 1977 by Taylor regarding the elaborate overdubs and sub-mixes for "The March of The Black Queen" for the album Queen II. At that time, the band was using 16-track equipment.[26] Producer Baker recalls that May's solo was done on only one track rather than recording multiple tracks. May stated that he wanted to compose "a little tune that would be a counterpart to the main melody; I didn't just want to play the melody". The guitarist said that his better material stems from this way of working, in which he thought of the tune before playing it: "The fingers tend to be predictable unless being led by the brain."[17] According to Baker, ... the end of the song was much heavier because it was one of the first mixes to be done with automation ... If you really listen to it, the ballad starts off clean, and as the opera section gets louder and louder, the vocals get more and more distorted. You can still hear this on the CD. They are clearly distorted.[22] In May 2023, an early handwritten draft unearthed from an auction of items that belonged to Mercury, courtesy of his friend Mary Austin, revealed that Mercury originally considered the song to be titled "Mongolian Rhapsody". It was explained that he wrote the title along with the lyrics in 1974 on a page of stationery from defunct airline British Midland Airways, but crossed out the word "Mongolian" in place of "Bohemian".[27] "Bohemian Rhapsody" has been affiliated to the genres of progressive rock (sometimes called symphonic rock),[6][28][29] hard rock,[30][31] art rock,[32] and progressive pop.[33] The song is highly unusual for a popular single in featuring no chorus, combining disparate musical styles, and containing lyrics which eschew conventional love-based narratives, and instead make allusions to murder and nihilism.[5] Music scholar Sheila Whiteley suggests that "the title draws strongly on contemporary rock ideology, the individualism of the bohemian artists' world, with rhapsody affirming the romantic ideals of art rock".[34] Commenting on bohemianism, Judith Peraino said, Mercury intended ... [this song] to be a 'mock opera', something outside the norm of rock songs, and it does follow a certain operatic logic: Choruses of multi-tracked voices alternate with aria-like solos, the emotions are excessive, the plot confusing.[35] "Bohemian Rhapsody" begins with an introduction, then goes into a piano ballad, before a guitar solo leads to an operatic interlude. A hard rock part follows this and it concludes with a coda. The song is in the keys of B♭ major, E♭ major, A major and F major, and is predominantly in 44 meter. This musical format of writing a song as a suite with changes in style, tone, and tempo throughout was uncommon in most mainstream pop and rock music, but common in progressive rock, a genre which had reached its artistic and commercial zenith between 1970 and 1975 in the music of British bands such as Jethro Tull, Yes, Genesis, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Gentle Giant, Van der Graaf Generator, and Curved Air.[36] The music of progressive rock was characterised by dramatic contrasts, frequent shifts in tempo and in rhythmic character from one section of a composition to the next.[37] Bands from the genre blended rock with classical music, including its structural features, compositional practices, and instrumentation.[38] Queen had embraced progressive rock as one of their many diverse influences.[39] "Bohemian Rhapsody" parodies many different elements of opera by using bombastic choruses, sarcastic recitative, and distorted Italian operatic phrases.[40] An embryonic version of this style had already been used in Mercury's earlier compositions for the band's "My Fairy King" (1973) and "The March of the Black Queen" (1974). The song begins with a close five-part harmony a cappella introduction in B♭ major—as evidenced by the presence of a V–I cadence (F7–B♭) multi-track recordings of Mercury although the video has all four members lip-syncing this part. The lyrics question whether life is "real" or "just fantasy caught in a landslide" before concluding that there can be "no escape from reality". The section is nearly entirely in 4/4 time, with the exception of measure 3 ("Caught in a landslide, no es—") switching to 5/4 time, then returning to 4/4 after.[41] After 20 seconds, the grand piano enters, the song modulates briefly to E♭ major via another perfect cadence (B♭7–E♭) and Mercury's voice alternates with the other vocal parts. The narrator introduces himself as "just a poor boy" but declares that he "needs no sympathy" because he is "easy come, easy go" and then "little high, little low" (when heard in stereo, the words "little high" come from the left speaker and "little low" comes from the right, the other respective speaker plays the piano at the same time); chromatic side-sl

was recorded in just four hours on 10 November 1975, at a cost of £4,500.[20] Gowers reported that the band was involved in the discussion of the video and the result, and "was a co-operative to that extent, but there was only one leader."[17] It became the first record to be pushed into the forefront by virtue of a video. Queen were certainly the first band to create a 'concept' video. The video captured the musical imagery perfectly. You cannot hear that music without seeing the visuals in your mind's eye. — Rock DJ Tommy Vance.[63] The video opens with a shot of the four band members standing in diamond formation with their heads tilted back in near darkness as they sing the a cappella part.[64] The lights fade up, and the shots cross-fade into close-ups of Mercury. The composition of the shot is the same as Mick Rock's cover photograph for their second album Queen II. The photo, inspired by a photograph of actress Marlene Dietrich, was the band's favourite image of themselves.[17] The video then fades into them playing their instruments. In the opera section of the video, the scene reverts to the Queen II standing positions, after which they perform once again on stage during the hard rock segment. In the closing seconds of the video Roger Taylor is depicted stripped to the waist, striking the tam-tam in the manner of the trademark of the Rank Organisation's Gongman, familiar in the UK as the opening of all Rank film productions.[65] All of the special effects were achieved during the recording, rather than editing. The visual effect of Mercury's face cascading away (during the echoed lines "Magnifico" and "Let me go") was accomplished by pointing the camera at a monitor, giving visual feedback, a glare analogous to audio feedback. The honeycomb illusion was created using a shaped lens. The video was edited within five hours because it was due to be broadcast the same week in which it was taped. The video was sent to the BBC as soon as it was completed and aired for the first time on Top of the Pops in November 1975.[17] Although the song has become one of the most revered in popular music history,[66] the initial critical reaction was mixed. The UK music papers reacted with bemusement, recognising that the song was original and technically accomplished, but they mostly remained indifferent. Pete Erskine of NME observed that, "It'll be interesting to see whether it'll be played in its entirety on the radio. It's performed extremely well, but more in terms of production than anything else... Someone somewhere has decided that the boys' next release must sound 'epic'. And it does. They sound extremely self-important."[67] Allan Jones of Melody Maker was unimpressed, describing the song as "a superficially impressive pastiche of incongruous musical styles" and that Queen "contrived to approximate the demented fury of the Balham Amateur Operatic Society performing The Pirates of Penzance... 'Bohemian Rhapsody' is full of drama, passion and romance and sounds rather like one of those mini-opera affairs that Pete Townshend used to tack on to the end of Who albums", before concluding, "The significance of the composition eludes me totally, though I must admit to finding it horrifically fascinating. It's likely to be a hit of enormous proportions despite its length."[68] Ray Fox-Cumming of Record Mirror was also left unmoved, saying, "It has no immediate selling point whatsoever: among its many parts. there's scarcely a shred of a tune and certainly no one line to latch onto. There's no denying that it's devilishly clever, encompassing everything from bits of operatic harmonies to snatches that sound like Sparks and David Cassidy, but, in the end the whole adds up to less than the sum of its parts." He did, however, say that it was "unthinkable" that it wouldn't be a hit.[69] The most positive review came from Sounds, which called it "impossibly disjointed and complex, but a dazzlingly clever epic from the fevered mind of Freddie Mercury".[70] Cash Box called it "a softly sung ode to the prospect of moving on from staid ways" with "good singing" and "good production."[71] Record World called it "a majestic vocal performance that takes on operatic proportions."[72] The Queen Extravaganza performing the song at the Fox Theatre, Detroit in 2012 In 1976, when asked for his opinion on "Bohemian Rhapsody", the Beach Boys' leader Brian Wilson praised the song as "the most competitive thing that's come along in ages" and "a fulfillment and an answer to a teenage prayer—of artistic music".[73] Producer Steve Levine said the track broke "all sonic production barriers" in a fashion similar to the Beach Boys' "Good Vibrations" (1966), which also consisted of disparate music sections recorded separately,[74] Phil Spector's "Be My Baby" (1963), and 10cc's "I'm Not in Love" (1975).[75] Greg Lake, whose song "I Believe in Father Christmas" was kept from number one in the UK by "Bohemian Rhapsody" when it was released in 1975, acknowledged that he was "beaten by one of the greatest records ever made", describing it as "a once-in-a-lifetime recording".[76] Addressing the song's enduring popularity, author and music lecturer Jochen Eisentraut wrote in 2012: "A year before punk made it unfashionable, progressive rock had an astounding success with the theoretically over-length (nearly 6-minute) single 'Bohemian Rhapsody' which bore many of the hallmarks of the 'prog' genre". He said it was "unique at this point to hear a hit single in this style", it was "more accessible than other music of the genre" and was "able to communicate beyond the usual confines of the style".[6] Author and progressive rock historian Stephen Lambe called it a "remarkable" single and said it "provides a neat but coincidental bridge between prog in its prime and the move to more aggressive songwriting", suggesting the song "feels like a grotesque (although probably unintentional) parody of progressive rock".[66] The New Rolling Stone Album Guide described it as "either a prog-rock benchmark or the most convoluted novelty song ever recorded".[77] Writing for the BBC in 2015, the Chicago Tribune's music critic Greg Kot called it a "prog-rock pocket operetta" and said the song's "reign as a work of wigged-out genius rather than a dated gimmick testifies to its go-for-broke attitude—one that has resonated across generations".[28] In 2009, The Guardian's music critic, Tom Service, examined the song's relationship with the traditions of classical music, describing its popularity as "one of the strangest musical phenomena out there": The precedents of "Bohemian Rhapsody" are as much in the 19th-century classical traditions of rhapsodic, quasi-improvisational reveries—like, say, the piano works of Schumann or Chopin or the tone-poems of Strauss or Liszt—as they are in prog-rock or the contemporary pop of 1975. That's because the song manages a sleight of musical hand that only a handful of real master-musicians have managed: the illusion that its huge variety of styles—from intro, to ballad, to operatic excess, to hard-rock, to reflective coda—are unified into a single statement, a drama that somehow makes sense. It's a classic example of the unity in diversity that high-minded musical commentators have heard in the symphonies of Beethoven or the operas of Mozart. And that's exactly what the piece is: a miniature operatic-rhapsodic-symphonic-tone-poem.[5] A comparison was also made between the song and Led Zeppelin's 1971 epic "Stairway to Heaven" by music writers Pete Prown and HP Newquist. They observed both songs were "a slow, introspective beginning and gradual climb to a raging metal jam and back again", with the notable distinction being "while Zeppelin meshed folk influences with heavy metal, Queen opted for the light grandeur of the operetta as part of its hard rock". They said "for sheer cleverness alone, not to mention May's riveting electric work, 'Bohemian Rhapsody' rightfully became one of the top singles of 1975 and established Queen in the elite of seventies rock bands".[30] In 2015, The Economist described it as "one of the most innovative pieces of the progressive rock era". It wrote "though Led Zeppelin's John Paul Jones and the Beatles' Paul McCartney had experimented with symphonic elements, and Roger Waters of Pink Floyd and Pete Townshend of the Who had created narrative albums with distinct 'movements', none had had the audacity to import a miniature opera into rock music."[31] In 1992, the song enjoyed renewed popularity in the United States after being featured in a scene in the film Wayne's World, in which the titular character and his friends headbang in a car to the hard rock part near the end of the song.[78] The film's director, Penelope Spheeris, was hesitant to use the song, as it did not entirely fit with the lead characters, who were fans of less flamboyant hard rock and heavy metal. Mike Myers insisted that the song fit the scene.[79] According to music scholar Theodore Gracyk, by 1992, when the film was released, even "classic rock" stations had stopped playing the almost six-minute song. Gracyk suggests that beginning the tape in the middle of the song after "the lyrics which provide the song's narrative ... forces the film's audience to respond to its presence in the scene without the 'commentary' of the lyrics".[80] Helped by the song, the soundtrack album of the film was a major hit.[81] In connection with this, a new video was released, interspersing excerpts from the film with footage from the original Queen video, along with some live footage of the band. Myers was horrified that the record company had mixed clips from Wayne's World with Queen's original video, fearing that this would upset the band. He said, "they've just whizzed on a Picasso." He asked the record company to tell Queen that the video was not his idea and that he apologised to them. The band, though, sent a reply simply saying, "Thank you for using our song." This astonished Myers, who responded, "Thank you for even letting me touch the hem of your garments!"[82] The Wayne's World video version of "Bohemian Rhapsody" won Queen its only MTV Video Music Award for "Best Video from a Film".[83] When remaining members Brian May and Roger Taylor took the stage to accept the award, Brian May was overcome with emotion and said that "Freddie would be tickled." In the final scene of the video, a pose of the band from the video from the original "Bohemian Rhapsody" clip morphs into an identically posed 1985 photo, first featured in the "One Vision" video. In the 2018 Queen biopic feature film Bohemian Rhapsody, Myers makes a cameo as a fictional record executive who pans the song and refuses to release it as a single, proclaiming that it is too long for radio and that it is not a song that "teenagers can crank up the volume in their car and bang their heads to", a reference to the aforementioned scene in Wayne's World.[84] The song has won numerous awards and has been covered and parodied by many artists. At the 19th Annual Grammy Awards in February 1977, "Bohemian Rhapsody" received two Grammy Award nominations for Best Pop Vocal Performance by a Duo, Group or Chorus and Best Arrangement for Voices.[85][86] In October 1977, only two years after its release, the British Phonographic Industry named "Bohemian Rhapsody" as the best British single of the period 1952–77.[80] It is a regular entry in greatest-songs polls, and it was named by the Guinness Book of Records in 2002 as the top British single of all time.[16] The song is also listed in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll.[87] In 2004, the song was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.[12] As of 2004[update], "Bohemian Rhapsody" is the second most-played song on British radio, in clubs and on jukeboxes collectively, after Procol Harum's "A Whiter Shade of Pale".[88] On 30 September 2007 for BBC Radio 1's 40th birthday, it was revealed on The Radio 1 Chart Show that "Bohemian Rhapsody" had been the most played song since Radio 1's launch.[89] In December 2018, "Bohemian Rhapsody" officially became the most-streamed song from the 20th century, surpassing Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and Guns N' Roses' "Sweet Child o' Mine".[13][90] "Bohemian Rhapsody" also became the most-streamed classic rock song of all time.[13] The number of downloads of the song and original video exceeded 1.6 billion downloads across global on-demand streaming services.[90] The video surpassed one billion views on YouTube in July 2019, making it the oldest music video to reach one billion on the platform, and the first pre-1990s song to reach that figure.[91][92] In 2022, the single was selected by the U.S. Library of Congress for preservation in the National Recording Registry as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."[93] In a 2001 poll of more than 50,000 readers of The Observer newspaper and viewers of British TV's Channel 4 for the 100 best number-one singles of all time, the song came second to John Lennon's "Imagine".[94] In a 2002 poll of more than 31,000 people conducted for Guinness World Records' British Hit Singles, "Bohemian Rhapsody" was voted Britain's favourite single, beating Lennon's "Imagine" to the top spot.[95] In 2002, it came in 10th in a BBC World Service poll to find the world's favourite song.[96] In the Netherlands, Bohemian Rhapsody has been in the top five of the annual year's end "Top 100 Aller Tijden" ("All-Time Top 100 [Singles]") since 1977, topping the list eight times, more than any other artists.[97] Since 1999, the Dutch "Top 2000" pop music poll supplanted the Top-100, to list and play the 2,000 all-time greatest songs annually in December, and the song has been ranked first in all but five years (2005, 2010, 2014, 2015 and 2020, when it was runner up).[98] In a 2012 readers poll conducted by Rolling Stone magazine, "Bohemian Rhapsody" was voted the best vocal performance in rock history.[99] In 2010, the song ranked at 166 on Rolling Stone's "500 Greatest Songs of All Time" list,[100] and was re-ranked at number 17 in 2021.[10] In 2012, the song topped an ITV poll in the UK to find "The Nation's Favourite Number One" over 60 years of music, ahead of Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" (number two), Adele's "Someone like You" (number three), Oasis' "Don't Look Back in Anger" (number four) and The Beatles' "Hey Jude" (number five).[9] The song was also ranked number five in RadioMafia's list of "Top 500 Songs".[101] Robbie Williams on stage in Poland in 2015 performing the song with the Queen image in the background See also: List of Bohemian Rhapsody cover versions Over two dozen artists have recorded or performed cover versions of "Bohemian Rhapsody", including charted single releases by: Bad News – a 1986 spoof version produced by Brian May which reached UK number 44 The Braids – an R&B version recorded for the soundtrack to the 1996 film High School High and which peaked at UK number 21, US number 42, and Canada number 13[102] Panic! at the Disco – a version recorded for the soundtrack of the 2016 film Suicide Squad and which peaked at UK number 80, US number 64 and Canada number 47[103] A video cover featuring The Muppets also went viral[104] and was subsequently released as a single in late 2009, peaking at number 32 in the UK.[105] "Weird Al" Yankovic's 1993 album Alapalooza includes a version of the song entitled "Bohemian Polka", which is a rearrangement of the entire song as a polka.[106][107] To mark the 40th anniversary of "Bohemian Rhapsody", the song was released on a limited edition 12" vinyl with the original B-side "I'm In Love With My Car" on 27 November 2015 for Record Store Day 2015. Queen also released A Night At The Odeon, Live At Hammersmith 75, on CD, DVD-Video and Blu-ray. This includes the first live "professionally" recorded performance of "Bohemian Rhapsody".[108] However, the first recording and live performance of "Bohemian Rhapsody" was the performance on 14 November 1975 in Liverpool.[109] From 4 August to 5 September 2023, the Freddie Mercury: A World of His Own exhibition was held at Sotheby's in New Bond Street, London where almost 1,500 items of Mercury's went on display before being sold across six auctions.[110] His Yamaha baby grand piano, which he used to compose "Bohemian Rhapsody", sold for £1.7 million, while his handwritten lyrics for the song went for £1.38 million.[110] A silver snake bangle worn by Mercury in the "Bohemian Rhapsody" music video was sold for £698,500.[110] "Bohemian Rhapsody" live at Milton Keynes Bowl (1982) In live performances, the operatic segment would be played from tape as it was too complicated for the band to perform live. As the heavy rock segment followed, the band would return to the stage. Problems playing this file? See media help. The a cappella opening was too complex to perform live, so Mercury tried various ways of introducing the song. When "Mustapha" became a live favourite, Mercury would often sub in that song's a cappella opening, which was easier to reproduce live as it was only one voice—this combination features in their 1979 live album Live Killers.[111] During their 1982 Hot Space Tour, and occasionally at other times, Mercury would do a piano improvisation (generally the introduction to "Death on Two Legs") that ended with the first notes of the song. Often, the preceding song would end, and Mercury would sit at the piano, say a quick word, and start playing the ballad section. At Live Aid where "Bohemian Rhapsody" was their opening song, Mercury commenced with the ballad section.[112] From left to right: Deacon, Taylor and May in concert in Hanover in 1979. Behind the drum kit is the tam-tam used at the end of "Bohemian Rhapsody". Initially following the song's release, the operatic middle section proved a problem for the band. Because of extensive multi-tracking, it could not be performed on stage.[113] The band did not have enough of a break between the Sheer Heart Attack and A Night at the Opera tours to find a way to make it work live, so they split the song into three sections that were played throughout the night. The opening and closing ballads were played as part of a medley, with "Killer Queen" and "March of the Black Queen" taking the place of the operatic and hard rock sections. In 1976 concerts where the same medley was played, the operatic section from the album would be played from tape as the introduction to the setlist. During this playback, Mercury would appear briefly to sing live for the line, "I see a little sillhouetto of a man".[114] As the song segued into the hard rock section, the band would emerge on the smoke-filled stage—the playback would end at this point, and the hard rock section would be performed live (without the final ballad section, which appeared later in the set). Footage of Mercury singing "Magnifico" in the operatic section of the "Bohemian Rhapsody" music video during a Queen + Adam Lambert concert at the United Center, Chicago, June 2014. Starting with the A Day at the Races Tour in 1977, the band adopted their lasting way of playing the song live. The opening ballad would be played on stage, and after May's guitar solo, the lights would go down, the band would leave the stage, and the operatic section would be played from tape, while coloured stage lights provided a light show based around the voices of the opera section.[113] Most playings of the opera section from the tape would often be accompanied by a portion of the song's music video containing the footage used for the operatic portion of the song. Other playings would be played over montages of footage filmed from the band members' other experiences throughout their daily lives. A blast of pyrotechnics after Taylor's high note on the final "for me" would announce the band's return for the hard rock section and closing ballad. Queen played the song in this form all through the Magic Tour of 1986. This style was also used for the Freddie Mercury Tribute Concert, with Elton John singing the opening ballad and then after the taped operatic section, Axl Rose singing the hard rock section. John and Rose sang the closing ballad part together in a duet.[115] "Bohemian Rhapsody" was performed by Queen + Paul Rodgers throughout their tours, accompanied by a video of Mercury.[116] Footage from the Live at Wembley '86 was used for the 2005–06 tour, and the 1981 Montreal performance used for the Rock the Cosmos Tour. As with the Queen tours, the band went backstage for the operatic section, which was accompanied by a video tribute to Freddie Mercury. When the hard rock section began, the lights came back up to the full band on stage, including Rodgers, who took over lead vocals. Rodgers duetted with the recording of Mercury for the "outro" section, allowing the audience to sing the final "Nothing really matters to me", while the taped Mercury took a bow for the crowd. Rodgers would then repeat the line, and the final line ("Any way the wind blows") was delivered with one last shot of Mercury smiling at the audience. Commenting upon this staging, Brian May says that they "had to rise to the challenge of getting Freddie in there in a way which gave him his rightful place, but without demeaning Paul in any way. It also kept us live and 'present', although conscious and proud of our past, as we logically should be."[16] Since 2012, May and Taylor have toured with former American Idol contestant Adam Lambert under the name Queen + Adam Lambert (following two one-off performances together in 2009 and 2011), with "Bohemian Rhapsody" regularly included at the end of their set.[117][118] Chart (1975–1976) Peakposition Australia (Kent Music Report)[119] 1 Belgium (Ultratop 50 Flanders)[120] 1 Belgium (Ultratop 50 Wallonia)[121] 7 Canada Top Singles (RPM)[56] 1 Finland (Suomen Virallinen)[122] 10 Ireland (IRMA)[123] 1 Netherlands (Dutch Top 40)[124] 1 Netherlands (Single Top 100)[125] 1 New Zealand (Recorded Music NZ)[126] 1 Norway (VG-lista)[127] 4 South Africa (Springbok Radio)[128] 2 Spain (AFE)[129] 4 Sweden (Sverigetopplistan)[130] 18 Switzerland (Schweizer Hitparade)[131] 4 UK Singles (OCC)[132] 1 US Billboard Hot 100[133] 9 US Cash Box[134] 6 West Germany (GfK)[135] 7 Chart (1991–1992) Peakposition Australia (ARIA)[136] 5 Austria (Ö3 Austria Top 40)[137] 8 Belgium (Ultratop 50 Flanders)[120] 6 Canada Top Singles (RPM)[138] 18 Canada Adult Contemporary (RPM)[139] 36 Denmark (IFPI)[140] 3 Europe (Eurochart Hot 100)[141] 3 Finland (Suomen virallinen lista)[122] 17 France (SNEP)[142] 15 Germany (GfK)[143] with "These Are the Days of Our Lives" 16 Ireland (IRMA)[144]with "These Are the Days of Our Lives" 1 Netherlands (Dutch Top 40)[145] 2 Netherlands (Single Top 100)[125] 1 New Zealand (Recorded Music NZ)[126] 16 Switzerland (Schweizer Hitparade)[131] 8 UK Singles (OCC)[146] with "These Are the Days of Our Lives" 1 US Billboard Hot 100[147] 2 US Cash Box[148] 1 Chart (2018–2019) Peakposition Australia (ARIA)[136] 17 Austria (Ö3 Austria Top 40)[137] 30 Belgium (Ultratop 50 Flanders)[120] 3 Czech Republic (Singles Digitál Top 100)[149] 1 Canada (Canadian Hot 100)[150] 26 Canadian Digital Song Sales[151] 6 Colombia (Promúsica)[152] 12 France (SNEP Singles Téléchargés)[153] 3 France (SNEP Megafusion)[154] 21 France (SNEP Streaming)[155] 27 Greece International Digital Singles (IFPI)[156] 8 Hungary (Single Top 40)[157] 4 Hungary (Stream Top 40)[158] 3 Italy (FIMI)[159] 10 Japan (Japan Hot 100) (Billboard)[160] 11 Lithuania (AGATA)[161] 4 Malaysia (RIM)[162] 8 Netherlands (Single Top 100)[125] 26 New Zealand (Recorded Music NZ)[126] 20 Portugal (AFP)[163] 21 Slovakia (Singles Digitál Top 100)[164] 5 Singapore (RIAS)[165] 24 Spain (PROMUSICAE)[166] 26 Sweden (Sverigetopplistan)[130] 33 Switzerland (Schweizer Hitparade)[131] 21 UK Singles (OCC)[167] 45 US Billboard Hot 100[168] 33 US Hot Rock & Alternative Songs (Billboard)[169] 2 Chart (2020–2022) Peakposition Global 200 (Billboard)[170] 97 Chart (1975) Position UK Singles (BMRB)[171] 22 Chart (1976) Position Australia (Kent Music Report)[172][173] 2 Belgium (Ultratop Flanders)[174] 14 Canada RPM Top 100[175] 6 Netherlands (Dutch Top 40)[176] 9 Netherlands (Single Top 100)[177] 11 UK Singles (BMRB)[178][179] 35 US Billboard Hot 100[55] 18 US Cash Box Singles[180] 52 Chart (1991) Position UK Singles (Gallup)[181] 2 Chart (1992) Position Australia (ARIA)[182] 59 Belgium (Ultratop)[183] 45 Europe (Eurochart Hot 100)[184] 34 Netherlands (Dutch Top 40)[185] 28 Netherlands (Single Top 100)[186] 24 New Zealand (RIANZ)[187] 41 UK Singles (Gallup)[188] 15 US Billboard Hot 100[189] 39 US Cash Box Singles[190] 22 Chart (2006) Position UK Singles (OCC)[191] 199 Chart (2018) Position France (SNEP)[192] 146 Hungary (Single Top 40)[193] 40 Iceland (Tónlistinn)[194] 97 Portugal (AFP)[195] 122 US Hot Rock Songs (Billboard)[196] 31 Chart (2019) Position Australia (ARIA)[197] 67 Czech Albums (ČNS IFPI)[198] 7 France (SNEP)[199] 60 Hungary (Single Top 40)[200] 29 Italy (FIMI)[201] 73 Japan (Japan Hot 100)[202] 49 Latvia (LAIPA)[203] 75 Portugal (AFP)[204] 79 Sweden (Sverigetopplistan)[205] 95 Switzerland (Schweizer Hitparade)[206] 39 UK Singles (OCC)[207] 64 US Hot Rock Songs (Billboard)[208] 7 US Rolling Stone Top 100[209] 67 Chart (2020) Position France (SNEP)[210] 158 Chart (2021) Position France (SNEP)[211] 177 Global 200 (Billboard)[212] 87 Portugal (AFP)[213] 146 Chart (2022) Position Global 200 (Billboard)[214] 75 Chart (1970–1979) Position UK Singles (OCC)[215] 7 Chart (2018) Position UK Singles (OCC)[216] 3 Region Certification Certified units/sales Australia (ARIA)[217] 8× Platinum 560,000‡ Brazil (Pro-Música Brasil)[218] Platinum 60,000‡ Canada (Music Canada)[219] 7× Platinum 560,000‡ Denmark (IFPI Danmark)[220] 3× Platinum 270,000‡ Germany (BVMI)[221] 3× Gold 750,000‡ Italy (FIMI)[222] 5× Platinum 500,000‡ Japan (RIAJ)[223] Gold 100,000* New Zealand (RMNZ)[224] 7× Platinum 210,000‡ Portugal (AFP)[225] 4× Platinum 160,000‡ Spain (PROMUSICAE)[226] 5× Platinum 300,000‡ United Kingdom (BPI)[227] 5× Platinum 3,000,000‡ United States (RIAA)[54] Physical Gold 1,000,000^ United States (RIAA)[54] Digital Diamond 10,000,000‡ Streaming Greece (IFPI Greece)[228] Platinum 2,000,000† Japan (RIAJ)[229] Gold 50,000,000† * Sales figures based on certification alone.^ Shipments figures based on certification alone.‡ Sales+streaming figures based on certification alone.† Streaming-only figures based on certification alone. I always wanted to do something operatic. I wanted something with a mood setter at the start, going into a rock type of thing which completely breaks off into an opera section, a vicious twist and then returns to the theme. I don't really know anything about opera myself. Just certain pieces. I wanted to create what I thought Queen could do. It's not authentic... certainly not. It's no sort of pinch out of Magic Flute. It was as far as my limited capacity could take me.[230]—Freddie Mercury, 1976 I'm going to shatter some illusions, it was just one of those pieces I wrote for the album: just writing my batch of songs. In its early stages I almost rejected it, but then it grew. We started deciding on a single about halfway through. There were a few contenders—we were thinking of "The Prophet's Song" at one point—but then "Bohemian Rhapsody" seemed the one. There was a time when the others wanted to chop it around a bit, but I refused. If it was going to be released, it would be in its entirety. We knew it was very risky, but we had so much confidence in that song—I did anyway. I felt, underneath it all, that if it was successful it would earn a lot of respect. People were all going, 'You're joking, they'll never play it, you'll only hear the first few bars and then they'll fade it out. We had numerous rows. EMI were shocked—a six-minute single? You must be joking! The same in America—oh, you just got away with it in Britain.[231]—Freddie Mercury, 1976 When we finished the album, the Night at the Opera album, that was the track on it that we thought we were gonna release as a single in the UK first. And when we released it in Britain we didn't necessarily think it'd be released in America, cause we know even over here, you know, the AM tastes are even more [hesitates] stricter. Anyway we did have thoughts about even in the UK, perhaps editing it down at all, but we listened to it over and over again and there was no way we could edit it. We tried a few ideas, but if you edited it, you always lost some part of the song, so we had to leave it all in. And luckily it took off anyway.[232]—John Deacon, 1977 The vocal harmonies was something we wanted to do from the beginning, as we are always keen to do that kind of thing. We wanted to be a group that could do the heaviness of hard rock, but also have harmonies swooping around all over the place. We thought there was some real power and emotion in that combination. The guitar solo was pretty much off the cuff, except I think I had plenty of time to think about that one. I remember playing along with it in the studio for a while when other things were being done. I knew what kind of melody I wanted to play.[233]—Brian May, 1982 Source:[17] Freddie Mercury – lead and backing vocals, piano, operatic vocals (middle register) Brian May – electric guitar, operatic vocals (low register) Roger Taylor – drums, timpani, gong, operatic vocals (high register) John Deacon – bass guitar List of Bohemian Rhapsody cover versions List of best-selling singles in the United Kingdom List of highest-certified digital singles in the United States ^ Lemieux, Patrick; Unger, Adam (11 April 2018). Queen Chronology/Bohemian Rhapsody. Lulu.com. p. 24. ISBN 9781926462103. Retrieved 6 January 2023. August 24: Queen begins recording their fourth album with two weeks (September 7th) of sessions at Rockfield Studios ^ Queen Chronology/Bohemian Rhapsody. Patrick Lemieux, Adam Unger. 11 April 2018. p. 24. ISBN 9781926462103. Retrieved 6 January 2023. Early September: Bohemian Rhapsody – the backing track is recorded during this time along with other "Opera" backing tracks ^ Queen Chronology/Bohemian Rhapsody. Patrick Lemieux, Adam Unger. 11 April 2018. p. 24. ISBN 9781926462103. Retrieved 6 January 2023. Mid September -- November: following Rockfield sessions, Queen continues working on their 4th album in London ^ a b Horton, Matthew (24 June 2015). "Queen: 20 Things You Probably Never Knew About 'Bohemian Rhapsody'". NME. Archived from the original on 24 September 2015. Retrieved 24 August 2015. a masterful, if ludicrous, six-minute suite of operatic cock-rock ^ a b c Service, Tom (8 December 2009). "Bohemian Rhapsody: Mamma, we've killed a song". The Guardian. London. Archived from the original on 19 December 2015. Retrieved 23 August 2015. ^ a b c Eisentraut, Jochen (2012). The Accessibility of Music: Participation, Reception, and Contact. Cambridge University Press. p. 111. ISBN 978-1107024830. progressive rock had an astounding success with the theoretically over-length (nearly 6 minute) single 'Bohemian Rhapsody' which bore many of the hallmarks of the 'prog' genre ^ Sutherland, Mark (30 October 2015). "Party On: Queen's Brian May Remembers 'Bohemian Rhapsody' on 40th Anniversary". Rolling Stone. Archived from the original on 4 January 2016. Retrieved 4 January 2016. ^ a b Hann, Michael (12 June 2011). "Queen herald the age of the music video". The Guardian. Archived from the original on 11 March 2017. Retrieved 17 December 2016. ^ a b "Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody voted the Nation's Favourite Number 1 Single" Archived 28 May 2019 at the Wayback Machine. Official Charts Company. Retrieved 17 January 2012 ^ a b "Bohemian Rhapsody ranked #17 on Rolling Stone 500 Greatest Songs List". Rolling Stone. 15 September 2021. Retrieved 16 September 2021. ^ "Reader's Poll: The Best Vocal Performances in Rock History". Rolling Stone. 5 September 2012. 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A Concise History of Rock Music. Mel Bay Publications. p. 243. ISBN 978-0786666430. Bohemian Rhapsody could easily have been dismissed as a fitting farewell to the dying genre of symphonic rock, had it not been for the fact that it was this record alone that elevated a previously middle-ranking commercial rock band to superstar status. ^ a b Prown, Pete; Newquist, H.P. (1997). Legends of Rock Guitar: The Essential Reference of Rock's Greatest Guitarists. Hal Leonard Corporation. p. 106. ISBN 978-0793540426. 'Bohemian Rhapsody' was akin to Led Zeppelin's 'Stairway to Heaven'. But while Zeppelin meshed folk influences with heavy metal, Queen opted for the light grandeur of the operetta as part of its hard rock. ^ a b "Bohemian Rhapsody's long legacy". The Economist. 27 November 2015. Archived from the original on 7 November 2017. Retrieved 6 November 2017. ^ Swanson, Dave (28 April 2012). "No. 7: Queen, 'Bohemian Rhapsody' – Top 100 Classic Rock Songs". Ultimate Classic Rock. 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