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## Queen: The Complete Review DVD Review

December 20, 2009 by [Christina](#)  
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Queen was not your typical knucklehead rock band, as we quickly learn in the DVD **Queen: The Complete Review** (Chrome Dreams 2005 & 2006/Pride Publications 2009), released October 20th. Innovative, unique, and following no other leader, Queen made social statements based on its members and fans instead of events of the times (e.g. Watergate or Vietnam – “They didn’t stand for anything but themselves” – Noel Williamson, *Uncut Magazine*). Because of this they were often called self-indulgent, but Queen also began the trend of stadium rock, where in a crowd of 70,000 people fans in the back row knew what was going on and could clap and sing along to songs like “We Are The Champions” and “We Will Rock You,” which became sports anthems. At 181 minutes on two discs and covering both the 70s and the 80s, *Queen: The Complete Review* is a treasure for both Queen fans and anyone else who would want to learn more about the band.

An exceedingly thorough British historical document, this film contains tons of vintage footage and interviews with experts galore, although we only see Queen in performance (except for a few snippets of Freddie Mercury talking on TV). Frontman and powerhouse singer Freddie Mercury, whom many may not know was of East Indian descent and a Parsi (and thus called Britain’s first Asian rock star), has long been revered as the driving force behind the band, composing unusual songs in many different keys on a piano. Brian May is renowned for his guitar riffs, while bassist John Deacon brought forth intense rhythms along with drummer Roger Taylor.

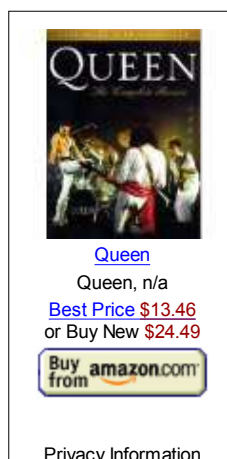
Queen was accused of being “a manufactured group” (as are almost all groups today) in an era when “the people’s music” (Christopher Welch, author and journalist) was “the democratic way to go” (starving and paying your dues for years without success) because Queen signed early on with Trident. Their first single, “Keep Yourself Alive”, was “not shown much interest” (Paul Gambaccini, music historian and BBC radio DJ and a good friend of Freddie Mercury) but “with Queen no one track defines their career” (Malcolm Dome of *Total Rock*) and they went on to create rock and roll history by playing over 700 concerts and selling more than 300 million albums (with *Rolling Stone Magazine* listing Freddie Mercury as number 18 in their 100 greatest singers).

Perhaps best known for works like “Bohemian Rhapsody” (which Christopher Welch informs us that the record company didn’t want to release as a single because it was too long, despite precedents like MacArthur Park and House Of The Rising Sun), Queen is known for its theatricality and showmanship, which had its roots in British vaudeville. (And *Bohemian Rhapsody* sold a million copies!) Beginning with “Mama just killed a man” and the chorus “carry on/Cause nothing really matters”, many have wondered what the song is about and entire documentaries have been devoted to its analysis, but Freddie Mercury said, “It’s just a song, enjoy it.” The album “A Night At The Opera,” which reached #1 on the UK charts and #9 on the US charts, was hailed as “the first complete album that they did where each song stands on its own but the sum is larger than its parts” (Malcolm Dome). Queen also never gave in to the Punk Movement but just kept on going their own way, with Freddie Mercury teasingly calling Sid Vicious “Mr. Ferocious,” which Vicious hates.

Malcolm Dome states, “Melody is the essence of their work – it works its way into the consciousness of the people. As soon as you hear the titles of their songs you remember what they sound like.” A band that was constantly reinventing itself, Queen teaches us what it’s like to live in the moment. Yet Paul Gambaccini states that “what they are now is larger than what they were. They still sound great and people still like them,” which is substantiated by vast sales of their memorabilia, up there in dollar signs with greats Elvis Presley and The Beatles! Ended by the tragic death of Freddie Mercury from bronchopneumonia caused by AIDS in 1991, a few revivals have been attempted but Paul Gambaccini left the “Return Of The Champions” with added new singer Paul Rodgers “at the interval yelling ‘Heinous! Heinous!’”

Thought by many to have been one of the best bands in rock and roll history, and having won two prestigious British Ivor Novello awards, Queen is done justice by this DVD, as any review shorter than a small tome could not

encompass all of its triumphs. Buy it today and begin your own enjoyable study!



**MPAA Rating:** Not Rated  
**Running Time:** 181 minutes  
**DVD Release Date:** October 20th, 2009

### Grade: A

Narrated by Sian Jones

With music experts Christopher Welch, Paul Gambaccini, Malcolm Dome, Simon Bradley, Noel Williamson, Jordan McLachlan, Phil Sutcliffe, Daryl Easlea, Ben Jones and Steve Gregory

*DVD Review by Christina of Music Room Reviews*

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