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Queen: Under Review 1973-1980

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Review by [Scott Weinberg](#) | posted December 29, 2005 | [E-mail the Author](#) | [Start a Discussion](#)

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The Movie

Like most music fans of my generation, I was introduced to the band Queen by way of radio airplay, Greatest Hits CDs, and the hilariously campy (and therefore very entertaining) musical score for Universal's *Flash Gordon* revisit. Over the years I've discovered some "non-hit" Queen tracks that I adore, and I've also grown more than a little weary of a lot of the top hits. (Anyone out there really *need* to hear "Bohemian Rhapsody" or "We Are the Champions" one more time?)

So when I received a new DVD called *Queen: Under Review 1973-1980*, I was half-expecting some sort of Greatest Hits video compilation. Instead I got a 100-minute documentary stuffed with thoughts, recollections, and analyses from British music critics, aficionados, and guitar players. Sounds pretty boring, right?

Actually, nope. Reimniscent of something you might find on VH1 if VH1 has the patience to broadcast something intelligent, *Queen: Under Review* is an insightful, respectful, and entirely honest look at the mega-band's seemingly endless output between the years of 1973 and 1980. Not nearly a mindless love-fest, the film is smart enough to include music experts who are both enraptured by the Queen sound and somewhat less than adoring, too. (Even the more dismissive music critics manage to maintain some respect for the band's impact and popularity.)

Composed mainly of interview segments and some pretty rare archival footage of the band in action, *Under Review* is not the

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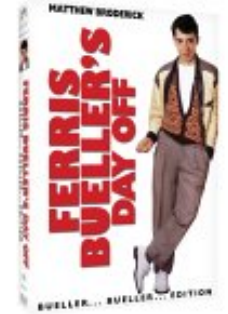
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flashiest or most hyperbolic look at the monster band's most popular years, but the experts gathered here seem to have not only strong memories of the rockers, but also the objectivity that comes with a few years distance. Their insights are smart and well-supported as they travel from the self-titled 1973 debut *Queen* (hit single: "Keep Yourself Alive") to 1974's *Queen II* ("Seven Seas of Rhye") and *Sheer Heart Attack* ("Killer Queen" & "Stone Cold Crazy") to 1975's *A Night at the Opera* ("Bohemian Rhapsody") to 1976's *A Day at the Races* ("Tie Your Mother Down" & "Somebody to Love") to 1977's *News of the World* ("We Will Rock You" & "We Are the Champions") to 1978's *Jazz* ("Fat Bottomed Girls" & "Bicycle Race") to 1980's *The Game* ("Another One Bites the Dust" & "Crazy Little Thing Called Love").

Sadly, there's no mention of the *Flash Gordon* score. ;)

Under Review moves through the years at a deliberate pace, stopping to focus on the songs, albums, and performances that helped to make Queen one of the most popular rock bands of all time. Although just a bit on the dry side, *Queen: Under Review* should prove to be a pretty damn fascinating piece for the hardcore Queenfans out there.

The DVD

Video: The documentary, which feels like it was originally produced for the BBC, is presented in a pretty slick widescreen format. Most of the archival material is presented in rather impressive fashion, I must say, **Audio:** 2.0 audio. It ain't fancy, but the songs sound solid enough.

Extras: Included as supplements are a complete Queen **discography** and a diversion entitled **The Hardest Queen Quiz Ever** ... which is pretty damn hard.

Final Thoughts

Love 'em or hate 'em, there's little denying that Queen made one hell of a musical impact during the mid- and late-1970s. Here the fans can relive the band's heyday by looking back over the decade and listening in on the experts' various reactions. Casual fans of the band will be bored stiff after about 15 minutes, but if you own more than, say, three Queen CDs, odds are you'll appreciate what's offered here.

Agree? Disagree? You can [post your thoughts](#) about this review on the DVD Talk forums.



Queen - Under Review: 1973-1980

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