



FEATURES

- ↳ Queen - The Collector
- ↳ The Hardest Interactive Queen Quiz In The World Ever
- ↳ More Queen related product from Chrome Dreams

Queen: Under Review '80 – '91

By Larry Phillips

Disc Details:

Video:	1.33:1
Anamorphic:	No
Audio:	• DD 2.0
Subtitles:	None
Runtime:	78 minutes
Rating:	N/R
Release Date:	August 29, 2006
Production Year:	2006
Director:	None
Released by :	Chrome Dreams / Music Video Distributors
Region:	0 NTSC

RATING





[Queen - Under Review - 1980-1991](#)

Queen

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QUOTES

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"I only recommend this title for fans of the band."

I am a Queen fan. I think that they have played a very important part in popular music history. These thoughts have already been expressed by me in great detail in my piece for [Queen: Under Review '73 – '80](#). Instead of boring both you and me by repeating myself, I ask that you give it a quick read before we



continue on here.

OK, great.

Queen: Under Review '80 – '91 picks up where the previous version left off in Queen's career. The same format continues where you have a number of critics and academics (all fans) discussing Queen, album by album in order of their release, starting with the soundtrack for **Flash Gordon**. From there, each subsequent release is discussed, as well as some of the more significant tracks from those albums. They track the course of the band, from the lows of *Hot Space* (only exceptional for the spectacular collaboration with David Bowie that resulted in *Under Pressure*) and the decision to play Sun City while South Africa was still under the grip of Apartheid; to the highs of their bravura appearance at the original Live Aid and their amazing return to form with the albums *The Miracle* and *Innuendo*. This volume of **Under Review** even moves into the Queen projects after singer Freddie Mercury's death, such as the giant impact that the movie **Wayne's World** had in reintroducing America to



Bohemian Rhapsody, the Queen theatrical show *We Will Rock You*, and the surviving members recent collaboration with Bad Company singer Paul Rodgers.

Many of the original voices from the first video return here. Thankfully, some changes were made as well, such as dumping the guitar dude and adding a few additional experts. Other changes featured include a more diverse and appropriate selection of video clips and concert footage to illustrate their points. In addition, there is a better clarity of narrative here, and the interview subjects

appear to be much more focused and interesting. It also seems that a number of the talking heads here had actually known and/or interviewed the members of the band around this period, so they bring some of that intimate knowledge and personal anecdotes into their discussions.

While there may have been just as much drama in the lives of Queen during the first half of their career, it is definitely



illustrated better in this volume. The band struggled through a number of lows, including musical and personal missteps, and the interviewees here do a commendable job illustrating that through the lens of the albums released by Queen during those times.

One of the sadder things noted in this overview of the latter half of Queen's career is seeing the noticeable and drastic deterioration in singer Freddie Mercury, who was dieing from the AIDS virus that eventually killed him. As Mercury and the band began to seriously contemplate mortality, much heavier notes can be found in their music. The interview subjects all point this out, and elaborate on much of the interpretation that everyone has on the songs in retrospect. Unfortunately, due to this specific format, many questions that they posed regarding the songs and their deeper meaning go unanswered. In a traditional documentary, you would expect the questions to be followed up by an interview clip with one or all of the surviving members of Queen. Sadly, this is not the



case here, as it is made quite clear on the packaging that says this video has not been authorized by Queen or their management. We are simply left contemplating what, and how much, meaning the band meant to give these late-period songs.

As tragically ironic as it always seems to be with artists, arguably Queen's greatest album was also the last one created by the band in the studio – *Innuendo*. Very much like John Lennon's *Double Fantasy*, Queen was able to put aside the ghosts of their past glories and actually break new

ground in a time that shouldn't have been theirs any longer. While technically not the last Queen album of original material (the band released *Made In Heaven* after Mercury's death with existing, unused vocal tracks) it easily stands as a glimpse of what could have been for the band (also like *Double Fantasy*.)

Presentation

As I said in the review for the first Queen disc, the current interview footage looks and sounds pretty good, but the band footage is more of a mixed bag. The filmmakers obviously did not go to the original sources and much of it looks like multi-generation tape; although with most of the clips being more current, the quality is definitely improved from the first time around. It was still a bit frustrating at times, only because I own some of the DVDs

where the concert footage is repeated here, and I know that the quality of those is simply pristine.

As for the sound, none of this would be mind-blowingly spectacular running through your home theater, but it wasn't really meant to be. None of the songs or performances are totally intact, they are used more to illustrate a point, so the standard stereo mix is acceptable.

The disc chapters are divided by each album title released by Queen during the years on the cover. The menu and title screens are of the barest minimum and look like something that any home-use software creates by default. A wee bit more production is really the least a fan of the band can expect.

Extras

Another batch of questions pops up this time for *The Hardest Interactive Queen Quiz In The World Ever*, and it definitely lives up to its billing. Equally as minimalist as the previous version, going through it only serves to remind you of how bored you must be to give it a try. That, and how stupid you are. I got five out of twenty-five correct, and that was probably 80% sheer luck.

In The Stories behind the DVD's expert contributors, I felt as it was billed incorrectly. What you get are text screens with the resume of each contributor in this volume. While kind of interesting and allowing for the respect that these men have earned, I was hoping for some explanation as to why these men were chosen for the piece, and what spectacular insight or connection they might have with the band. There was really not a mention of any of this and it was a wasted opportunity.

One of the more interesting bits was *Queen - The Collector*. Using the same interview subjects, each discusses their view on Queen fandom. It all really looks like a deleted segment that didn't fit within the framework of the main piece, but it was still pretty good. While not nearly as in depth as it could've been, some fascinating points were made. I would've liked to have seen them expand upon the subject further and would've loved stills of some of the things that Queen fans collect, but really the only cutaway images we get from the interviews are a



few shots of what must be the fan club catalogue.

Wrap-up

The way that **Queen: Under Review '80 – '91** is structured, there it isn't mandatory that you view **Queen: Under Review '73 – '80** first, or at all, really. With that said, I only recommend this title for fans of the band. If you dig one of the volumes, you'll dig them both. This version was an improvement in many ways, while still slightly frustrating for the same reasons as before.

While Queen no longer makes music (at least they shouldn't. The whole Paul Rodgers thing? Please. Stop.) their work will live on. Only true innovators can make the bulk of their catalogue always seem fresh and innovative, and Queen does just that.



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