

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA: PERFORMANCE, THEATRICALITY, AND IDENTITY IN
THE MUSIC OF QUEEN

A THESIS IN
Musicology

Presented to the Faculty of the University
of Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

by
GRACE KATE ODELL

B.M., Furman University, 2016

Kansas City, Missouri
2016

©2019

GRACE KATE ODELL

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA: PERFORMANCE, THEATRICALITY, AND IDENTITY IN
THE MUSIC OF QUEEN

Grace Kate Odell, Candidate for the Master of Music Degree

University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2016

ABSTRACT

Many discussions of the rock band Queen (vocalist Freddie Mercury, guitarist Brian May, drummer Roger Taylor, and bassist John Deacon) reference their theatricality, yet few analyze what makes Queen's music and performances theatrical. Through examining Queen's theatricality from different angles, this thesis shows the different layers of Queen's performativity and its relationship to identity.

After an introductory chapter that surveys the literature about Queen, the second chapter of the thesis analyzes the theatricality of Queen's music from a stylistic basis. The chapter begins by addressing Queen's camp theatricality through their use of music hall,

operetta, and musical theatre styles. It then addresses their drama-based theatricality through their use of opera and film music styles. The third chapter analyzes Queen's performance of gender and sexuality through their use of different genres. It first discusses Queen's participation in the genre of glam rock, in which they performed a more feminine persona, but were still understood as heterosexual. Then it explores Queen's disco and funk influenced music and Mercury's "castro clone" image as simultaneously a more masculine and more homosexual performance. Finally the chapter analyzes the various rock genres Queen used throughout their career in order to perform heterosexual masculinity, including hard rock, stadium rock, and heavy metal. The fourth chapter focuses primarily on Mercury's performance of ethnicity and nationality through his music. Taking into account his history as a first-generation Parsi Zanzibarian who immigrated to London, it first looks at his and Queen's expressions of "Britishness" through the figure of the British pop dandy and their use of the British national anthem. Then it turns to discussing the influence of Mercury's Persian and African heritage on select songs. Finally, it examines religion as it relates to cultural identity, specifically Mercury's Zoroastrian heritage and the ways he used the aesthetics of heavy metal to articulate his place within that religion. The fifth chapter concludes the thesis by taking a holistic view of how all of these layers of performativity operated simultaneously, endowing Queen's music with a deep and complex sense of theatricality.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the Conservatory of Music and Dance, have examined a thesis titled “A Night at the Opera: Performance, Theatricality, and Identity in the Music of Queen,” presented by Grace Kate Odell, candidate for the Master of Music degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Supervisory Committee

Andrew Granade, Ph.D., Committee Chair
Conservatory of Music and Dance

Sarah Tyrrell, Ph.D.
Conservatory of Music and Dance

Alison DeSimone, Ph.D.
Conservatory of Music and Dance

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Review of the Literature	6
Plan of the Thesis	15
2. MUSICAL THEATRICALITY	17
Camp	19
Drama	44
Queen's Masks	60
3. PERFORMING GENDER AND SEXUALITY	63
Glam Rock	67
Disco and Funk	79
Rock	89
Queen's Characters	98
4. PERFORMING ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY	100
Performing Britishness	103
Performing Persianness and Zanzibarianness	110
Performing Religion	117
Queen's Identity	125
5. CONCLUSION	129
Layered Performances	129
Innuendo	134
APPENDIX	141
BIBLIOGRAPHY	154
VITA	165

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Bars 1-3 of “The Honeysuckle and The Bee.”	24
2. The beginning of the chorus in “The Honeysuckle and the Bee.”	26
3. Introduction of “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon.”	28
4. Mm. 16-21 of “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon.”	30
5. Mercury’s melody at 0:22 in “Seaside Rendezvous.”	33
6. Adele’s melody at the beginning of “Mein Herr Marquis.”	36
7. Chromatic bass line in mm. 3-5 of “Vesti la Giubba.”	47
8. The piano reduction of the accompaniment in bars 5-8 of “Vesti la Giubba.”	48
9. Chords from the chorus of “It’s A Hard Life.”	52
10. Descending bass line during the interlude of “It’s A Hard Life.”	53
11. The melody at the beginning of <i>Highlander</i> ’s main theme.	56
12. The various outfits of the child version of Mercury in the official music video for “The Miracle.”	64
13. The Sweet on “Top of the Pops” in 1972.	69
14. May’s silver necklace and flared sleeves in the official video for “Liar.”	73
15. Mercury’s “drag” in the live video for “Another One Bites the Dust” filmed in Montreal in 1981.	85
16. Shot of the full band in the official video for “Body Language.”	86
17. Masculine stances and May’s Washburn RR11V in the official video for “Princes of the Universe.”	96

18. Mercury during “God Save the Queen” at Wembley Stadium. 109

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to recognize the help of my wonderful advisor, Dr. Granade. In addition, I appreciate the advice and support of my committee members, Dr. DeSimone, and Dr. Tyrrell. I would also like to thank Mom, Dad, Hattie, Jared, Chris, Anna, Nick, Ashton, Tiffany, Laura, and Kristen for their suggestions and emotional support. Thanks also to Juan José Castaño-Marquez for his edits and suggestions.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The official video for the British band Queen's song "I Want to Break Free" features each band member in drag, parodying the female characters in the popular British soap opera *Coronation Street*. (For a list of Queen songs and pertinent information see the Appendix.) Lead singer Freddie Mercury wears fake breasts with slipping black bra straps, a leather mini-skirt, and big pink earrings; guitarist Brian May has curlers in his hair, a pink robe, and fluffy bunny slippers; drummer Roger Taylor wears bows in his hair, a flouncy skirt, and stockings; and bassist John Deacon has a flowered hat, pearl earrings, and black gloves. Most of the comments on the song's official YouTube video are about how pretty and attractive Taylor looks dressed as a woman. Bernie McKinley writes "When I look at Rodger I'm not sure if I like guys or girls ?!" and Akita Roll Productions adds "ROGER IS A GUY SO IM TECHNICALLY NOT A LESBIAN."¹ These comments display Queen's lasting challenge to binaries of gender and sexuality. They also show that the whole band created this challenge and it cannot be credited solely to Mercury's ambiguous sexual orientation. The beginning of Queen's career in the early 1970s featured the members wearing long hair, makeup, and painted fingernails, placing the group firmly in the glam rock movement pioneered by the theatrically androgynous onstage presentation of musicians such as David Bowie and Marc Bolan. However, by the time Queen released "I Want to Break

¹ Queen Official, "Queen - I Want To Break Free (Official Video)," Youtube video, 4:31, posted September 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4Mc-NYPHaQ>.

Free” in 1984, they had gradually cut their hair (all except May) and lost the makeup, leaving the group with a more traditionally masculine look. In 1980, Mercury replaced his sparkly bodysuits of earlier performances with his signature moustache, jeans, and T-shirt. While Queen’s video for “I Want to Break Free” channeled time-honored British comedy tropes of men in drag rather than intentionally returning to a glam rock look, audiences often interpret it in light of Queen’s earlier glam connection by viewing Taylor’s comedic character in the video as a symbol of androgyny and flexible sexuality.

Glam rock was a style founded in theatricality, and musicians usually used this theatricality to perform various aspects of gender and sexuality. Although Queen’s career trajectory took them far away from glam rock to genres as stylistically opposed as disco, they took with them glam’s central tenet of theatricality, employing it to perform not just gender and sexuality, but other aspects of identity as well. Queen’s excessive theatricality, and specifically Mercury’s, has become a common buzzword many invoke when describing the band. The back cover of Matt Richards’ and Mark Langthorne’s biography of Mercury features quotes from Lady Gaga and David Bowie referencing Mercury’s theatricality: “He was not only a singer but also a fantastic performer, a man of the theater” (Gaga) and “Of all the more theatrical rock performers, Freddie took it further than the rest” (Bowie).²

Besides theatricality, audiences often note the diversity within Queen’s musical styles. As one interviewer noted in 1982, “the group has jumped into Billie Holliday-like blues, punk rock, Spanish flamenco, jazz, heavy metal, country, ragtime, '50s-style rock,

² Matt Richards and Mark Langthorne, *Somebody to Love: The Life, Death, and Legacy of Freddie Mercury* (San Francisco: Weldon Owen, 2016), back cover.

disco and good ol' 4/4 rock 'n' roll.”³ Composing and performing in vastly differing styles, sometimes even switching among them within the space of a single song, allowed Queen to resonate with a wider audience.⁴ Yet this mixture of styles combined with their theatricality undermined their critical reception in magazines such as *New Musical Express* and *Rolling Stone* by suggesting “inauthenticity.” Anne Desler attributes Queen’s negative reception by rock critics to the advent of punk in 1976, which engendered a “redefinition of what constituted ‘authentic’ rock values,” namely that the rock should represent anti-establishment and low-class values sans artifice or show.⁵ Queen’s very name stands in opposition to punk’s anti-establishment values. In addition, the band’s connection to glam rock celebrated the artifice that proponents of punk despised. Going beyond punk, Bianca Rizzoli describes the overarching rock aesthetic as a romanticist aesthetic that “requires artists to sincerely express their inner self in their music, and judges them to be successful insofar as they manage to communicate their own feelings to their audience.”⁶ To those who saw “serious and emotionally honest expression” in rock’s fundamental values, Queen’s dizzying ability to shift between completely different styles suggested no true adherence to any of those styles and also suggested that their use of each of these styles was a parody of itself instead of a

³ “Beguiling Variety Crowns Queen’s Divergent Efforts,” *The Daily Oklahoman*, August 1982, accessed online, April 8, 2019, queenarchives.com, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/08-26-1982-the-daily-oklahoman/>.

⁴ Anne Desler, "History Without Royalty? Queen and the Strata of the Popular Music Canon," *Popular Music* 32, No. 3 (October 2013): 390.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 393-394.

⁶ Bianca Rizzoli, "Fan and Journalist Discourses on the Music of Queen: An International Perspective" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Iowa, 2005), 27.

sincere expression of emotion.⁷ In this way, Queen’s theatricality, while exciting and intriguing to some, has rendered their music insincere and artificial to others who felt rock needed to be a true “expression of the artist’s feelings.”⁸ Some who enjoy the band’s music yet identify with traditional rock values try to fit this theatricality and stylistic diversity within the “requirements” of the prevailing rock aesthetic. For example, in a DVD describing the making of the album *A Night at the Opera*, Jac Holzman summarizes what he sees as Queen’s appeal: “the size of it, the perfection of it, the willingness to go everywhere from music hall to jazz and to have them wear those different musical costumes close to their skin and part of who they were. It was not fake, it was always genuine and you can always tell the difference.”⁹ This statement is contradictory; Holzman acknowledges Queen’s theatricality in their “musical costumes,” and yet he feels the need to assure viewers that those costumes were “part of who they were,” making the band “genuine.” This language contrasts with the idea of a costume, which by definition helps the wearer play a role and temporarily act as someone they are not.

Mercury echoed this ambiguity in a 1985 interview. Perhaps because of criticisms related to Queen’s deviation from the traditional rock aesthetic, Mercury chose to emphasize the emotional aspects of his music. In the interview he claimed that his “songs are all under the label emotion, you know. It’s emotion and feeling,” going on to reveal that they are

⁷ Desler, 395.

⁸ Rizzoli, 72.

⁹ *The Making of A Night at the Opera*, directed by Matthew Longfellow (London: Eagle Rock Entertainment, 2005), DVD.

inspired by his own experiences of love and loss.¹⁰ In this case Mercury insinuates that his music is genuine insofar as it relates to his actual feelings and experiences, contrasting with the interpretation of Queen's music that is based in theatricality. However, even while stating that the music arises from self-expression, Mercury asserted that a fundamental part of his own identity was the ability to perform different versions of himself, in his personal life and in his music:

Interviewer: So we can take it that your songs reflect the state of your life?

Freddie: I think so, I think so, yes.

Interviewer: And that's why on your songs there is always quite a diverse selection of moods, isn't it?

Freddie: Yes, it is because that's my character too, you know. How boring to just be, you know, to have just one side of your character coming across in everything you do, you know, I just gather information... I'm a man of extremes, you know, I sort of change from day to day like a chameleon and each day is different to me and I look forward to that, you know. I don't want to be the same person everyday and who knows ?, the way this Album has turned out it's just a whole spectrum of what my life is, to be honest. But I was not 'made in heaven'. A lightning [sic] bolt suddenly goes 'crack.'¹¹

This quote reveals that Mercury saw self-expression as a form of theatricality. Each day he performed a different version of himself, and his music followed suit by expressing many different emotions and musical styles.

This relationship between theatricality and identity is central to Queen's music, yet none of the literature surrounding Queen and Mercury focuses on this element. While some scholarship touches on Mercury's identity and the ways it is expressed through his music, most focuses on Mercury's expression of identity rather than the band's theatricality. In

¹⁰ "XX-XX-1985 – Unknown," queenarchives.com, 1985, accessed March 13, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/xx-xx-1985-unknown-2/>.

¹¹ "XX-XX-1985 – Unknown."

addition, this scholarship tends to downplay the theatricality of Queen's other members. While Mercury is a necessary focus because of his visually and aurally arresting presence, he consistently stressed that the four members of Queen were equal.¹² This thesis seeks to begin filling the gap by addressing Queen's theatricality and their performance of identity as a band and the intricate ways these two elements are intertwined in their music and history.

Review of the Literature

Queen suffers from a relative lack of scholarly work. One of the first scholarly writings on Queen was Jennifer Anne De Boer's 2000 master's thesis, in which she argued that Queen has been forced to the "margins of the mainstream" because of critics' disapproval of the ways they mixed traditionally binary gender cues.¹³ More recently, in 2013, Anne Desler tackled a similar question, and while she acknowledged that gender issues may have played a part, she gave a larger role to the advent of punk as a dominant rock style.¹⁴ She argued that as a genre emphasizing authenticity, punk not only overshadowed and conflicted with Queen's early glam aesthetic (based in campy inauthenticity), but also

¹² Rosy Horide, "Queen Deserve Rock's Royal Crown?," *Circus Magazine*, January 1978, accessed online, March 27, 2019, queenarchives.com, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/01-19-1978-circus-magazine/>.

¹³ Jennifer Anne De Boer, "On the Margins of the Mainstream: Queen, the Rock Press, and Gender" (Master's thesis, McMaster University, 2000).

¹⁴ Desler, 393.

resonated more heavily with the criteria for a critical and academic “canon” of popular music.¹⁵

Since 2000, scholarly work about Queen has been appearing sparsely but regularly. While difficult to categorize these under any broad heading, the works tend to focus more heavily on discussing music and style or Mercury’s identity within a cultural context. Style is what scholar Nick Braae, perhaps the closest person musicology has to a “Queen scholar,” has chosen to write about in his publications. Braae has written two articles on his subject, one that charts Queen’s stylistic development in their early years, and another that analyzes classical influence in Queen’s music.¹⁶ Another scholar who has written twice on Queen, Ken McLeod, has observed this classical influence in his article specifically on Queen’s operatic influences.¹⁷ McLeod has also addressed Queen’s relationship to gender in an article concerning masculinity and sports in popular music.¹⁸ Coming closest to analyzing Queen’s theatricality, Stephen Drew discusses Queen’s contributions to the films *Flash*

¹⁵ Desler, 394.

¹⁶ Nick Braae, "Keeping Themselves Alive: Identifying and Analyzing Queen's Musical Development, 1973-1980," *Popular Music History* 9, No. 3 (December 2014): 248-269; and Nick Braae, "Queen's Classical Music References (1973-76) or Was Queen a Progressive Rock Band?," in *Prog Rock in Europe: Overview of a Persistent Music Style*, ed. Philippe Gonin, 117-130 (Dijon, France: Éditions Universitaires de Dijon, 2016).

¹⁷ Ken McLeod, “Bohemian Rhapsodies: Operatic Influences on Rock Music,” *Popular Music* 20, No. 2 (2001): 189-203.

¹⁸ Ken McLeod, “‘We Are the Champions’: Masculinities, Sports and Popular Music,” *Popular Music and Society* 29, No. 5 (December 2006): 531-547.

Gordon and *Highlander*, noting how the band used musical style to depict aspects of the characters and plot.¹⁹

Reception is also a starting point for a couple of dissertations. De Boer's dissertation, mentioned above, addressed Mercury's camp theatricality briefly, but mostly focuses on expression of identity rather than theatricality.²⁰ Bianca Rizzoli's dissertation, like De Boer's, examines Queen's relationship to journalists, but also discusses their reception by fans.²¹ Barry Promane's dissertation is specifically about Queen's engagement with different genres of music, touching briefly on Mercury's performance of sexuality in his discussion of *Hot Space*.²² Other scholarly articles tend to focus on Queen in a social context. For example, John Lynch's 2003 article discusses the cover image of *The Sun* tabloid newspaper announcing Mercury's death, comparing it to a similar cover used by the magazine about war.²³ Nancy Stockdale published an article in 2016 analyzing Mercury's songs through the lens of his multi-cultural identity.²⁴

¹⁹ Stephen Drew, "Who Wants to Live Forever: Glam Rock, Queen and Fantasy Film," in *The Music of Fantasy Cinema*, ed. Janet Halfyard (Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2012), 58-78.

²⁰ De Boer, 68-71.

²¹ Rizzoli.

²² Barry C. Promane, "Freddie Mercury and Queen: Technologies of Genre and the Poetics of Innovation" (Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Western Ontario, 2009).

²³ John Lynch, "'Support our Boys': AIDS, Nationalism and the Male Body," *Paragraph* 26, No. 1/2 (March-July 2003): 175-187.

²⁴ Nancy L. Stockdale, "No Escape From Reality: The Postcolonial Glam of Freddie Mercury," in *Global Glam and Popular Music: Style and Spectacle From the 1970s to the 2000s*, ed. Ian Chapman (New York: Routledge, 2016), 83-97.

There are a few different articles from other areas besides music. Nicola Bizzo's 2007 article specifically analyzes Queen's visual imagery in their album covers and music videos.²⁵ In 2012, Aubrey Malden published an article about Mercury's business-minded marketing outlook.²⁶ In the same year, an article by Christian Herbst scientifically analyzed Mercury's voice.²⁷ Paul Fouché published an article in 2018 that provided a retroactive psychological analysis of Mercury using Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory.²⁸

While this scholarship is spotty, it provides a useful starting point. Viewpoints about Mercury's identity and information about Queen's musical style can be linked in order to examine how Queen as a group dramatized identity in a theatrical way through their use of pre-existing musical genres. The three lenses this thesis uses to analyze Queen's theatricality are that of purely musical theatricality, the performance of gender and sexuality, and the performance of ethnicity and nationality. Each of these areas have a scholarly conversation surrounding them, although none address Queen in depth. Displaying the conversation around these three lenses, the *Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology* has

²⁵ Nicola Bizzo, "A Video-Iconographical Journey Through Queen's Production," *Music In Art: International Journal for Music Iconography* 32 No. 1/2 (Spring-Fall 2007): 205-224.

²⁶ Aubrey Malden, "The Fred Factor- The Insightful Marketing Story About a Man Who Changed the World of Rock," *Communicare* 31, No. 1 (July 2012): 61-75.

²⁷ Christian Herbst et al., "Freddie Mercury- Acoustic Analysis of Speaking Fundamental Frequency, Vibrato, and Subharmonics," *Logopedics Phoniatics Vocology* 42, No. 1 (April 2017): 29-38.

²⁸ Paul Fouché et. al., "Queen's Great Pretender: A Psychohistorical Sketch of Freddie Mercury," *Journal of Psychohistory* 46, No. 1 (Summer 2018): 17-36.

sections entitled “Performance and Gesture,” “Gender and Sexuality,” and “Identity and Ethnicity,” each containing three or more articles.²⁹

The theatricality of popular music has been addressed most directly only a few times since the early 1990s. Jacques Lacava published an article in 1992 titled “The Theatricality of the Blues,” which addresses the necessity of analyzing the blues not just from a sonic standpoint, but also incorporating the fundamental theatricality of the genre.³⁰ In 1996 Linda Pohly analyzed Barbra Streisand’s theatricality through her vocal manipulation of phrasing, tempo, timbre, dynamics, as well as a brief analysis of her theatrical physical comporment.³¹ Paul Carr and Richard Hand have published two articles about Frank Zappa’s theatricality in 2000 and 2007.³² Stuart Lenig gave a broad overview of theatrical rock styles in his 1993 article “The Theatre of Rock.”³³ One approach this thesis takes to analyzing theatricality in Queen’s music is through their use of camp. While in the past camp has been analyzed in

²⁹ *Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*, ed. Derek Scott (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009).

³⁰ Jaques D. Lacava, “The Theatricality of the Blues,” *Black Music Research Journal* 12, No. 1 (Spring, 1992): 127-139.

³¹ Linda Pohly, “Barbra Streisand and the Theatricality of Popular Song: Vocal Technique and a Director’s Eye,” *The American Music Research Center Journal* 6 (1996): 69-87.

³² Paul Carr and Richard Hand, “‘Twist’n Frugg in an Arrogant Gesture’: Frank Zappa and the Musical-Theatrical Gesture,” *Popular Musicology Online* 5 (2000); Carr and Hand, “Frank Zappa and Musical Theatre: Ugly Ugly O’phan Annie and Really Deep, Intense, Thought-Provoking Broadway Symbolism,” *Studies in Musical Theatre* 1, No. 1 (2007): 41-56.

³³ Stuart Lenig, “The Theatre of Rock,” *Popular Music and Society* 17, No. 1 (1993): 1-21.

terms of visual art and literature, Freya Jarman-Iverns took the first step in applying Susan Sontag's ideas on camp to music in her "Notes on Musical Camp."³⁴ Jarman-Iverns' approach has been taken up by others, for example, Janina Ann Vela in her thesis "Is Ziggy Stardust Camp?: David Bowie as a Case Study in Music and Camp."³⁵

Gender and sexuality has been a popular subject within the scholarly literature overall, including the literature on rock and popular music. In 2001, the journal *Popular Music* published an issue with the theme of "gender and sexuality" including articles such as "Glamour and Evasion: The Fabulous Ambivalence of the Pet Shop Boys" by Fred Everett Maus.³⁶ Most pertinent to analysis of Queen is Philip Auslander's book about glam rock, which also directly addresses theatricality: *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music*.³⁷ In 1990, Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie wrote their seminal essay "Rock and Sexuality," which explores the notion that rock constructs gender and sexual identity, rather than the other way around.³⁸ Mary Celeste Kearney published a similarly titled book in 2017 called *Gender and Rock* that takes an intersectional approach to surveying

³⁴ Freya Jarman-Iverns, "Notes on Musical Camp," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*, ed. Derek B. Scott (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009), 191.

³⁵ Janina Ann Vela, "Is Ziggy Stardust Camp?: David Bowie as a Case Study in Music and Camp" (Masters Thesis, Texas State University-San Marcos, 2010).

³⁶ *Popular Music: Gender and Sexuality* 20, No. 3 (October 2001).

³⁷ Philip Auslander, *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006).

³⁸ Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie, "Rock and Sexuality," in *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word* ed. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (London: Routledge, 1990), 371-389.

gender and rock music.³⁹ Stan Hawkins' book *The British Pop Dandy: Masculinity, Popular Music, and Culture* addresses the phenomenon of the dandy image in British pop music, and analyzes figures close to Queen such as David Bowie, Marc Bolan, and others.⁴⁰ Lucas Hilderbrand pinpoints 1981 as an important year for queer pop music in his article "'Luring Disco Dollies to a Life of Vice': Queer Pop Music's Moment," which was included in an issue of *Journal of Popular Music Studies* with the theme "Trans/Queer."⁴¹ Hilderbrand briefly discusses Queen and David Bowie's song "Under Pressure" as potentially relating to the AIDS crisis. In addition, there has been scholarship published about specific people or groups who interact with gender and sexuality. In 1996, there was an article on Led Zeppelin and "cock rock" and one about glam-influenced artists The Cure and Suede.⁴² In 2012, Susan Fast published her article "Michael Jackson's Queer Musical Belongings."⁴³

³⁹ Mary Celeste Kearney, *Gender and Rock* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁴⁰ Stan Hawkins, *The British Pop Dandy: Masculinity, Popular Music and Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

⁴¹ Lucas Hilderbrand, "'Luring Disco Dollies to a Life of Vice': Queer Pop Music's Moment," *Journal of Popular Music Studies: Trans/Queer* 25, No. 4 (December 2013): 415-438.

⁴² Steve Waksman, "Every Inch of my Love: Led Zeppelin and the Problem of Cock Rock," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 8 (1996): 5-25.; Thomas Geyrhalter, "Effeminacy, Camp and Sexual Subversion in Rock: The Cure and Suede," *Popular Music* 15, No. 2 (May 1996): 217-224.

⁴³ Susan Fast, "Michael Jackson's Queer Musical Belongings," *Popular Music and Society* 35, No. 2 (May 2011): 281-300.

Contemporary pop artists have also received attention, particularly ones connected to Queen's legacy such as Lady Gaga and Adam Lambert.⁴⁴

The study of musical performance of ethnicity, nationality, and race is widespread, however somewhat limited within rock music. Most of the sources pinpoint and explore rock music within a specific nation or culture, for example Canada, Ireland, or Finland.⁴⁵ Most relevant to this thesis is a 1994 book by George Lipsitz that addresses the multi-cultural music created by immigrants, including popular music and rock.⁴⁶ There is work about the black heritage of rock music in scholarship, for example, about the Black Rock Coalition and about Jimi Hendrix.⁴⁷ Some sources address exoticism, particularly the negative side of it such as "From 'Help!' to 'Helping Out a Friend': Imagining South Asia Through the Beatles

⁴⁴ Lise Dilling-Hansen, "'My Artpop Could Mean Anything': An Investigation of the Gender and Body Performances of Lady Gaga and of the Negotiation Practices and Affective Responses of the Gaga Fans" (Doctoral Dissertation, Aarhus Universitet, Institut for Kommunikation og Kultur, 2015); Elizabeth S. Gould, "Queer Transversal: The Spectacle Adam Lambert," in *Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari* ed. Pirkko Moisala (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 107-128.

⁴⁵ Olaf Kuhlke, "The Geography of Canadian Shield Rock: Locality, Nationality and Place Imagery in the Music of the Rheostatics," in *Sound, Society, and the Geography of Popular Music* ed. Ola Johansson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 161-184; Noel McLaughlin, "Pop and the Periphery: Nationality, Culture and Irish Popular Music" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Ulster, 1999); Sven-Erik Klinkmann, "Swedish Rock in Finland: 'The Sound Which is Not?'" in *Rockin' the Borders: Rock Music and Social, Cultural and Political Change* ed. Björn Horgby (Newcastle Upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars, 2010), 89-116.

⁴⁶ George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London: Verso, 1994).

⁴⁷ Maureen Mahon, *Right to Rock: The Black Rock Coalition and the Cultural Politics of Race* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Steve Waksman, "Black Sound, Black Body: Jimi Hendrix, the Electric Guitar, and the Meanings of Blackness," *Popular Music and Society* 23, No. 1 (Spring 1999): 75-113.

and the Concert for Bangladesh” by Samantha Christiansen and “Postcolonialism on the Make: The Music of John Mellencamp, Davie Bowie and John Zorn.”⁴⁸ Exoticism is also addressed in Jonathan Bellman’s 1998 article “Indian Resonances in the British Invasion, 1965-1968.”⁴⁹ Steve Waksman also contributed to this scholarly conversation in 2011 by comparing Kiss’s tours of Asia and Latin America with Led Zeppelin’s stylistic borrowings from various styles of world music.⁵⁰ Directly relating to Queen and ethnicity, Nancy Stockdale’s 2016 article “No Escape From Reality: The Postcolonial Glam of Freddie Mercury” analyzed Mercury’s songs through the lens of his multi-cultural identity.⁵¹

There is a scholarly conversation occurring around all three of the lenses used in this thesis: musical theatricality, performance of gender and sexuality, and performance of ethnicity and nationality. Because Queen was a rock band with a multi-cultural, queer vocalist joined by three straight, white, British band-mates, they provide ideal ground and material for further research into these areas.

⁴⁸ Samantha Christiansen, “From ‘Help!’ to ‘Helping Out a Friend’: Imagining South Asia Through the Beatles and the Concert for Bangladesh,” *Rock Music Studies* 1, No. 2 (May 2014): 132-147; Ellie M. Hisama, “Postcolonialism on the Make: The Music of John Mellencamp, Davie Bowie and John Zorn,” *Popular Music* 12, No. 2 (May 1993): 91-104.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Bellman, “Indian Resonances in the British Invasion, 1965-1968,” in *The Exotic in Western Music* ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University, 1998), 292-306.

⁵⁰ Steve Waksman, “Arenas of the Imagination: Global Tours and the Heavy Metal Concert in the 1970s,” in *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the World* ed. Jeremy Wallach (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 227-246.

⁵¹ Stockdale.

Plan of the Thesis

The second chapter of the thesis analyzes Queen's music from a purely stylistic basis. Although the visual nature of Queen's theatricality often overshadows the musical theatricality, the music itself reveals an inherently dramatic foundation. Queen often borrowed stylistically from genres that are themselves based in theater or role playing. The chapter begins by addressing the campy side of Queen's style, analyzing their use of music hall, operetta, and musical theatre styles, before addressing their more sincere theatricality based on an operatic style and influence from film music.

The following chapter returns to analyzing the music in tandem with the visual aspect as it examines Queen's performance of gender and sexuality through their use of different genres. It first discusses Queen's participation in the genre of glam rock, in which they exhibited a more feminine persona, but were still understood as heterosexual. Then it explores Queen's disco and funk influenced music as simultaneously a more masculine and more homosexual performance. Finally the chapter analyzes the various rock styles Queen used throughout their career in order to perform heterosexual masculinity, including hard rock and stadium rock.

The fourth chapter focuses primarily on Mercury's performance of ethnicity and nationality through his music. Taking into account his history as a first-generation Parsi Zanzibarian who immigrated to London, it first looks at his and Queen's expressions of "Britishness" through the figure of the British pop dandy, and also through their use of the British national anthem. Then it turns to discussing the influence of Mercury's Persian and African heritage on select songs. Finally, it examines religion as it relates to cultural identity,

specifically Mercury's Zoroastrian heritage and the ways he used the aesthetics of heavy metal to articulate his place within that religion.

The conclusion takes a holistic view of how all of these layers of performativity operated simultaneously, endowing Queen's music with a deep and complex sense of theatricality. Queen began as a glam rock band and although their style changed drastically over the course of their career, they retained glam's central tenet, which posited that not only the on-stage performance, but also off-stage cultural norms were in fact constructed and based in theatricality. This emphasis on performativity allowed their music to resonate with a diverse audience.

Queen founded their theatricalization of identity on the purely stylistic theatricality of their music. Their borrowings from genres of the theater provided a basis from which Queen could create and perform their own dramas. While these performances ranged from insincere camp to sincere drama, the music set the stage for Queen's inventive characterizations of identity.

CHAPTER 2

MUSICAL THEATRICALITY

In a 1977 interview, Mercury defended Queen's flamboyance by saying, "a concert is not a live rendition of our album. It's a theatrical event."¹ Most references to Queen's theatricality relate to the visual nature of their live performances or music videos. Recorded performances effortlessly draw focus to their extravagant costumes, extroverted performance antics, and coordinated lighting; however, these visual aspects actually only provided exaggerations and visual manifestations of an element already inherent in Queen's music. This is clear in May's response to a question about Queen's theatrics:

MM: Wouldn't you prefer it if Queen was more musical and less theatrical?

Brian May: That's a very loaded question. Not easy to answer. I like the dramatic side of it in terms of dramatic accompaniment to the music. Because the music is dramatic. I don't think we end being less musical because we get involved in the theatrics. If your [sic] asking what kind of theatrics I like that's a different question, I prefer rock theatrics to showbiz theatrics. We all have different feelings on that.²

May clearly indicates that the music is already dramatic and theatrical, albeit in different ways ranging from rock to "showbiz." In 1982, an interviewer asked Mercury if he would ever want to "translate [his] theatrics into film." His response indicates that he felt his

¹ Don Rush, "Part 2: The Queen Tapes," *Circus Magazine*, March 1977, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 13, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/03-17-1977-circus-magazine/>.

² "Interview," *Melody Maker*, 1985, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 27, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/xx-xx-1984-melody-maker/>.

personal creativity and theatricality were completely fulfilled by writing for and performing with Queen:

Not really. A lot of people ask me that. Um, If I'd wanted that I'd have done it a long time ago. I feel, at the moment there's lot of things I'm doing within Queen that keeps me happy. As far as being a actor or whatever, ah, forget it. [...] It's very creative at the moment, I mean, what we're doing within Queen, my creative output, is enough for me.³

An essential element of Mercury's creativity was theatricality, yet he fulfilled that need by writing and performing songs. While the visual and physical elements of the live concerts and music videos may have been more obviously theatrical, each of Queen's albums was also a "theatrical event."

Queen expressed theatricality in different ways throughout their career. Although there are levels in between, broadly speaking, their music swings between two poles: a parodic, purposefully inauthentic camp theatricality (for example "Bring Back That Leroy Brown," "Good Company," "I'm Going Slightly Mad") and a more serious, sincere, and emotionally expressive theatricality ("Love of My Life," "Save Me," "It's A Hard Life"). (For a list of songs by Queen see the Appendix.) This chapter begins by discussing Queen's camp theatricality through examining their use of stylistic influences from music hall songs such as "The Honeysuckle and the Bee," operettas such as Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, and musical theater, particularly Liza Minnelli's interpretation of *Cabaret*. Then it shifts to discussing Queen's sincere theatricality based in their use of opera. It analyzes *Pagliacci*'s influence on "It's a Hard Life" as well as the dramatic structuring of "Who Wants to Live

³ Entertainment Tonight, "Watch Freddie Mercury's Rare 1982 ET Interview (Exclusive)," Youtube video, 3:03, posted October 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywyzFJYGOig>.

Forever,” which is influenced by both opera and film music. While Queen’s theatricality at times tended towards playful camp and at other times resembled serious drama, at the root of all Queen’s music is the construction of musical performance as a theatrical experience, not only live and in music videos, but more fundamentally, on record.

Camp

Camp as a concept has been most famously addressed by Susan Sontag in her “Notes on Camp.”⁴ She describes camp as “a victory of ‘style’ over ‘content,’” also noting that “the hallmark of Camp is the spirit of extravagance.”⁵ She characterizes camp as inherently theatrical:

Camp sees everything in quotation marks. It’s not a lamp, but a “lamp”; not a woman, but a “woman.” To perceive Camp in objects and persons is to understand Being-as-Playing-a-Role. It is the farthest extension, in sensibility, of the metaphor of life as theater.⁶

This idea of “life as theater” resonates with Mercury’s statement that “I don’t want to be the same person everyday,” perhaps leading to Mercury’s use of the camp aesthetic in his compositions.⁷ However, Sontag’s and others’ analyses of camp usually focus on visual art

⁴ Susan Sontag, “Notes on ‘Camp,’” in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Picador, 1966), 275-292.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 287; 283.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 280.

⁷ “XX-XX-1985 – Unknown.”

or literature.⁸ Using Sontag’s vocabulary and description as a starting point, Freya Jarman-Iverns begins to remedy this gap by applying these ideas to music.⁹ Centering on performance style rather than composition itself, Jarman-Iverns suggests that “exaggerated tension and exaggerated display of release” is an important marker of camp in music.¹⁰ She analyzes Liza Minnelli’s performance of “Auf wiedersehen mein Herr” from the movie *Cabaret*, noting among other examples the unresolved dominant before the entrance of the singer and the way that Minnelli draws out the expectation generated by the lengthening before the harmonic resolution.¹¹ Besides Jarman-Iverns’ claim that musical camp focuses on exaggerated tension and release, it also relates to a theatrical way of singing that mimics speaking or that exaggerates mannered musical phrases. Just as an actor can use campy vocal inflections, singers can also be camp in the different vocal timbres and effects they decide to employ. A 1977 article compared Mercury to “an over-emotional actress - Gloria Swanson, say, or perhaps Holly Woodlawn playing Bette Davis.”¹² Besides his performance

⁸ In addition, Sontag’s essay does not address the queer black roots of camp, which is significant especially since the use of camp within genres such as glam rock and elsewhere (as well as for Queen) is often used to perform queerness. For a brief overview of these roots of camp, see: Taylor Crumpton, “The History of Camp is Black and Queer,” *Afropunk*, May 09, 2019, accessed May 22, 2019, <https://afropunk.com/2019/05/black-queer-camp/>.

⁹ Jarman-Iverns, 191.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹² John Ingham, “A Riot At The Opera: Queen Triumphant,” *Sounds*, November 1975, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 13, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/11-29-1975-sounds/>.

style, Mercury also draws inspiration for the composition of his songs from genres that employ musical camp, including music hall, operetta, and musical theater.

Music Hall

In January of 2015, Queen as it exists today (May and Taylor) performed at the O2 Arena in London. During the years the band performed with all four members, they often incorporated a reference to the location of their performance, for example Mercury's performance of a Hungarian folk song in Budapest in 1986.¹³ At the 2015 performance in London, May played a 1946 song written in the music hall style, "Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner," as an ecstatic crowd sang along.¹⁴ Going deeper than a reference to London as the place of performance, the choice of song demonstrated the influence that the music hall style had on Queen's own works from the beginning.

Developing in the mid-nineteenth century and reaching its peak from 1880-1920, the music hall was essentially the British version of cabaret in Germany and France. Anthony Bennett describes the development of music hall songs, noting that by the late 1800s, composers were producing them in bulk, designing them specifically to appeal to the changing public taste through their catchiness.¹⁵ The music hall style included a range of

¹³ *Hungarian Rhapsody: Queen Live in Budapest*, produced by Justin Shirley-Smith (Burbank, CA: Hollywood Records, 2012), DVD.

¹⁴ sektar, "Queen - Brian May "Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner + Love Of My Life" London O2 Arena 17 Jan 2015," Youtube video, 6:34, posted January 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZWhcmu7Uxw>.

¹⁵ Anthony Bennett, "Music in the Halls," in *Music Hall: Performance and Style* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986), 10.

sentimental, comic, and more serious art music, but usually emphasized the comic singer.¹⁶ Bennett also notes that “essential to their acts was the projection of an assumed character, or range of characters.”¹⁷ Because of the comic and character-focused nature of the song, the expression of the words was important. Therefore, the speed and rhythms approximated that of speech, with some performers exaggerating the speech-like quality in order to perform the song in an almost conversational way.¹⁸ Although the genre originally had a narrow harmonic range, the influence of parlor song in the 1880s and 90s introduced more chromatic harmony and modulations to minor keys as well as the dominant.¹⁹ Emphasizing the dominant to increase expectation and provide a marker to indicate the chorus’s return also became a distinguishing characteristic.²⁰ Differing from cabaret or vaudeville, a central element of music hall was audience participation during the chorus of the songs.²¹ Barry Faulk shows that while the music hall had basically died out by the 1950s, elements of its format and style still influenced popular culture into the ‘60s and the British consciousness saw music hall as something worth national pride.²²

¹⁶ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 13; 21-22.

¹⁹ Ibid., 12-13.

²⁰ Ibid., 12.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Barry Faulk, *British Rock Modernism, 1967-1977* (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010), 5-7.

Certain elements of Bennett's description of the music hall style resonate with Jarman-Iverns' exploration of musical camp. Adapted to examine composition rather than performance, this type of analysis readily applies to music hall songs, for example "The Honeysuckle and the Bee" by William H. Penn.²³ The piece combines elements that signify progression with elements that signify stasis, resulting in exaggerated build-ups of tension followed by exaggerated releases. While all tonal music is built on the idea of tension and release, and therefore the mere presence of it cannot be noteworthy, the exaggerated prolongation of and emphasis on these aspects denotes musical camp.²⁴ Like most songs in the music hall style, the introduction of "The Honeysuckle and the Bee" begins with the melody of the verse played by piano alone, as if to remind the singer which song they are performing. The singer's silence at the beginning creates an inherent sense of expectation during the short intro, a feeling emphasized by the use of a melody that the listener knows will be restated with lyrics and in the singer's vocal timbre. The introduction also creates suspense through harmony and melodic shaping. In the first two measures, the harmony alternates between the F major tonic and the minor subdominant in second inversion (providing a pedal on F), the latter harmony functioning not as a new chord, but rather as adding chromatic color to F major. (See Figure 1.) In addition, while these chords are oscillating, the melody articulates a short repetitive phrase matching the harmonic changes. Coupled with the coloristic harmony, this repetition gives a dual feeling of stasis (F pedal,

²³ Recommended recording: FrettFavre "The World of Julie Andrews - The Honeysuckle and the Bee," 3:32, posted July 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgarw2UrPwg>.

²⁴ Jarman-Iverns, 201.

repetitive melody) and exploration (unusual harmonic decoration, motivic repetition possibly anticipating future development), which results in heightened anticipation. This sense of expectation is furthered in the third bar, which provides a half cadence and a fermata on the following rest. (See Figure 1.)



Figure 1: Bars 1-3 of “The Honeysuckle and The Bee”

Score in public domain, accessed May 26, 2019 from the New York Public

Library online: <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/904ebc18-9e65-5071-e040-e00a1806792b>.²⁵

Once the verse finally begins, it repeats the music of the introduction, evoking the same sort of anticipation; however, instead of waiting for the singer to enter, the listener is now waiting for the chorus. In an actual music hall, the audience would have been anticipating their own participation in the chorus, making this an even more experiential prolongation of tension. At the end of the verse, the strange oscillating harmony is

²⁵ William H. Penn, *The Honeysuckle and the Bee* (Chicago: Sol Bloom, 1901).

supplanted by a direction-filled cadential progression: beginning in measure eighteen, the bass line rises chromatically from B-flat to C. However, instead of cadencing on the tonic, the tension extends as the bass rises to D, supporting a secondary dominant harmony in the key of C. Then, as the vocalist sings lyrics introducing the chorus (“Then he whispered to her words she thought divine...”) the harmony provides a strong cadence in C major followed by a rest, finally bringing this expanded cadential progression to its height as a tension-filled half cadence instead of the originally expected authentic cadence in the tonic key. The chorus provides the “exaggerated display of release” described by Jarman-Iverns as musical camp.²⁶ Although the chorus is marked “Daintily,” it is accompanied by six- and seven-note chords played at a consistently higher register than the rest of the song. In addition, the melody is chromatic in comparison to the verses, which, although employing chromatic harmonies, retain an almost completely diatonic melody. These full chords, high register, and extensive melodic chromaticism combine to make the chorus satisfy the expectations set up by the verse in an extravagant way. (See Figure 2.)

²⁶ Jarman-Iverns, 197.



Figure 2: The beginning of the chorus in “The Honeysuckle and the Bee”

Score in public domain, accessed May 26, 2019 from the New York Public

Library online: <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/904ebc18-9e65-5071-e040-e00a1806792b>.²⁷

Queen, and specifically Mercury, found the music hall style inspiring, particularly its camp possibilities.²⁸ Mercury’s song “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon” displays his use of the music hall style. Like most music hall songs, the accompaniment takes a background role to the vocalist; the left hand of the piano mostly provides repeated octaves or oscillation between octaves while the right hand blocks chords on the beat instead of providing rhythmic

²⁷ Penn.

²⁸ Songs that display this influence include: “Brighton Rock” (May), “Bring Back that Leroy Brown” (Mercury), “Seven Seas of Rhye” (May), “Killer Queen” (Mercury), “Good Company” (May), “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon” (Mercury), “Seaside Rendezvous” (Mercury), “Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy” (Mercury), “Millionaire Waltz” (Mercury), “I’m Going Slightly Mad” (Mercury).

syncopation or countermelodies. The drums emphasize the piano's regular rhythm in their steady articulation of each beat of the 4/4 measure, with emphasis on beats two and four. Although it uses a traditional rock beat, it also emphasizes the regular rhythmic nature of the music hall-influenced piano accompaniment. In addition, Mercury's vocals include swung rhythms that replicate the effect of the dotted rhythms common to the music hall style, and he sings at a speaking pace that makes the words easy to understand.

Like "The Honeysuckle and the Bee," "Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon" draws out the campy tension inherent in cadential figures and in chromaticism, specifically through combining elements that suggest stasis with those that suggest forward motion. There is a short introduction that, although it does not exactly reproduce the melody of the verse, imitates its contour by moving downward from E-flat. Similar to the introduction of "The Honeysuckle and the Bee" there is a relatively static bass line that provides a pedal first on E-flat and then on B-flat, and a melodic line that repeats short motives. (See Figure 3.) Instead of ending on a half cadence, the phrase includes a chromatic scale ending with an octave leap played by the right hand alone that leads to a cadence on the tonic. However, the conclusivity of this cadence is interrupted by an appoggiatura: before arriving on the already slightly unstable first inversion tonic chord, only a D and G are played together, the D acting as the appoggiatura leading towards the E-flat of the following E-flat major chord. (See Figure 3.) Like "The Honeysuckle and the Bee," chromatic harmonies provide color rather than function, decorating the verse. For example, the first measure that includes voice sustains the E-flat major harmony for the first half of the bar, and in the second half the left hand continues playing oscillating E-flats, and the right hand simply adds chromatic color

with F-sharp and D before returning to traditional E-flat harmony in the following measure.
(See Figure 3.)

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the introduction of the song "Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon" by Queen. The first system is a piano introduction in 4/4 time, featuring a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system shows the vocal entry with the lyrics "I go out to work on Mon-day morn - ing. Tues" and a piano accompaniment. Chord symbols are indicated above the staff: Eb, Bb5, Bb7, Bb, Bb6, Eb, Eb, D+/Eb, and Eb. The piano part includes triplets and a 7th note.

Figure 3: Introduction of “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon.”

From *Queen: 13 Note-for-Note Keyboard Transcriptions From the Original Recordings*.²⁹

Instead of a verse and chorus structure, “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon” is in a short and nebulous ABA form. Although this form contrasts with the traditional form of music hall songs, it does not detract from Mercury’s emulation of the style. Rather, the form

²⁹ Queen, *Queen: 13 Note-for-Note Keyboard Transcriptions From the Original Recordings* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2016), 55.

provides similar locations of exaggerated tension and release. The first A section ends with a confident cadence in the tonic key, solidifying that tonic with three iterations of the E-flat chord followed by a rest. Because this confident cadence occurs so near the beginning of the piece, it acts almost as a parody of music hall form and generates expectation for the next section. Generally, music hall songs that include this kind of cadence before a new section begin the following section in a different key, usually either the dominant or a minor key. Similarly, the beginning of the B section begins on the dominant of G minor, this time providing functional chromaticism rather than just chromatic decoration; the D major chord is only a half step away from E-flat major. Besides the minor key, a slower tempo also alters the mood. A chromatic bass line leads to a dominant seventh chord in the key of B-flat, which is lengthened and emphasized by the piano's drawn out reiteration of the chord and the vocal line, which reaches the highest note of the piece up until this point. (See Figure 4.) In addition, backing vocals enter here for the first time.³⁰ A fermata draws out this tension, which remains unfulfilled when the music begins again because deceptive motion takes the tonality back to G minor. This G-minor phrase modulates as it moves towards a half cadence in F minor that is drawn out again by a sustained A-flat in the voice, which resolves to G as it is held out ("Fridays I go painting in the Louvre"). (See Figure 4.) Once again, backing vocals emphasize the tension in this cadence, providing the second dramatic moment in a short amount of musical time.

³⁰ In Julie Andrews' interpretation of "The Honeysuckle and the Bee" backing vocals also enter at a point of high expectation at 0:58: FrettFavre "The World of Julie Andrews - The Honeysuckle and the Bee."

The image displays a musical score for the song "Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon" by Queen. It consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 16-21 and includes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "zoo. I come from Lon-don town; I'm just an or-di-nar-y guy." The piano part features a "molto rit." marking. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment, with lyrics: "Fri-days I go paint-ing in the Louvre. I'm". The piano part includes a "Tempo I" marking and a 3/4 time signature change. Chords are indicated above the vocal line: F7/C, Gm, Dm, Eb/G, D7/F#, Eb/G, Bb7/F, and C7.

Figure 4: Mm. 16-21 of “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon.” Background vocals are not notated in this example, however they are present leading up to and on the word “zoo” and at “Fridays I go painting in the Louvre.”

From *Queen: 13 Note-for-Note Keyboard Transcriptions From the Original Recordings*.³¹

Besides the way that these backing vocal parts provide exaggeration, they also reference the audience “sing-along” expected during the chorus. In recorded live performances of “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon,” the audiences do not actually sing along; however, in both Queen’s 1976 Boston and Tokyo performances, Mercury exaggerated the

³¹ Queen, *Queen: 13 Note-for-Note Keyboard Transcriptions From the Original Recordings*, 56.

tension at the end of the B section by coming to a complete halt with the music and eliciting audience participation. In both recordings, members of the audience begin shouting at that moment (as there are no video recordings extant, there is no way of knowing what kind of physical gesture he might have used as an aid in eliciting this audience response).³²

Following this half cadence in F minor, the concluding A section begins *a tempo* in F minor, acting both as a reprise of the melodic material in the first section and as a harmonic resolution of the B section's final cadence on a C7 chord, providing the exaggerated release of the B section's extreme tension. The desired cadence in the tonic key of E-flat finally occurs at the end of that phrase.³³

Besides the compositional structure of the music-hall influenced songs, elements of Mercury's performance style also evoke traditional interpretations of music hall songs. Actress and singer Beryl Reid released her interpretation of "The Honeysuckle and the Bee" one year before *A Night at the Opera*, giving an example of how the music hall tradition carried into the 1970s. Reid was born in 1919, just after music hall reached its height. She began her career as a music hall singer in the 1930s, and later became a well known movie and TV actress. Reid's performance style exemplifies what Bennett described as the

³² Boston: Antonio_p82 "Queen - Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon (Live in Boston 30/01/1976)," Youtube video, 1:31, posted March 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uK5YV_4WYQQ; Tokyo: Migels1000, "Queen - Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon (Live in Tokyo, Japan '76)," Youtube video, 1:28, posted February 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NETASm__pU.

³³ Immediately following the cadence is an abrupt change of key and the piece ends with a guitar solo in A major that echoes the melodic shape of the first section, thereby rounding out a more complete reprise of that melody, but also acting as a coda because of the new instrumentation and the distant tonality.

“informal, narrative” mode of singing that marked many music hall singers’ interpretations.³⁴ For example, in “The Honeysuckle and the Bee,” as she sings the lyrics in the chorus “I love you dearly, dearly, and I hope that you love me” Reid varies her tone quality and rhythm to appear as if she is speaking a dramatic monologue rather than singing a light popular piece.³⁵ She begins by singing “I love” as notated and then dipping down to speak-sing “you” at a lower pitch than notated. She returns to traditional singing at the higher register for “dearly” and waits dramatically before the second “dearly,” taking a breath and slightly emphasizing the word. This re-articulation of “dearly” does not sound as though she sang it twice because the melody required it, but rather because her character wanted to emphatically convey her love and in the moment, decided to say it again. As Reid continues, she places the words “and I hope” in a timbre somewhere between speaking and singing and rhythmically performs them quickly together, portraying the lyrics’ sense of yearning and hopefulness. Reid’s interpretation seems less focused on vocal quality and more on portraying the words in a theatrical way. Combined with the campiness inherent in the musical composition, Reid’s theatrical and drawn-out performance of the lyrics creates an interpretation based in camp as well.

Mercury used his voice in a way that echoed this conversational music hall style, and he also crafted the music in a way that facilitates this interpretation. Paralleling Reid’s interpretation of “The Honeysuckle and the Bee,” in his music hall influenced song “Seaside

³⁴ Bennett, “Music in the Halls,” 21.

³⁵ John Worfolk, “Beryl Reid - Old Time Music Hall Singalong,” Youtube video, 7:24, Posted October 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBYq5a4Ks5U&list=RDqMGqgCgcaOQ&index=10,2:21-2:31>.

Rendezvous,” Mercury sings the words “I love you madly” at 0:22. (See Figure 5.) He chooses pitches and rhythms that mimic a dramatic reading of the words: as in Reid’s interpretation of the phrase “I love you,” he has chosen to leap down for the word “you,” and to return to a higher register immediately afterwards. (See Figure 5.) The rhythmic and melodic emphases in this short phrase rest on the word “love” and the syllable “mad,” not



Figure 5: Mercury’s melody at 0:22 in “Seaside Rendezvous.”

Transcription by the author.

only corresponding with the natural inflection of the words, but over-emphasizing them. Besides instances like this where Mercury “writes in” dramatic vocal inflections, his entire performance style evokes theatricalities like Reid’s. For example, Mercury sing-speaks the phrase at 0:40, “c’est la vie mesdames et messieurs,” but sings the final syllable (“sieurs”) elongating the note and exaggerating the vibrato as if to imitate a non-musician making fun of opera. This direct juxtaposition of speech-like articulation with a parody of serious

singing connects to the music hall style in the way that the music accentuates the comic nature of the lyrics.³⁶

Musical Theater and Operetta

Music hall is not the only musical genre from which Queen borrows. They also regularly used musical theater and operetta, two related but separate genres. John Kendrick's *Musical Theatre: A History* includes operetta as a precursor to modern day musical theater.³⁷ As Nick Braae has shown, the operatic section of "Bohemian Rhapsody" displays traits comparable with songs from operettas by Gilbert and Sullivan.³⁸ Braae also touches on "The Millionaire Waltz" from Queen's album *A Day at the Races*, which many compare to

³⁶ Mercury wrote most of Queen's songs influenced by music hall; however, a few exceptions apply. One example is "Brighton Rock," written by May. The influence is clearest in the introduction, which includes sounds intended to evoke a fairground with people talking, a band playing, and someone whistling "I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside," a music hall song that Queen also used at the end of Mercury's "Seven Seas of Rhye." Beyond this quotation of a literal music hall song, this song's link with music hall is more tenuous than prior examples because its dominant stylistic language is that of hard rock. However, there are connections. The lyrical subject matter of the piece are the two lovers Jenny and Jimmy, who meet while on holiday, but for various reasons (including a domineering mother and a wife back home) cannot be together afterwards. Music hall songs often touched upon the subject of being on holiday, and they also often included a story with the dialogue of different characters. Yet the connection goes beyond the subject matter: May composed the dialogue's melody so that the listener can hear the different voices of the characters. When Jimmy says "Jenny will you stay - tarry with me pray? Nothing 'ere need come between us tell me love, what do you say?" the vocal part is written at the B below middle C and is sung in a full tenor voice. Jenny's response is an octave up and in a parodic, falsetto tone: "Oh no I must away to my mum in disarray..." Even though presented in the context of a hard rock beat and instrumentation, this comical portrayal of archetypal characters echos the music hall style.

³⁷ John Kendrick, *Musical Theatre: A History* (New York: Continuum, 2008).

³⁸ Braae, "Queen's Classical Music References," 123.

“Bohemian Rhapsody.” Braae demonstrates how Viennese waltzes, specifically those by Johann Strauss II, influenced “The Millionaire Waltz,” including Strauss’ Blue Danube Waltz. May’s solo resembles another waltz by Strauss, the “Wiener Blut,” Op. 354.³⁹ However, Strauss’ stage works often included elements of dance forms, and because of the vocal parts and the dramatic, story-like structure of “The Millionaire Waltz,” it has more in common with Strauss’ operettas than the instrumental waltzes.

An example from a Strauss operetta that uses a waltz style is “Mein Herr Marquis” from *Die Fledermaus*. The aria is sung by the character Adele, who, especially in this particular moment in the plot, invites a campy interpretation. Strauss seems to encourage this interpretation with his music. At this point in the operetta’s plot the characters are attending a masked ball and Adele, a chambermaid, is disguised as a famous actress. The Marquis has just accused her of being the chambermaid in disguise, and she responds by laughing at the absurdity that he could believe something so outrageous. Adele is a lowbrow person not only pretending to be highbrow but being ostentatious about it. Even if Strauss’s operetta is not necessarily campy, Adele’s impersonation should be, and thus the aria encourages this type of interpretation. The vocal melody begins by moving stepwise from G to B and then leaping down to D before jumping back up to the B. This motive is repeated a step higher, beginning on A, but still jumping down to D instead of retaining the interval of a sixth. (See Figure 6.) The melody throughout uses this contour of close motion juxtaposed with large leaps. Another example begins on the pickup to m. 25 and includes a leap of a sixth down

³⁹ Ibid.

followed by a stepwise melodic turn around the arrival note. These leaps combined with stylized, written-in “laughs” encourage an over-acted and campy version of laughter.



Figure 6: Adele’s melody at the beginning of “Mein Herr Marquis.”

Score in public domain, accessed May 26, 2019 from the International Music Score Library Project.⁴⁰

The piece features soprano solo, and yet periodically involves the chorus, who enter for only eight bars at a time, an element that also encourages a campy interpretation. The chorus serves the purpose of commenting on and supporting the statements of the solo singer, which encourages a staging that highlights Adele as the center of attention within a crowd. Her statements, even if addressed to the Marquis, are really intended for everyone to hear, providing an overly artificial theatrical element based in camp.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Johann Strauss Jr., *Die Fledermaus*, arr. Richard Genée (Leipzig: Friederich Schreiber, 1875).

⁴¹ Features similar to these occur in other arias as well, for example in measure 33 of the “Champagne Song” there is a melodic turn around G for one measure before the melody leaps up to F#, followed by repetition of this leaping motive. A different character sings each verse as a solo and the chorus provides punctuating commentary.

In recent years, the piece has invited campy interpretations such as Carla Maffioletti's at an Andre Rieu concert in 2004 where Maffioletti wore a dress decorated with a sparkling setting sun, a long cape featuring a giant collar decorated with large peacock feathers, bright blue eyeshadow, and an extravagant headdress.⁴² She moved about the stage miming certain lyrics of the song and swinging her cape around. Musically, she exaggerated the fermatas written in the score and modified the final note so she could sing an impressive G6.

While Mercury never mentioned *Die Fledermaus* in interviews, "The Millionaire Waltz" echoes elements of the operetta's theatricality, specifically Adele's "Mein Herr Marquis." Like Strauss's melodic shaping, the vocal part in "Millionaire Waltz" tends to juxtapose conjunct motion with large leaps. It begins by moving stepwise down the scale before leaping up a fifth and then down a seventh. Like the chorus in "Mein Herr Marquis," backing vocals occasionally enter to provide support for Mercury. These elements reference Strauss's style in general and combined with the story-like structure of the piece leads to a reference to a stage work such as *Die Fledermaus*. The piece begins in a waltz style designated by the piano's left hand as Mercury sings about love and spring using a leaping contour similar to Strauss's style, which the chorus supports with short comments. This leads to a slower section that contains lyrics describing a past love affair; this section gradually includes more minor inflections as the listener finds out the lover has left and a plea arises for the lover to come back. Following this narrative, an instrumental section with chorus support slowly gains in tempo and then leads to a "hard rock" section that continues the plea "come back to me." May's "Wiener Blut" waltz solo arrives, representing the return

⁴² Carla Maffioletti, "Mein Herr Marquis sung by Carla Maffioletti," Youtube video, 5:11, posted February 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFfGcxphj2o>.

of the lover. This solo expands in texture and dynamic until the final section, which returns to the slower style as Mercury's vocal line asks the lover to stay forever. A triumphant waltz section reprises the first section and concludes the song. The piece includes a discernible story with multiple characters, with Mercury's voice representing one lover and May's guitar representing the other, while the chorus provides commentary. Thus "Millionaire Waltz" references Germanic operetta just as "Bohemian Rhapsody" referenced the English operetta of Gilbert and Sullivan.

As with operetta, Queen also took inspiration from musical theater, specifically *Cabaret* by John Kander and Fred Ebb. While Kendrick acknowledges that "Kander and Ebb's compositions are often classified by one of their later song titles, 'Razzle Dazzle,'" he also demonstrates that this outward showiness enhanced what was essentially a deeper philosophical meaning in their music.⁴³ As the line "life is a cabaret" from *Cabaret*'s final number implies, this musical's story blurred the boundaries between life on stage and life off stage.⁴⁴ The 1972 film version is set in Berlin and centers on a young American cabaret performer, Sally Bowles, and her romance with a British visitor, Brian Roberts. Soon after the two meet, Bowles tries to flirt with Roberts which leads him to imply that he is gay. Later they begin a romantic and sexual relationship, assuming that the failure of his heterosexual experiences in the past were due to the specific women involved. Eventually, after both separately conduct an affair with the same man (von Heune), Bowles finds out she is pregnant. Instead of going back to England to start a family with Roberts, as they

⁴³ Kendrick, 311-312.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 312.

originally planned, she gets an abortion and ends their relationship because she realizes she cannot give up on her dream to stay in show business and hopefully become a star.

The movie featured Liza Minnelli as Sally Bowles and was the catalyst by which Minnelli became a gay icon, following in the footsteps of her mother, Judy Garland. Mitchell Morris argues that the success of Minnelli's interpretation and the historically gay appreciation of that interpretation lies in the ways that Minnelli mimics, or to use Morris' terminology, performs Garland as Garland might have interpreted the role.⁴⁵ Morris links both Garland's and Minnelli's statuses as gay icons with attributes that echo the camp aesthetic: "a crucial aspect of such a role has always been artifice: the most enduring gay divas have always tended toward intensely mannered modes of self-presentation, duplicating the crucial faultlines between public and private that matter so much to their favored audiences."⁴⁶ Beyond Minnelli's "intensely mannered" performance style, the idea of self-conscious performance is inherent in the fictional characters themselves, specifically "the queerly desiring characters."⁴⁷ Bowles performs on and off stage, especially when engaged simultaneously in romantic affairs with Roberts and von Heune; to each she plays the role of innocent and fun-loving flirt. Roberts performs both as a jealous lover and as a delicate and seduceable object. As Morris suggests, they "participate in an endless play of masks and mirrors, and yet, paradoxically, their insubstantiality continually calls into question what is

⁴⁵ Mitchell Morris, "'Cabaret', America's Weimar, and Mythologies of the Gay Subject," *American Music* 22, No. 1 (Spring 2004): 151-152.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 150-151.

meant by any reality.”⁴⁸ Minnelli, through taking a campy Garland-esque approach to a story about the metaphor of life as theatre, boldly proclaims camp’s essential tenet of, as Sontag would say, “Being-as-Playing-a-Role.”⁴⁹

Differing from the stage play, most of the music in the film is diegetic, primarily occurring on the stage of the Kit Kat Club, where Bowles works. However, as Morris shows, although visually separated from the events of the plot, the movie’s cuts still allow the music to respond to and influence the audience’s feelings about elements of the story.⁵⁰ For example, Bowles’ performance of the song “Maybe This Time” on stage at the Kit Kat Club is interspersed with scenes from Bowles’ and Roberts’ newfound love, insinuating that the lyrics and mood of the song articulate Bowles’ feelings about that romance. “Maybe This Time” is a slow, jazz-influenced song with a shuffle beat. Drums and piano accompany Minnelli and a clarinet gradually contributes more and more as the texture builds. Through use of vibrato and audible breath, Minnelli’s vocal style particularly evokes camp and theatricality. She begins the piece by singing “maybe this time” with a breathy tone, gradually increasing the breathiness so that the following lyrics “I’ll be lucky” are almost pitch-less. She immediately contrasts that sound as she sings “maybe this time he’ll stay” in a fuller and more confident voice full of vibrato. This measured employment of audible breath gives the feeling that Minnelli is talking to herself, articulating her inner thoughts at the beginning of this new relationship. In this way, the music has direct relation to the story,

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Sontag, 280.

⁵⁰ Morris, 147.

and although technically just a performance in the Kit Kat Club, it still has theatrical meaning enhanced by Minnelli's performance.

Minnelli evokes Garland by using vibrato theatrically, for example in the phrase "Well, all the odds are, they're in my favor/Something's bound to begin."⁵¹ Minelli begins by singing "Well," with a straight tone that mimics speaking, and then continues the phrase with full vibrato. "They're in my favor" is sung straight toned as well until the final syllable. In the following phrase "something's bound to begin," the word "begin" is held out and gradually given vibrato, a typical feature of musical-theater style singing. For the final words "maybe this time I'll win" the accompaniment thins out and leaves Minnelli's strong and

⁵¹ Morris suggested that Minnelli's performance of "Maybe This Time" resembles Garland's performance of "The Man That Got Away" in *A Star is Born*. (Morris, 151.) Morris does not go into depth comparing the two performances, focusing mostly on the theatrical impact. Through comparing the musical elements of both, the listener can perceive that Minnelli and Garland use timing and vibrato in a similar way to create that theatrical impact. Garland does not use as much audible breath in her interpretation, however the passionate vibrato and the elastic use of time make the two similar. Garland exploits the blues influence in "The Man That Got Away" by delaying or anticipating the beats in order to establish an emotional push and pull. For example, in the line "for, you've been through the mill" Garland sings "you've been through" just slightly behind each beat, giving the listener an idea of how arduous the experience she is speaking of must be. Minnelli does the opposite with the line "It's gonna happen, happen sometime; maybe this time I'll win" (2:27): she places the words slightly before the beat, showing a feeling of anticipation and hope. Because they are genetically related, Minnelli and Garland have a similar sounding vibrato; however beyond this unavoidable relationship, the way they employ it has similar effects. In the section "Every trick of his you're on to/But, fools will be fools/and where's he gone to?" Garland uses vibrato very carefully. In "every trick of his" she uses no vibrato, but adds it for "you're on to." She sings aggressively straight toned for "but" and then immediately switches to a luscious, sobbing vibrato for "fools will be fools." "And where's he" switches back to the hard edge of straight tone. With "gone," Garland uses vibrato in a way typical of musical theater: she begins the held note with straight tone, and then builds the excitement by slowly adding vibrato. This quick shifting between vibrato and straight tone allows Garland to give each vocal color theatrical meaning, differentiating between the emotional import of different lyrics simply through her vibrato.

prominent vibrato hanging alone in the air. These elements contribute not only to a theatrical interpretation, but because of their exaggerated employment they become, as Morris noted, a kind of theatricality resulting from an “intensely mannered [mode] of self-presentation.”⁵²

Mercury admired the movie *Cabaret*, and particularly Minnelli’s interpretation. In a 1977 interview, Mercury acknowledged his debt to the film:

I like the cabaretish sort of thing. In fact, one of my early inspirations came from *Cabaret*. I absolutely adore Liza Minnelli, she’s a total wow. The way she delivers her songs- the sheer energy. The way the lights enhance every movement of the show. I think you can see similarities in the excitement and energy of a Queen show. It’s now Glamrock, you see; we’re in the showbusiness tradition.⁵³

Although Mercury never said more than this about the movie’s impact on his work, it is possible that the connection goes deeper than his reaction to the excitement of Minnelli’s performance. Certain aspects of Mercury’s personality and situation resonate with the characters of *Cabaret*. Like Sally Bowles, he was drawn to the stage and to stardom, even when commitment to performance became his whole life. Like Bowles, he was also a foreigner fascinated with the cultural aspects of his new home (she an American in Berlin, he a Parsi Zanzibarian in London). He might have also identified with the aspects of the film that touched on sexual freedom: not only Bowles’ and others’ sexually provocative musical performances in the cabaret, but also the character of Brian Roberts, a quiet yet passionate man whose sexual identity in the film shifts between gay and bisexual. As he implied, Mercury also saw a connection between *Cabaret* and glam rock; perhaps his main attraction

⁵² Morris, 152.

⁵³ Rush.

to the film was the way it used camp and self-conscious performance to ask questions about the truth of a person's identity, whether regarding sexuality, nationality, or even career goals.

Whatever Mercury's reasons for being drawn to the movie, the interest was not merely philosophical, or even visual, even though his athletic and sexualized antics on stage echo Bob Fosse's extroverted choreography. Musical elements of his composition and vocal style relate to *Cabaret* as well. For example, Mercury's song "My Melancholy Blues" provides a direct counterpart to "Maybe This Time." In a similar slow jazz style with a shuffle beat, this piece projects the same intimacy and passion of Minnelli's performance in *Cabaret*. The emotions conveyed in "Maybe This Time" and "My Melancholy Blues" are completely different, yet both Minnelli and Mercury use exaggerated shifts in vocal tone and style to give a theatrical "reading" of the lyrics. Like Minnelli, Mercury begins with a breathier quality to his voice, performing the first few lines in an improvisatory style. He employs a high, trembling falsetto for the lines "I don't want to talk about it. Want to forget about it," conveying the whiny nature of the lyrics, emphasized by the scoop up to the pitch on the word "about." The final word of the introduction, "brew," trails off into an audible sigh, evoking the ennui of the song in a campily unsubtle way.

Mercury also uses vibrato in a way that echoes Minnelli. For example, in the lyrics "So- Don't expect me/To behave perfectly/And wear that sunny smile" Mercury uses straight tone juxtaposed with vibrato to demonstrate the pouty nature of the lyrics. On "so" he uses straight tone to wail as the pitch slides upwards, and he adds just a shake or two of small vibrato right at the end of the note, and then continues the rest of the phrase with no vibrato until the longer note "me," which, in the musical theater style used by Minnelli, he begins

straight and then slowly adds vibrato. The entire rest of the excerpt is straight toned except for the word “that.” In this piece, Mercury tends to end musical phrases with a held note to which he slowly adds vibrato. However, this is not always the case. For example, the phrase “and let me take over with my melancholy blues” clearly ends a section and precedes a piano solo, providing the ideal spot for a braveau-filled musical theater-inspired vibrato. Instead, Mercury holds “blues” out using no vibrato the entire time. This detailed addition of vibrato in specific places contributes to the mannered delivery of the lyrics. Through the careful placement of audible air, vibrato, and pitch bending, Mercury crafted an interpretation that sounds both whiny and sexy, and both of these qualities are delivered in an over the top, exaggerated way. Evoking Minnelli, Mercury’s overly theatrical delivery of the lyrics results in the song’s camp aesthetic.

Drama

Contrasting with camp is the idea of sincerity— music that tells a story about actual experiences or feelings in a non-ironic way. Sincerity does not mean the art is any less theatrical, however. For example, the theatricality of Japanese Noh theater and ancient Greek tragedy displayed a serious and elevated, yet completely theatrical mode of storytelling. Martha Johnson describes Noh as “a highly subtle, sophisticated understanding of serious entertainment” while noting its “evocative, formal expression rather than realistic portrayal.” The action of Noh theater, and arguably other types of theater, represents a symbol of real life rather than emulating real life itself. This idea of symbolizing life applied

to ancient Greek tragedy, is supported by Johnson's description of physical movement in the Greek theater:

1. The performer uses his entire body to express himself, even in illustrations of restrained emotion. [...] 2. Gestures and movement are often exaggerated, broad, expansive, and sometimes contained and subdued. 3. All movements, vigorous or quiet, are executed with a powerful sense of visual form and precision.⁵⁴

Theatricality in this sense is not necessarily about exaggeration, although exaggeration may often be present, but rather it is about a premeditated precision and elegance that separates theatrical actions from the relatively careless actions of everyday life. Translating to music, any means by which a composer can craft compositions that elicit precise and deliberate (and sometimes exaggerated) expression of a specific emotion or storyline by the interpreting musician results in a theatrical piece of music.

Opera

While the music video accompanying Mercury's 1984 song "It's a Hard Life" may be camp, the music itself is less exaggerated and ostentatious. It opens with Mercury's passionate vocals quoting a melody from "Vesti la Giubba," an aria from Ruggero Leoncavallo's tragic opera *Pagliacci*. The title of the opera translates to "clowns" and the plot centers on events taking place within a performing troupe. The concluding tragedy of the piece occurs as the performers put on a play that disintegrates as a real-life vengeful husband, Canino, murders his adulterous wife and her lover on stage. A confused audience receives the final line of the opera, "The comedy is finished," which variously indicates the

⁵⁴ Martha Johnson, "Reflections of Inner Life: Masks and Masked Acting in Ancient Greek Tragedy and Japanese Noh Drama" *Modern Drama* 35, No. 1 (Spring 1992): 22.

end of the play within the opera, the end of the terrible events of that day, the end of two character's lives, and, to a different audience, the end of the opera. The aria "Vesti la Giubba" occurs at the end of the first act and articulates Canino's views on the boundary between life and theater. He is depressed and stressed about his wife's affair, and yet he must prepare to play a role and amuse the audience.

"Vesti la Giubba" features chromaticism from the beginning, usually to dramatic effect unlike the camp of music hall chromaticism. This type of chromaticism not only enhances the tragic and plaintive nature of the piece, but also facilitates quick shifts between dissonant and consonant chords or between major and minor chords, allowing a musical articulation of the mix of tragedy and laughter of which the lyrics speak. This compositional strategy encourages an interpretation that highlights this mixed emotional expression. A short recitative begins the piece, in a hesitant D minor (hesitant because it begins on a chord with just F and A before introducing the D in the next harmony). From mm. 3-5 a bass line rises from G to C providing a chromatic line beginning after a first whole step [G, A, B-flat, B-natural, C]. This rising chromatic line builds the tension and the excitement, but it also allows the harmony to shift from D minor to the brighter key of C major. (See Figure 7.)

The image shows a musical score for the aria 'Vesti la Giubba'. It features a vocal line (C) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'rio non so più quel che di - co e quel che fac - cio! Ep - pur è / ness, not knowing what I'm say - ing or what I'm do - ing! Yet I have'. The bass line in the piano accompaniment is chromatic, descending from A to G across measures 3-5.

Figure 7: Chromatic bass line in mm. 3-5 of “Vesti la Giubba.”

Score in public domain, accessed May 26, 2019 from the International Music Score Library Project.⁵⁵

Later, in the aria proper, entire chords often shift by half step. The piece is in E minor, and the first few bars simply explore that one harmony, decorating it with various instances of chromaticism, for example a D-sharp disrupting the tonic harmony in the first bar. In m. 5, the harmony begins to shift as the bass line descends chromatically from A to G. (See Figure 8.) M. 5 features the predominant harmony, presumably leading to the dominant. However, while the following harmony is a version of B, the G-sharp in the bass and the minor quality prevent it from functioning as the dominant of E minor. Instead, it moves chromatically to a G7 chord and a cadence on C major in measure 8. (See Figure 8.) Besides moving from a minor to a major mode, this chromatic motion also allows a diminished chord with

⁵⁵ Ruggero Leoncavallo, *Pagliacci* (New York: Schirmer, 1906).

questionable function to flow directly into a dominant seventh whose function is more easily ascertained.



Figure 8: The piano reduction of the accompaniment in bars 5-8 of “Vesti la Giubba.” Score in public domain, accessed May 26, 2019 from the International Music Score Library Project.⁵⁶

Tenors usually interpret the aria in a free, passionate way, using elements of the music as a guide for taking time. Luciano Pavarotti, one of Mercury’s favorite singers, sang the aria with a focus on vocal quality and projecting the emotion of the lyrics.⁵⁷ For example, in mm. 26-29, the aria’s emotional highpoint, Pavarotti stretches each note out, adding a *ritardando*, especially towards the end of m. 28. This decision leads to Pavarotti’s addition of a *fermata* to the first beat of m. 29, even though it is not notated in the score. He seems to know the audience will relish his full and powerful vibrato, and so holds it out for

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ John Merriman, “Pavarotti - Vesti La Giubba,” 3:58, posted June 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0PMq4XGtZ4>.

the sensuous pleasure of hearing it. At the end of the held note he slides down to the following pitch before re-articulating it with the next syllable and adding a small scoop up, which creates an almost sobbing effect. This kind of dramatic interpretation of the piece prioritizes emotion and vocal quality in order to give a passionate picture of the tragic character.

Pinpointing the most elevated moment in the aria, the introduction to “It’s a Hard Life” quotes the melody and the bass line from mm. 26-29 in “Vesti la Giubba.” While the tone quality of Mercury’s voice here is full and passionate, it does not have the same disciplined sound of an opera singer such as Pavarotti. However, through the manipulation of his vocal style, Mercury imitates the passion and fullness of opera while still retaining a “rock” sound. Mercury begins in a strong, full voice with vibrato, similar to Pavarotti; however it includes more noise and distortion, giving a harsher and more “pebbly” quality to the sound.⁵⁸ This distortion adds to the passion, giving it the emotional quality of opera even if the exact sound does not match that of an opera singer. This harshness is present for the lyrics “I don’t want my freedom, there’s no” and then on the word “reason” Mercury switches to falsetto with quick vibrato. In this context, the prominent vibrato brings an operatic style to mind, even though a tenor such as Pavarotti would not have sung in falsetto often, if at all. Although in falsetto, “reason” is still relatively loud and piercing, but a gradual decrescendo for the rest of the phrase “for living with a broken heart” allows Mercury to become quieter and to modify his vocal quality gradually so that he sings “heart”

⁵⁸ “Description and Sound of Distortion,” *CVT Research Site*, accessed March 26, 2019, <https://cvtresearch.com/effects/distortion/>.

quietly and with audible breath. In his interpretation of “Vesti la Giubba,” Pavarotti’s focus remained on transmitting the emotion, primarily through manipulating the music to showcase his vocal quality. Mercury also carefully chooses which vocal sound to use for each moment, using the tone quality of his voice to successfully convey the tragedy of the lyrics. Mercury emulates the drama and passion of opera, while accessing sounds used in popular styles such as rock.

The rest of “It’s a Hard Life” at first may not seem related to “Vesti la Giubba” or any other opera. However, there are certain elements that, like the introduction, evoke the drama of opera within a rock context.⁵⁹ “It’s a Hard Life” employs chromaticism to similar effect as the chromaticism in “Vesti la Giubba.” The lyrics of “It’s a Hard Life” describe the feelings of someone going through a breakup— although they are in pain, they decide not to give up on love: “Yes it's a hard life/In a world that's filled with sorrow/There are people searching for love in every way/It's a long hard fight/But I'll always live for tomorrow/I'll look back at myself and say I did it for love.” Thus, both songs deal with a mixture of negative and positive emotions, “Vesti la Giubba” mixing sorrow and laughter, and “It’s a Hard Life” mixing pain and hope. Mercury acknowledged this connection as a theme in many of his songs: “Most of the songs I write are all love ballads and things to do with sadness and torture and pain: at the same time it’s frivolous and tongue in cheek.”⁶⁰ The chromaticism in both supports this dichotomy. In the chorus of “It’s a Hard Life,” the first

⁵⁹ For example, Mercury gives the chorus melodic decoration when it returns, a common feature of the da capo aria style. In addition he includes a vocal melisma at 1:54.

⁶⁰ “XX-XX-1985 – Unknown.”

harmony is the tonic B-flat (“It’s a hard”), and the progression continues by going to D minor (“life”) then E-flat major (“to be true lovers”), B-flat major (“together”), E-flat major (“to love and live”), B-flat major (“forever in each other’s”), and finally ending on F major (“hearts”). (See Figure 9.) While not overtly chromatic, the one consistent movement in these chords is from the notes D to E-flat, which occurs after D minor in each transition until the F major harmony. Deacon emphasizes this chromatic motion by bringing out the bass’s motion from the D minor to the E-flat chord. The chromaticism here plays with the major/minor duality: after moving from D minor to E-flat, the next chord, B-flat, shares all but one note with D minor.⁶¹ (See Figure 9.) In this way the chromaticism facilitates the almost imperceptible substitution of minor and major chords.⁶²

⁶¹ In the second iteration of the chorus, Mercury embellishes the melody so that the final time the chord moves to B-flat he starts on G before moving to F, thus giving the chord a brief instability; while perhaps not perceivable as a G minor chord, it still takes away the stability of the B-flat major tonality for a brief moment.

⁶² After the arrival on F, the chords change on the beat, bringing the song from the dominant to the tonic through the bass line F, G, A-flat, A-natural, B-flat. This bass line provides an exact transposition of the bass line in mm. 3-5 of the recitative introducing “Vesti la Giubba.” Rather than showing a direct inspiration, this probably just indicates the chromatic nature of both pieces.



Figure 9: Chords from the chorus of “It’s A Hard Life.” Chords are shown in a voicing that demonstrates the chromatic motion between D and E-flat. The chromatic bass line is given in the last two measures shown here.

Transcription by author.

The instrumental interlude evokes opera through the use of harmony as well as its symphonic sound. At the interlude’s beginning, the harmony moves from A-flat to G, which then serves as the dominant of C minor. Once again, a chromatic slide leads from major to minor. From here the bass line suggests the lament bass of early Venetian opera.⁶³ While Mercury would not have been intentionally referencing the lament bass, and the sonic effect is not immediately obvious, it does show how Mercury, in using a broadly “operatic” and “classical” style as his inspiration, inadvertently found devices similar to those of classical composers in evoking dramatic tragedy. The bass moves down by step, progressing from C to G. Although it does not end on G major (the dominant of C minor), it does provide a C-minor chord in second inversion, suggesting the beginnings of a cadence that does not

⁶³ Ellen Rosand, “The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem of Lament,” *The Musical Quarterly* 65, No. 3 (July 1979): 346-359.

materialize. (See Figure 10.) The rest of the interlude features downward motion by step in the bass, each time proceeding to a third below. (See Figure 10.) This downward motion is



Figure 10: Descending bass line during the interlude of “It’s A Hard Life.”

Transcription by author.

complimented by melodic motion that often follows a downward line. In addition, the instrumentation during the interlude is particularly thick and symphonic, evoking the grandeur of opera. However, it begins rather thinly with piano and sparse drums as the piano plays a short motive. The guitar quietly joins as May plays in unison with the piano for what sounds like it will be a second iteration of that motive a step higher (Deacon’s bass gradually joins as well). Instead the motive is transformed and stretched out: this motivic manipulation is a traditionally classical element rather than one common to rock music.⁶⁴ As the interlude continues, May’s guitar part expands into a typical example of what Jennifer Anne De Boer has described as a “guitar orchestration.”⁶⁵ May produces three chords that sound almost like a choir in their layered fullness, while another guitar track provides contrapuntal

⁶⁴ Jennifer Anne De Boer has noted that May’s guitar solos often include this type of motivic development atypical of rock but suggestive of classical procedures. (De Boer, 130-131.)

⁶⁵ De Boer, 128-129.

accompaniment. This contrapuntal and motivic texture continues and builds until the climax of the interlude adds actual vocals from the band, mixed so effectively with the choral guitar that the resulting effect simply makes the guitar sound gradually more and more like a choir. After this climax, the solo lessens in texture to allow for May's imitation of a solo vocalist. He employs a clearer tone with less distortion that places more emphasis on the guitar's vibrato and subtle pitch bends. These effects suggest the warmth, clear vibrato, and expressive liberties often taken by an opera singer. Just as Pavarotti decided to slide down to a following pitch before re-articulating it as notated, May also slides up to his highest pitches in order to emphasize their elevated emotional quality. The solo ends with a melisma evoking the virtuosic lines of many different operatic styles, from baroque to Bellini's *bel canto*.

"It's a Hard Life" differs from a song like "Bohemian Rhapsody" in that it does not invite a camp interpretation. Both the music and the lyrics carry nothing that could suggest parody or artifice; even the quotation of "Vesti la Giubba" sounds sincere in Mercury's perfectly controlled and yet profoundly emotive vocals. Beyond the literal quotation of the opera serving an aesthetic and sonic function, the knowledgeable listener can also interpret the quotation in a philosophical way. Canino's story may have resonated with Mercury's experience as a performer: whatever personal troubles he may have faced, he still had to get up in front of the world and entertain them night after night. This connection is amplified by including in "It's a Hard Life" a musical reference to "Bohemian Rhapsody," arguably Queen's biggest hit, and also a song that the band promoted as being "operatic." The accompanimental figure at 1:24 in "It's a Hard Life"— which repeats for each verse—

resembles the accompanimental figure at 0:53 in “Bohemian Rhapsody.” Queen clearly linked “It’s a Hard Life” with their other “operatic” piece, referencing the song that propelled them to world fame while contemplating the resulting career with the mindset of a tortured performer such as Canino. These kind of interpretations suggest that Mercury and Queen were expressing something true about themselves, a fact that stands in direct contrast with a song like “Seaside Rendezvous,” which appears more campy and flippant even though both were founded on a base of theatricality.

Film Music

Queen also used an operatic, or at least more classically influenced style, in other works that have direct influence from film music. Stephen Drew analyzes Queen’s contributions to film music in their work on the soundtracks for *Flash Gordon* and *Highlander*, the latter a collaboration with Michal Kamen. While Drew pinpoints Queen’s natural theatricality as ideal for use in film, he also notes that the music Queen produced for these two movies departs from the classical conventions of a composer such as John Williams.⁶⁶ However, while perhaps not as overtly based in classical music as Williams’ scores, Queen in *Highlander* blended a rock aesthetic with a classical aesthetic to create dramatic music inspired by the film, but used in their independent album as standalone works. For example, May wrote “Who Wants to Live Forever,” for *Highlander* and it also

⁶⁶ Drew, 69-76.

appeared on Queen’s 1986 album *A Kind of Magic*.⁶⁷ Most of the music for the film was written separately, Queen contributing six new songs and Kamen working on underscoring, but “Who Wants to Live Forever” was essentially a collaboration between May and Kamen.⁶⁸ Kamen was a classically trained composer who often wrote for film and collaborated regularly with popular and rock musicians including Pink Floyd and Eric Clapton. Perhaps because of Kamen’s input, “Who Wants to Live Forever” has melodic similarities to some of the other music in the movie, including Kamen’s main theme. Kamen’s *Highlander* main theme begins in D minor with a melody that steps down from F to E (with a short trill on E), then decorates the following D by jumping down to C then A before reaching the D. (See Figure 11.) The C as natural instead of sharp gives it a modal



Figure 11: The melody at the beginning of *Highlander*’s main theme.

Transcription by author.

⁶⁷ The other songs from *A Kind of Magic* written for *Highlander* were “A Kind of Magic” (Taylor), “One Year of Love” (Deacon), “Gimmie The Prize” (May), “Don’t Lose Your Head” (Taylor), and “Princes of the Universe” (Mercury).

⁶⁸ Drew, 66-67.

quality. This modality evokes the foreignness, both in time and place, of the main character MacLeod who is a Scottish warrior from the sixteenth century. In general the piece harmonically tends to oscillate between D minor and B-flat major, which have two notes in common and whose tonics are a third apart. The instrumentation begins with strings and a chorus providing a rich and slow moving harmonic backing with a piano that briefly comments, adding single notes and small arpeggios here and there for color. A synthesizer emulating the reed stop on an organ plays the opening melody, cutting through with a piercing quality. This sonic landscape perhaps evokes MacLeod's lone figure on the Scottish Highlands. As the music continues, the strings and piano, joined by guitar, continue to provide increasingly sweeping harmonic support for a melody that is taken over by brass and strings, eventually decorated by woodwind arpeggiations. Overall the music's effect is coloristic rather than overly thematic, although Kamen uses the main melody's motivic content throughout.

“Who Wants to Live Forever” has a similar orchestration, allowing the movie to retain a continuous sound throughout and showing Kamen's influence in the composition. It begins with synth that sounds like a mellow organ stop playing B, E, F-sharp, and G, then repeating the pattern an octave higher except replacing the B with C. These notes create a cluster chord that evokes E minor, with the C adding a coloristic disruption, before moving to a “pure” E-minor chord, without the C and F-sharp. This idea of moving the distance of a third by step (for example E, F-sharp, G) remains a central melodic element of the song, as does the harmonic implications of third-related chords, reminiscent of Kamen's main theme. In addition, the soft organ-like sound and the accumulation of pitches to create a cluster

chord begin the piece with the same cinematic mix of subtlety and emotion of Kamen's score.

Immediately following this short introduction, May sings the first verse as strings almost imperceptibly join and gradually grow in prominence. May often sang the songs he wrote, however for this one, he only sings solo for the first verse and chorus. Mercury takes over for the following verses and choruses. May's voice is soft and sweet sounding in timbre, similar to the string and synth sounds and quiet compared to Mercury. When Mercury enters, he mimics May's timbre, yet his characteristic vibrato and more piercing sound quickly emerge. This succession of May, Mercury imitating May, and then Mercury works to gradually elevate the texture and the passion, in tandem with the strings becoming more active and the addition of low percussion. Following Mercury's first iteration of the chorus, the strings take over and repeat the beginning of the chorus, adding a scalar run up to the first note in a climactic sweeping way reminiscent of Kamen's main theme. Mercury then joins at the emotional climax, singing "Who dares to love forever" in an operatic timbre. The vibrato is present yet not overwhelming and there is little distortion in his voice until the word "forever," which he sings forcefully and passionately, similar to the timbre used in the introduction to "It's a Hard Life." He pushes the upbeats so they come as late as possible, heightening the tension and the emotion. The orchestra at this point is almost overtaking him, until they drop out almost completely while Mercury sings "Oh, when love must die" using the melisma on "oh" to transfer from a more operatic sound completely to a rock style, with grit and distortion and aggressive pitch bending, eliding the "oh" and sliding up to "when" with an almost blues sound.

After this climactic moment, in the film the music becomes underscoring to accompany Heather's death. In the album, May's guitar solo replaces Heather's death: as in "The Millionaire Waltz," May takes on a human voice with his guitar, perhaps standing in for the final words between the lovers in the movie. May quotes from Kamen's *Highlander* main theme at the beginning of his solo and uses it as a motive from which to develop the rest of his solo. As in "It's a Hard Life," May demonstrates the more classical way he tends to deal with motives by developing them rather than repeating them. His solo gradually adds distortion and he ends with a power chord, transitioning from a classical style to a typical rock sound. The official music video (created separately from *Highlander*) supports this interpretation: May plays his solo surrounded by the orchestra and begins by looking at a score and even turning the page. As the distortion grows, and the style grows freer, he gradually stands up, no longer needing the printed music. He plays the ending power chord with the windmill motion made famous by rocker Pete Townshend of The Who. Thus the video visually re-enforces the aural transition from opera to rock.

Overall, "Who Wants to Live Forever" is structured so a larger climax occurs over the course of the verses and choruses. Just as Mercury and May mix an operatic/classical style with a rock style in their timbres and melodic improvisation, the song takes an ordinary verse-chorus structure and situates it within an overall dramatic structure.⁶⁹ The song gradually builds over the first two verses and choruses until it reaches its main climax

⁶⁹ The music video for the song also mixes elements of classical and more popular styles. Mercury wears a tuxedo, Deacon plays an upright bass, Taylor does not have a drum set, and a boy choir plus full orchestra accompany them. However, Deacon's bass is glossy and white, and his outfit makes him look more fit for a jazz club, Taylor is wearing a jean jacket, and the stage looks like it is from a Marilyn Monroe film about showbiz.

halfway through, then May's solo builds to the end of the piece, which gradually fades out. While watching the movie, the textural build-up to the first climax occurs in tandem with a montage of bittersweet remembrances of love that culminates in Heather's death in McLeod's arms. However, the band creates the overall structure better and more carefully in the version released on *A Kind of Magic*. In the film version, Mercury sings the first verse instead of May, and although there is a slight build-up, his vocals are more consistently passionate and gritty throughout than in the album version. Additionally, May's guitar solo does not appear in the movie. Therefore the truly dramatic build up and tension between operatic and rock sounds occurs only on the album, thereby making that version arguably more dramatic than the music intended to accompany the film. Although not as "plot-driven" as songs like "Bohemian Rhapsody" or "The Millionaire Waltz," "Who Wants to Live Forever" has a decidedly dramatic structure. This structure probably arose from the movie's inspiration, but the overall drama in the music was in fact better realized on Queen's technically unaffiliated album.

Queen's Masks

As implied by the examples in this chapter, Queen's theatricality is based in music, but it often relates to elements of their identity. In contrast with someone like David Bowie, who created Ziggy Stardust and the Thin White Duke among other characters, Queen never invented specific characters to become on stage, instead still coming across as Mercury, May, Taylor, and Deacon. However, by not inventing specific characters to play, Queen allowed the musical aspect of their theatricality to be even more apparent. Through using similar

musical devices, Queen's music takes on the theatricality of the genres from which they borrowed. In addition, most of the genres discussed (music hall, operetta, musical theater, and opera) tend to incorporate the idea of disguise into the performance or the plot. In music hall, singers acted as a specific comic character. Operettas and operas abound with plots that include masked balls and mistaken identities (*Die Fledermaus*, *Marriage of Figaro*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, etc.) Musical theater often features stories about changed identity, people who are themselves performers, and/or mysterious masked figures. (*Cabaret*, *Chicago*, *Wizard of Oz*, *My Fair Lady*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *A Chorus Line*, etc.) Besides the rich musical inspirations in these genres, perhaps Queen was also attracted to the connotations of ever-shifting identity that these stories evoked.

The types of theatricality that Queen used also boast elements in common with Japanese Noh theater. Whether or not this type of theater directly inspired Queen, it provides a helpful lens through which to view Queen's theatricality. In Noh theater, masks are not used in order to conceal, and they do not hinder expression, but rather they are considered revelatory and supremely expressive aids.⁷⁰ The Japanese word for mask, *omote*, is simply an older term meaning "face" and in the act of putting on the mask, the actor "becomes one with the mask."⁷¹ As Johnson describes, the Noh mask "allows the performer to conjure the greatest range of emotions through the *omote* by becoming an evocative, nonspecific instrument for the spectator's imagination."⁷² Queen's theatricality served the same function.

⁷⁰ Johnson, 25.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

Instead of composing in only one style and becoming synonymous with that style, they were able to access many different styles of music and many different subject matters, essentially “putting on” a new mask with each different musical style. As W. Anthony Sheppard described in his book *Revealing Masks*, masks function “simultaneously as tools for disguise and as markers of identity.”⁷³ The “masks” Queen used resonated with a wide variety of people: as a testament to this, Queen’s music still echoes in areas as different from one another as gay pride parades and sports stadiums.

⁷³ W. Anthony Sheppard, *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 25.

CHAPTER 3

PERFORMING GENDER AND SEXUALITY

The music video for Queen's 1989 "The Miracle" opens with children dressed as the various members of the band lip synching to the song.¹ (For a list of songs by Queen see the Appendix.) The child version of Mercury is wearing a wig with long hair and Mercury's signature low-cut harlequin body-suit of his early Queen years. As the song progresses boy-Mercury recapitulates most of Mercury's famous looks: all leather, muir cap, and moustache; white tank top, jeans, and armband; and yellow jacket over a Warhol-esque t-shirt. (See Figure 12.) In the video, the child switches constantly among these four outfits; although at the beginning they are presented in chronological order, once they are all introduced they return at random times. This video displays Mercury's different fashion choices throughout his career; however it also stands as a metaphor for Queen's overall ability to participate in different musical genres both audibly and visually. Through using the associations of various genres, Queen aligned themselves with several often conflicting groups, specifically in terms of gender and sexuality.

¹ Queen Official, "Queen - The Miracle (Official Video)," Youtube video, 5:22, posted September 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DaY8-Mui0I>.



Figure 12: The various outfits of the child version of Mercury in the official music video for “The Miracle.”

Screenshot from the YouTube video “Queen – The Miracle (Official Video)” posted by Queen Official.²

Relating musical style and methods of composition to truths about a composer’s gender and sexuality is a nebulous and difficult claim. While specific cadences, textures, or even vocal styles cannot by themselves provide indicators of a musician’s identity, since the associations of genre are often linked to cultural groups, a musician’s use of a specific genre leads to a dialogue about their inclusion (or not) in those groups. For example, female composers before the twentieth century and particularly in the mid-nineteenth century were

² Ibid.

expected to write primarily for the piano and/or the voice; essentially, they were supposed to remain within genres of the home. Those who wrote symphonies, such as Amy Beach, invariably received criticism with gendered language. For example, in reviewing Beach's Symphony in E Minor, Op. 32, George Chadwick said it contained an "expression of true womanliness," and yet at the same time, for her success in the symphonic genre he names her "one of the boys."³

Fashion choices and physical comportment contribute to readings of a person's gender as masculine, feminine, or a mixture, and of a person's sexuality as heterosexual or queer in some way. Judith Butler notes that while attributes with gendered connotations do not make up a person's "gender" (she describes gender as something someone "does" rather than what they "are"), in certain readings these attributes can be used to give "the appearance of an abiding substance or gendered self."⁴ Music is another long-standing cultural marker of gender and other aspects of identity. Certain groups of people tend to prefer certain types of music, and often if a person exhibits a connection with a genre of music, they seek inclusion in that group. This is true of audience members as well as the musicians themselves. Usually while creating songs within a certain genre of music, the musician will also align with others who perform or listen to that genre in terms of fashion and comportment. P. David Marshall describes this broadly in his book about the concept of

³ William Armstrong, "Amy Beach: New Gems in the Old Classics," *Etude Magazine*, February 1904, accessed online, etudemagazine.com, March 31, 2019, <http://etudemagazine.com/etude/1904/02/amy-beach---new-gems-in-the-old-classics.html>; Adrienne Fried Block, *Amy Beach Passionate Victorian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 103.

⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 33-34.

celebrity, arguing that “celebrity is composed of a system of signs that includes chains of signification.”⁵ Examples of these signs include reggae musicians with dreadlocks, country artists with cowboy hats, and Austrian folk musicians with lederhosen and dirndls. Audience members recognize these signs and these fashion choices, among other signs, become conflated with a certain style of music. So in this broader, cultural sense, genre is not only the sonic arrangement of a specific type of music, but the idea of genre also incorporates the visual images and actions of the musicians.

Similarly, Queen’s use of stylistic influences from a variety of genres had the effect not only of giving their music theatrical foundations, but also of allowing them to present different versions of their gender and sexuality. In addition, Queen separated their presentation of gender and sexuality so that one did not necessarily equal the other. As they participated in the genre of glam rock, their look was coded more feminine and yet understood as more “straight.” As Mercury debuted his new look of the 1980s, aligning himself with the ultra-masculine “castro clone” fashion worn by gay men, his presentation became simultaneously more masculine-coded and more “gay.” Conversely, at the beginning of the 1980s, May attempted to retain a more glam look through the use of more feminine-coded clothing particularly because he was not interested in the gay aesthetic that Mercury had begun exhibiting. In addition, throughout Queen’s career, each band member at times presented as typical heterosexual, masculine rock stars.

This chapter opens with a look at Queen’s participation in the genre of glam rock. Glam’s exaggerated theatricalization of femininity and androgyny allowed musicians to

⁵ P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 58.

present a purposefully constructed performance of gender and sexuality on stage. While many glam rockers, including Mercury, hinted that they might be bi- or homosexual, there was an underlying understanding that these men identified as straight in their personal lives. Next the chapter addresses the disco and funk influence on Queen's 1982 album *Hot Space*. Mercury and Deacon particularly spearheaded this development, with May and Taylor clinging to a more rock-centered sound. Mercury had been visiting gay clubs and experimenting with the castro-clone look, ultimately using disco to explore the music of gay culture. The final section examines Queen's career-long association with various rock forms including hard rock, stadium rock, and heavy metal. The ideas of power and struggle through adversary arise often in Queen's music and align them with traditional rock. Thus, many of their songs have been accepted as standards within the traditionally masculine genre of rock. Through each of these genres, Queen performed both on and off stage, leading their audience to believe certain things about their identity based on the genres in which they performed. This theatricalization of identity is made most self-evident in their use of glam rock, a genre which arguably influenced all of Queen's music.

Glam Rock

Philip Auslander situates the beginning of glam rock in the late 1960s and early 1970s as an androgynous, ironic, and extravagant reaction against the more seriously virtuosic and music-focused genre of psychedelic rock.⁶ He emphasizes that glam was primarily a visual movement, defined by the manner of performance rather than the content of the music—

⁶ Auslander, 40-41.

especially since much glam rock varies in musical style.⁷ Glam generally took on a lighthearted air inherent in the over-exaggerated campiness of its performance, yet because of its supposed superficiality, it was able simultaneously to ask serious questions about the construction of identity.⁸ The purposeful inauthenticity of the performance led to questions about what in life is not performance, including gender and sexuality. Scholar Judith Butler later makes this claim philosophically in her 1990 book *Gender Trouble*: “gender proves to be performative [...] gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed.”⁹ A typical popular example of a glam rock band is The Sweet, demonstrated in their performance on “Top of the Pops” in 1972.¹⁰ Vocalist Brian Connolly wore yellow pants, a yellow shirt with a large collar, and a tight striped sweater; bassist Steve Priest wore a sparkly silver, low-cut shirt with flared sleeves, short shorts, and stockings; guitarist Andy Scott wore a gold jacket with huge lapels and bows tying his hair into loose pigtails. (See Figure 13.) All three sported long hairstyles, makeup, and high-heeled boots of various ostentatious colors.

⁷ Ibid., 39-40.

⁸ Ibid., 61.

⁹ Butler, 34.

¹⁰ Official Sweet Channel, “Sweet - Little Willy - Top Of The Pops/Disco 1972 (OFFICIAL),” Youtube video, 3:04, posted November 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NM6I-pmVORA>.



Figure 13: The Sweet on “Top of the Pops” in 1972.

Screenshot from the YouTube video “Sweet - Little Willy - Top Of The Pops/Disco 1972 (OFFICIAL)” posted by Official Sweet Channel.¹¹

David Bowie took the constructed nature of the glam image to its extreme by creating various personas that he then embodied on stage. In his book *Performing Glam Rock*, Auslander adapts Butler’s theory of gender performance to apply to sexual identity and uses it to analyze David Bowie’s Ziggy Stardust character, who was a bisexual and androgynous alien.¹² The image that Bowie presented when acting as Stardust included heavy makeup and a gold circle painted on his forehead, platform red boots, and a tight striped jumpsuit with a low-cut V-neck exposing much of his chest. Bowie created and performed as Stardust in the

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Auslander, 135.

early 1970s, and although Bowie did identify as bisexual in his private life, the character of Ziggy Stardust exhibited a constructed performance of bisexuality rather than expressing Bowie's "true" sexuality.¹³ Auslander also points out that when Ziggy Stardust performed songs with overtly heterosexual lyrics such as "Hang Onto Yourself" in platform heels and makeup it suggested that the heterosexuality of rock is also performative.¹⁴

Simon Reynolds adds to Auslander's conception of glam by focusing on the ways glam artists purposefully held themselves up as divas and rockstars by using words such as "throne," "royalty," and "aristocracy" (ironically, all without referring to Queen).¹⁵ Andrew Branch also suggests that glam rockers' performance of gender and sexuality is linked to the performance of class. By interviewing self-proclaimed fans of glam rock, Branch discerns that many of the male fans were from a working class background but aspired towards the middle class.¹⁶ For these fans, glam represented the higher-class goal they were working towards through its focus on intellect rather than brute strength.¹⁷ Branch discusses these men's anxieties about fitting in and feeling inadequate once they were in those middle class

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 136-8.

¹⁵ Simon Reynolds, "London Glam City: Poseurs, Dreamers, Heroes, and Monsters, from the Bromley Contingent and Blitz to the Batcave and Leigh Bowery," in *Totally Wired: Post-Punk Interviews and Overviews*, ed. Simon Reynolds (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 398.

¹⁶ Andrew Branch, "All the Young Dudes: Educational Capital, Masculinity, and the Uses of Popular Music," *Popular Music* 31, No. 1 (January 2012): 42.

¹⁷ Ibid., 34.

social situations.¹⁸ While he does not link this aspect directly with glam, perhaps part of their attraction to this music lay in the fact that the self-conscious performativity of glam articulated the feelings of “pretending” and inauthenticity they felt in middle class spaces. Auslander ultimately concludes that, especially with glam, “an audience actively *constructs* the performer’s identity in ways that speak to what it wants and needs that performer to be.”¹⁹ Being able to see the process of the performer’s own construction of a performance persona allows audiences more flexibility in their interpretation of the performance.

Building on the “natural” conclusions audiences might make based on their image, glam rockers liked to imply, or even overtly state to the press that they were homosexual or bisexual. For example, in 1972 David Bowie claimed “I’m gay. . . and always have been,” even though the way Bowie delivered that statement leaves the author of the interview somewhat unconvinced: “is he or isn’t he?”²⁰ The lead singer of a later band in the glam rock tradition, Suede’s Brett Anderson said he was “a bisexual who’s never had a homosexual experience.”²¹ In fact, the prominent musicians performing in the 1970s glam rock style in Britain were all men who, in their personal lives, identified as heterosexual: T. Rex, Slade, Mott the Hoople, Roxy Music, Gary Glitter, Wizzard, and Sweet. This duality extended to American musicians in the glam rock style such as Alice Cooper and the

¹⁸ Ibid., 37-8.

¹⁹ Auslander, 233.

²⁰ Qtd. in Ibid., 135.

²¹ Qtd. in *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Queer Culture*, ed. David A. Gerstner (London: Routledge, 2006), 543.

members of KISS. As Branch showed, many perceived glam's gay trappings as artificial. One interviewee noted, highlighting the heterosexuality both of glam artists and fans, "I mean, they [glam stars] looked great but none of us were gay or anything . . . they [Bolan and Bowie] had loads of girlfriends so I personally think the whole gay thing was just a marketing scam."²² Thomas Geyrhalter bemoans the "constant disappointment to be experienced from a gay perspective, as these so called radicals 'come out' as normal heterosexuals, revealing that their act, that promised more, was just an act, therefore commodifying the flirt with the sexually diverse."²³ In a way, the glam rock musicians separated gender performance from performance of a sexual identity. They generally presented as feminine or androgynous onstage but this expression was separate from their sexuality which was usually left questionable to audiences but expressed in their personal sexual relationships as heterosexual.

Mirroring the state of glam in general, Queen's music resists easy stylistic categorization, while their image and performance in the 1970s fits into the visual description of glam. In an interview with Caroline Coon, Mercury drops a few lines that resonate with Auslander's and Branch's description of glam: "[My background] wasn't as affluent as people think. It was middle-class. But I suppose I gave the appearance of being affluent. I love that. I still do. It's all part of how you feel and how you project yourself." Later in the interview he added,

²² Branch, 33.

²³ Geyrhalter, 223.

I play on the bisexual thing because it's something else, it's fun. But I don't put on the show because I feel I have to and the last thing I want to do is give people an idea of exactly who I am. I want people to work out their own interpretation of me and my image. I don't want to build a frame around myself and say, 'This is what I am' or 'This is all I am.'²⁴

In these quotes, Mercury reveals his alignment with the glam image in that he depicts both his class and sexuality as performances. In this way, his performance of glam rock on stage extended to his “performance” off stage in the way he represented himself to the public in interviews.



Figure 14: May’s silver necklace and flared sleeves in the official video for “Liar.” Screenshot from the YouTube video “Queen – Liar (Official Video)” posted by Queen Official.²⁵

²⁴ Caroline Coon, “Freddie Mercury: Queen Bee,” *Melody Maker*, December 1974, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 30, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/12-21-1974-melody-maker/>.

²⁵ Queen Official, “Queen - Liar (Official Video),” Youtube video, 6:34, posted September 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oU7rqB9E_0M.

In the official video for “Liar” from Queen’s eponymous first album (1973), Mercury wears a fitted black shirt with studded rhinestones, a striking black necklace, and a silver slave bracelet on one hand and a white leather glove on the other; May wears a huge dazzling silver necklace and a shirt with flared sleeves (See Figure 14.); Taylor wears a low cut and fitted sparkling black crop-top; and Deacon, who is quoted as saying “As for my taste in clothes, I think it’s pretty ordinary,” is wearing a jacket with a black and white striped bow attached to the lapel, a V-neck shirt with silver designs around the neckline, shiny leather pants, plus a bow-tie around his otherwise bare neck.²⁶ A 1973 article articulates the glam perception of Queen at that time:

Freddie Mercury is liquid heaviness. His friend Brian is an absolute dear. They're a pair of Queens. But let me explain. Freddie and Brian have an amazing band. With two of their friends Roger and Deacon they're busily putting glam-rock on a new level by simply adding guts. To look at, the boys are divine - especially young Freddie who looks every inch a star. But a word of warning, don't try anything on with any of these Queens: They are hard and tough and their music is expressed in a very masculine manner. Their stage act is busy and they flash about in two colours - black and white. Not outstandingly gay, I think you'll agree.²⁷

This quote singles Mercury out for being particularly spectacular, but it does not let that preclude the assumption that May, Taylor, and Deacon were also “queens,” meaning that they also presented a feminized image. This statement from 1973 contrasts directly with Sheila Whiteley’s 2007 analysis of Mercury, in which, completely disregarding the glam

²⁶ “The Four Kings of Queen,” *Music Star*, June 1974, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 13, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/06-15-1974-music-star/>; Queen Official, “Queen - Liar (Official Video).”

²⁷ “Standing Up For Queen,” *Melody Maker*, July 1973, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 13, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/07-28-1973-melody-maker/>.

rock influence and the early feminized appearance of the other members of the band, she analyzes “Killer Queen” as “an affirmation of gay aesthetics” and “Bohemian Rhapsody” as a veiled confession of Mercury’s homosexuality.²⁸ While later analyses such as these may link Mercury’s early feminized image to his sexual relationships with men, contemporary analyses such as the 1973 article attribute this image to his participation in the genre of glam rock and thus include his bandmates in discussing the feminized image.

Perhaps due to a homophobic culture that assumed all rock stars, glam or otherwise, were, or at least should be, heterosexual, the 1973 article labels the band members “queens,” yet insists that the band’s stage act was “not outstandingly gay.”²⁹ This observation pinpoints a central element of glam rock: it tended to separate gender expression from sexuality. For Queen, the performance of onstage femininity but offstage heterosexuality was amplified by the fact that although they may have worn makeup and V-neck crop tops, their performances were full of masculine-coded movements and music. For example, in the “Liar” video, Mercury tends to keep his legs in a wide stance, and his movements are somewhat abrupt and violent. The music at times emulates Black Sabbath’s heavy metal, a genre associated with masculinity. The interpretation of Queen and Mercury as glam but “not gay” continued throughout the 1970s. In a 1977 interview with Queen, Fred Hauptfuhrer describes Mercury’s prior ambivalence on the subject of sexuality before revealing the newfound “truth”:

²⁸ Sheila Whiteley, “Which Freddie? Constructions of Masculinity in Freddie Mercury and Justin Hawkins,” in *Oh Boy! Making Masculinity in Popular Music* ed. Freya Jarman-Ivens (New York: Routledge, 2007), 23-25.

²⁹ “Standing Up For Queen.”

Mercury has himself, at 31, emerged from the closet. The bloke, it turns out, is a mere heterosexual. . . This month, as the group launched an SRO, 22-city tour of the U.S., Freddie acknowledged there was a bird in hand. She is Mary Austin, 26, a former shop girl turned Mercury's bookkeeper/major domo and quiet live-in lovely for seven years. Mary admits to being "a bit puzzled" by her relationship with a simulated bisexual, but apologizes for him: "He's mentally all over the place."³⁰

Mercury's revelations in this interview display his desire to fit in with the glam rock crowd by "simulating" bisexuality— or at least performing a feminized version of his gender on stage— while simultaneously confirming and highlighting (and to a certain extent, fabricating) his off-stage heterosexual relationships. The fact that he was at that point engaging in sexual relationships with men was kept from many people in Mercury's life, including the press, thereby protecting him from the rampant homophobia of the time (homophobia that caused some American radio stations to burn Elton John's records after he came out in a 1976 interview) while also allowing him to participate in the genre of glam rock.³¹

Although Whiteley analyzed Queen's 1974 performance of "Killer Queen" on Top of the Pops as an expression of Mercury's homosexuality, it in fact presents an example of how Queen participated in the genre of glam rock through actively constructing gender expression via a specific song. In the video, Mercury wears a fluffy fur coat cinched at the waist, black

³⁰ Fred Hauptfuhrer, "The Mercury That's Rising in Rock is Freddie the Satiny Seductor of 'Queen,'" *People Magazine*, December 1977, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 13, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/12-05-1977-people-magazine/>.

³¹ Cliff Jahr, "Elton John, Lonely at the Top: Rolling Stone's 1976 Cover Story," *Rolling Stone*, 1976, accessed April 14, 2019, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/elton-john-lonely-at-the-top-rolling-stones-1976-cover-story-238734/>; At this point, Austin knew of Mercury's homosexual affairs, and had agreed to continue accompanying him in public to keep the press at bay.

fingernail polish on his left hand, eyeliner, and many rings and bracelets. All band members have long hair and makeup, however the other three wear somewhat more conventionally masculine outfits, May and Deacon with jackets and Taylor with a button-up shirt and a black tie. This fashion choice is a theatricalization of the song's subject matter: Mercury here is acting as the, female, "Killer Queen," while the others are her male cohorts. These roles are emphasized by each musician's movements— Mercury is extroverted and feminine, wagging or beckoning at the camera with one finger, running his fingers flirtatiously up Deacon's bass, and seductively caressing the microphone. The others' movements are more conservative; they never look up from their respective instruments and offer little extraneous motion, which, in conjunction with their more traditionally masculine clothing, offers a more serious and masculine-coded performance. Mercury, as the lead singer and deliverer of lyrics, performs the female persona, eschewing the masculine stance of "Liar," while the others highlight his performance as the Killer Queen by performing as her masculine foils: not only do they highlight her femininity as a character, but they also highlight the performative nature of Mercury's femininity (as well as the performative nature of their own masculinity).

This performance of "Killer Queen" embodies a central tenet of the glam style, aligning Queen with Auslander's statement that "glam rockers specifically foregrounded the constructedness of their effeminate or androgynous performing personae."³² In addition, just as Auslander notes that Bowie's glam suggested that "rock heterosexuality" was just as constructed as the queer sexualities he enacted, this performance of "Killer Queen" argues a

³² Auslander, 61.

similar point for gender rather than sexuality, allowing both femininity and masculinity to appear constructed.³³ Taken with other early videos such as the official video for “Liar,” the Top of the Pops performance of “Killer Queen” helps display Queen’s participation in the genre of glam rock.

Even after Queen’s wholehearted participation in glam rock died out by the end of the 1970s, elements of it resonated in some of their later songs. The music video for Deacon’s 1984 song “I Want to Break Free” features all band members in drag, which in fact referenced British comedy more than glam rock; however it still displayed a constructed gender performance separate from the band member’s offstage identities. In Mercury’s words: “I’m sure everybody thought it was my idea, but in fact it wasn’t my idea at all. It came from Roger, and actually the other three *ran* into their frocks quicker than anything.”³⁴ Mercury’s short leather miniskirt and slipping bra straps, Taylor’s stockings and flounces, May’s hair rollers and pink nightgown, and Deacon’s pearl earrings and lipstick are more distinctly women’s wear than anything the band wore in the ‘70s. Because British comedy often featured a time-honored trope of men wearing drag, the UK and Europe loved the song and video.³⁵ However, in America, where Queen was already losing popularity, audiences

³³ Ibid., 137-38.

³⁴ Richards and Langthorne, 247.

³⁵ For a brief overview of drag in British comedy, as well as its use in music hall, see: Fraser McAlpine, “The Brits and Cross-Dressing: A History,” BBC America, 2014, accessed May 21, 2019, <http://www.bbcamerica.com/anglophenia/2014/11/brits-cross-dressing-history>.

interpreted it as Mercury's "coming out" video and MTV did not play it.³⁶ American audiences seem to have confused gender expression with a confession of sexual identity. However, the video simply represented Queen's comfort with non-conforming gender expression, in this case used for a comedic purpose.

Disco and Funk

As the '70s progressed, Queen's overall look gradually became more masculine, but Mercury's personal image became more overtly gay. In the official video for "Don't Stop Me Now" from Queen's 1978 album *Jazz*, Mercury is wearing a T-shirt from the gay sex club Mineshaft. Open from 1976 to 1985 in New York City, Mineshaft was a notorious gathering place and fantasy-actualizer for ultra-masculine gay men who wished to indulge in uninhibited sex. Its dress code outlined the fundamentals of the "castro clone" look that would represent a strong facet of gay culture in the late '70s and early '80s:

Cycle & western gear, Levis, T-shirts, uniforms, jock straps, plaid & plain shirts, cut offs, club patches, overlays & sweat. No cologne or perfume or designer sweaters. No suits, ties, dress pants or jackets. No rugby styled shirts or disco drag. No coats in the Playground.³⁷

As Ira Tattleman notes, clubs such as Mineshaft "overturned cultural stereotypes of effeminacy," using exaggerated masculinity as a marker of homosexuality.³⁸ Tattleman describes gay sex clubs, including Mineshaft, as theaters of performance: their interior

³⁶ Richards and Langthorne, 248.

³⁷ Qtd. in Ira Tattleman, "Staging Sex and Masculinity at the Mineshaft," *Men and Masculinities* 7, No. 3 (January 2005): 305.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 300-301.

decoration imitated the clandestine and often disreputable locations in which gay men had sought sexual intimacy before the existence of clubs, and the men who visited wore various “costumes” of ultra-masculine roles such as bikers, construction workers, or cowboys.³⁹ He notes that these costumes were essentially male drag.⁴⁰ Therefore, Mercury’s performance wearing a biker jacket and muir cap at a concert in 1979 in Paris is just as much a drag performance as the video for “I Want to Break Free.”⁴¹ In each, he is taking on an archetypal version of either the male or female gender, and wearing their outer trappings. However, this reference would have been lost on a mainstream audience, who still associated ultra-masculine imagery with heterosexuality.

While disco specifically was a genre with roots in gay dance clubs, the music at gay sex clubs, specifically bathhouses, incorporated “classic disco, extended funk jams, smooth vocal R&B, spacey jazz and early electronic experimentation.”⁴² While both sex and dance tended to happen at clubs of both types, dance clubs tended to rely on disco’s common 120 bpm, while bathhouses played a wider range of styles. In general, the music in the bathhouses displayed harmonic influence from black genres such as soul and R&B, set up a steady 4/4 beat which was often accented on two and four, and included orchestral timbres.

³⁹ Ibid., 301-302.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 302.

⁴¹ blablably, “QUEEN - Live In Paris 1979 (Full Concert),” Youtube video, 1:02:57, posted June 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJkjN7Brkzg>.

⁴² Marke B., “The Musical Legacy of Gay Bathhouses,” *Red Bull Music Academy*, April 25, 2017, accessed March 11, 2018, <http://daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2017/04/gay-bathhouse-musical-legacy>.

It accomplished disco's rhythmically hypnotic effect while also accessing the sensuality of the syncopations and vocal style in funk and soul. A specific type of music arising from early bathhouses as well as gay dance clubs was sleaze, also known as "morning music," a genre curated by DJs instead of produced by musicians.⁴³ DJs played this music in the early morning hours, choosing slower and more mellow songs to soundtrack the end of an exhilarating night, pulling from disco, soul, and other styles.⁴⁴

Mercury began experimenting with gay culture slowly and gradually, not allowing it to influence Queen's music fully until 1980.⁴⁵ According to Mercury's biographers Matt Richards and Mark Langthorne, Mercury began exploring the gay club scene in New York on Queen's 1976 tour, and in 1980 visited Mineshaft.⁴⁶ The Mineshaft shirt in Queen's 1978 "Don't Stop Me Now" video remains somewhat subtle. The shirt is mostly hidden by a leather jacket and would not be known by mainstream audiences, however, if one recognizes the shirt, the jacket, paired with his leather pants, only enhances the gay connotation. In 1979, Queen played in Paris, a show which comprised of songs mostly in the hard rock/heavy metal genre with a few of their glam rock hits. Mercury began the show in a leather jacket, a muir cap, and leather pants with suspenders and no shirt. He removed the hat after the second song and the jacket after the third, but kept the leather pants and suspenders for the rest of the show. While this seems to have been inspired by gay culture,

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ This transition is described , 121-123.

⁴⁶ Richards and Langthorne, 130.

wearing leather also fits within the heavy metal aesthetic. Because the “clone look” imitated an excessively masculine look which many heterosexual men adopted simply to appear tough (bikers and rockers included), its gay connotations were only available to a smaller subset of, mostly gay, people. The music does not reference disco or funk, and therefore Mercury’s outfit choice shows him “dipping his toe” into gay culture while not yet embracing it fully. This subtle exploration is emphasized by the band’s visual incongruity as regards fashion. In the video for “Don’t Stop Me Now,” May is wearing something more reminiscent of the glam rock style: a black shirt with pointy shoulders and silver stripes creating geometric patterns. May reportedly disliked the song because he was worried about the excesses of Mercury’s partying, and he felt that the song represented them.⁴⁷ While the different stylings of the band in the “Killer Queen” video dramatize Mercury’s feminine persona, the diverse fashion choices here seem to represent the members’ different conceptions of the song, and differing desires about how to present themselves.

Not until 1980 did Mercury produce the final version of his take on the “castro clone” look when he cut his hair to its shortest length and grew a thick moustache. Additionally, Queen began experimenting with the genres of disco and funk, most notably through Deacon’s compositions. An album called *Queen- Disco Hits* was released in Japan in 1982 and included “Another One Bites the Dust” by Deacon, plus selections from the album *Hot Space*: “Back Chat” (Deacon), “Dancer” (May), “Body Language” (Mercury), “Staying Power” (Mercury), and “Cool Cat” (Deacon/Mercury). Most of these songs incorporate both disco and funk influences, often mixing these while also adding traditional rock sounds rather

⁴⁷ Ibid., 159.

than being fully in any one style. Their generally slower tempo and emphasis on a melodic bass line also limit their categorization as pure disco. Instead, while sleaze was not a genre in which musicians wrote, many of Queen's disco-influenced songs may have been more appropriately placed in this category. "Staying Power" is arguably the most disco oriented of their songs. It begins with a syncopated bass riff played by synthesizer and accompanied only by drums emphasizing each beat of the 4/4 measure. The guitar is not prominent, and in a highly unusual move for a song by Queen, the track includes a horn section arranged by Ardiff Mardin, a musician who had worked for popular disco groups such as the Bee Gees.⁴⁸ May's "Dancer" represents an almost equal hybrid between disco and rock, specifically in its use of rock timbres (including distorted guitar) with a funky bass line and the lyrics and beat of a disco song. "Cool Cat" is perhaps the furthest from disco because of its slow tempo, but it displays strong funk and soul elements in Mercury's falsetto vocal lines and the extended harmonies produced by syncopated guitar.

By 1982, when Queen released *Hot Space*, styles such as disco and funk had already reached mainstream popularity, and disco had begun its decline. Most popular music listeners were unaware of disco's origins in gay clubs, instead associating it mainly with John Travolta in the movie *Saturday Night Fever*. *Hot Space* could have been Queen simply branching out and experimenting with a style outside of rock, but it could also have been the band using disco as a platform from which they, and particularly Mercury, could subtly perform a masculine homosexuality. One notable song prior to *Hot Space* had already begun

⁴⁸ "Staying Power," *Queen Songs Recording and Songwriting*, accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.queensongs.info/song-analysis/songwriting-analyses/modern-era-queen/hot-space/staying-power>.

this experimentation. “Another One Bites the Dust” from *The Game* (1980) is often compared to the 1979 disco hit “Good Times” by Chic, both featuring a similar bass line. While “Another One Bites the Dust” features a thinner texture, the drums evoke the steady 4/4 emphasis of disco and the bass line’s prominence references funk. In addition, the official video for “Another One Bites the Dust” features Mercury wearing clothes that would be appropriate at a club such as Mineshaft. He is wearing a tight yellow tank top that shows off his muscular torso, dark pants, white sneakers, and a red sweatband on his wrist. Halfway through the song he puts on a baseball cap adorned with horns. Mercury’s clothing here is ultra-masculine athletic wear with a nod to the Vikings, a group of almost mythic masculinity. In a video from a live performance, Mercury’s “drag” is even more pronounced— he is wearing nothing but short and tight white shorts, the red sweatband, a red handkerchief tied around his neck, a white baseball cap, and, as the Mineshaft dress code would include, sweat.⁴⁹ (See Figure 15.) The others in this video are wearing masculine-coded clothing, although less exaggerated than Mercury’s outfit. Deacon is wearing a tight t-shirt and pants, (See Figure 15.) and Taylor, like Mercury, has a sweatband on his arm and handkerchief around his neck. May is wearing a loose button up shirt, with only a few of the bottom buttons actually fastened, plus a white leather vest with some subtle western-themed tassels on the side. While not as overtly “gay” as Mercury’s outfit, the rest of the band were also following Mineshaft’s dress code. The disco and funk influence on the music of “Another One Bites the Dust” only enhances this connection.

⁴⁹ Queen Official, “Queen - Another One Bites The Dust (Live),” Youtube video, 3:52, posted January 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVIbCvfkO3E>.



Figure 15: Mercury’s “drag” in the live video for “Another One Bites the Dust” filmed in Montreal in 1981.

Screenshot from the YouTube video “Queen – Another One Bites the Dust (Live)” posted by Queen Official.⁵⁰

While this visual imagery is somewhat subtle, the official video for Mercury’s 1982 song “Body Language” drops pretense by referencing gay sex clubs in explicit detail.⁵¹ The beginning features close ups of naked or scantily clothed bodies, often with such close shots that they leave the bodies’ sexes as ambiguous. As Mercury begins singing, the shot pulls out and shows him walking in what could easily be a sex club: the architecture is slightly

⁵⁰ Queen Official, “Queen - Another One Bites The Dust (Live).”

⁵¹ Queen Official, “Queen – Body Language (Official Video),” Youtube video, 4:41, posted October 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2EDkv_dyel.

disorienting and resembles a mirrored maze designed to look like a public bathhouse. People who are mostly naked writhe around with each other as Mercury, fully leather-clad and wearing sunglasses, walks through, letting the lyrics essentially narrate the scene. As the video continues, the naked bodies engage in more explicit acts including licking, biting, and spraying each other with water. Eventually the video displays the whole band snapping their fingers and looking deadpan at the camera. They are wearing all black, much of it black leather. (See Figure 16.)



Figure 16: Shot of the full band in the official video for “Body Language.”

Screenshot from the YouTube video “Queen – Body Language (Official Video)” posted by Queen Official.⁵²

⁵² Ibid.

While the visual images in the official video for “Body Language” reference gay bathhouses, the music itself, with disco influence and Mercury's erotic vocal moaning references the music of these clubs as well. Of all Queen’s disco-influenced music, “Body Language” replicates most directly disco’s constant 4/4 emphasis, producing a similarly hypnotic effect. Mercury’s moans evoke the sexually explicit sounds of a song like Donna Summers’ 1975 disco classic “Love to Love You Baby.” Near the end of the video, Mercury begins dancing with three black women wearing brightly colored sequin dresses, one of whom is carrying a fan and feather boa. Both through these women’s race and fashion, this video also provides a brief visual reference to disco’s origins in black dance clubs. Thus the video aligns itself, both audibly and visually with the music of gay clubs rather than just the sex of gay clubs.

Hot Space, which included the bulk of Queen’s disco music, was not critically or commercially successful.⁵³ Even May remembers “having a go at Freddie because some of the stuff he was writing was very definitely on the gay side. . . It’s nice to involve people. What it’s not nice to do is rope people out. And I felt kind of roped out by something [‘Body Language’] that was very overtly a gay anthem.”⁵⁴ The lyrics (“You got red lips/Snakes in your eyes/Long legs, great thighs/You've got the cutest ass I've ever seen”) could apply to heterosexual lust just as well as homosexual lust; therefore, the disco influence is what pushes this song into the “gay” territory. This facet is amplified by the music video, which,

⁵³ Richards and Langthorne, 214-15.

⁵⁴ Qtd. in *Ibid.*, 216.

although it includes female bodies, explicitly references clubs designed for gay men in its visuals.

Through disco songs like these, Queen performed a version of masculine homosexuality associated with the genre, both through music and image. However, as suggested above, there was dissonance within the group about this relationship between identity and music. While the visual focus on Mercury in videos such “Body Language” and “Another One Bites the Dust” emphasizes many people’s current perception of Mercury as a gay man, many of the songs were composed by and predominantly performed by Deacon. For example, in “Another One Bites the Dust,” Deacon played most of the instruments except for Mercury’s vocals. Thus Deacon, who identifies as heterosexual, provided much of Mercury’s sonic platform from which to perform homosexuality. Deacon’s outfits, while never as explicit as Mercury’s also tended to reference a “gayer,” disco style. This incorporation of disco style stands in contrast with May, who perhaps was most resistant to disco’s influence on Queen. An example from a live show in Montreal in 1981 shows how May kept one foot in rock throughout Queen’s disco experiment. Mercury wore the shorts and red bandana for “Another One Bites the Dust,” but he kept the same outfit for “Sheer Heart Attack,” a song firmly in a hard rock bordering on punk style. While Mercury’s outfit looks somewhat out of place during “Sheer Heart Attack,” May’s leather vest works for both songs. It seems simply like a subtle leather vest during “Sheer Heart Attack,” yet during “Another One Bites the Dust” it could be read as reminiscent of “cowboy” drag that someone such as Randy Jones from the Village People would wear.

Rock

Even though their style transcended categorization, Queen is generally classified as a “classic rock” band. Throughout their career, even appearing during their various phases including glam rock and disco/funk, they produced songs that fall into many different rock categories including hard rock, heavy metal, and stadium rock. In general, rock music during Queen’s career was played by straight men with an overtly masculine presentation. The term “cock rock” refers to music of this era with strong heterosexual masculine associations. Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie describe rock music as not expressing a natural sexuality, but rather featuring a “construction of sexuality.”⁵⁵ Essentially, through their composition and performance of songs, rock performers constructed an aural and visual image of their masculine, heterosexual identity. Musically, the style is “loud, rhythmically insistent, built around techniques of arousal and climax” and involves “shouting and screaming.”⁵⁶ Visually, it typically features “male bodies on display, plunging shirts and tight trousers, a visual emphasis on chest hair and genitals.”⁵⁷

Much of Queen’s work fits into this style. Mercury was known for his tight pants, in one interview even highlighting his own virility by noting “By the way, I do not wear a hose. My hose is my own. No coke bottle, nothing stuffed down there.”⁵⁸ May and Taylor tended to adhere to a more rock-centered fashion style throughout Queen’s career. In Queen’s 1977

⁵⁵ Frith and McRobbie, 373.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 374.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 374.

⁵⁸ “Interview,” 1974.

official video for Deacon's "Spread Your Wings," the band plays the song on a makeshift stage outside amidst the snow. At that point the band generally had shaggy hair, not quite as long as 1973, but not yet as short as 1980. Mercury, probably the warmest of the four, is wearing a leather bomber jacket with a fur collar over a striped sweater, a white fringed scarf, star-shaped sunglasses, white pants, and big leather gloves. Deacon wears a red varsity jacket and blue pants. May sports a black leather jacket and black pants with a red knit scarf. Taylor has on a jacket with fur trim and lining and black gloves. No frills, slender silhouettes, or sparkles. Paired with their performance in the snow with visibly pink noses, the implication is that they are tough men who, with a nice masculine jacket, can handle the cold. The song itself is a rock ballad about a young man named Sammy, who works in a bar where his boss thinks he will never amount to anything. Instead of continuing to work for him, Sammy wants to leave and, ostensibly, become a rock star. The song's subject matter is masculine and centered on a young man who is striving to rebel against his superiors, a typical narrative within rock songs asserting masculinity through rebellion.⁵⁹

Although a relatively slow ballad, Mercury's vocal tone throughout "Spread Your Wings" has the strength and grit of traditional hard rock singers. Towards the end, during the line "Sammy boy, don't you know who you are," his voice cracks on the word "who." Besides giving an emotional emphasis to the boss's pleading, his crack gives the feeling that Mercury had been singing hard for too long and his voice has finally given out. This underscoring of persistence despite exhaustion embodies cultural ideas about masculinity and

⁵⁹ Jason T. Eastman, "Southern Masculinity in American Rock Music" in *Perspectives on Males and Singing* ed. Scott Harrison, Graham Welch, and Adam Adler (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2012), 274.

contributes to Mercury's performance of masculinity through the hard rock timbre of his voice. In addition, throughout the video, Mercury drags the microphone stand around so he can move around as usual, and later he takes the microphone off the stand. However, he does not detach the top of the stand and sing into it upside-down, as had become his trademark. In this way, he seems to put aside this element of individuality in order to imitate other rock singers who did not have a glam connotation.

Another central element of rock's masculine presentation is the idea of power. Jason Eastman describes heavy metal as "loud and powerful [...] over a steady, constant blues beat thrusting like a running machine which cannot be stopped [...] Vocals of long, extended notes at extreme ranges allow musicians to embrace and express this power."⁶⁰ Stadium rock also epitomizes the idea of power in a literal way as a small group of men perform for and essentially control the emotions of a stadium full of people. Simon Zagorski-Thomas notes that with stadium rock "the power of the large-scale communal experience is reinforced by the sonic imprint of a big noise in a big space."⁶¹ As Andy Bennett noted, playing live in stadiums resulted in artists creating stadium rock as a genre within the recording studio as well, with a generally bigger and multi-layered recorded sound.⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid., 279.

⁶¹ Simon Zagorski-Thomas, "The Stadium in Your Bedroom: Functional Staging, Authenticity, and the Audience-led Aesthetic in Record Production," *Popular Music* 29, No. 2 (May 2010): 256.

⁶² Andy Bennett, "'Let me Know You're Out There!' Male Rock Vocal and Audience Participation" in *Perspectives on Males and Singing* ed. Scott Harrison, Graham Welch, and Adam Adler (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2012), 287.

Queen's name implies a group with power, although not necessarily a masculine form of power. However, many of their songs align with a cultural view of coding power as masculine. May's song "We Will Rock You," appeared on the same album as "Spread Your Wings," and they used the same snowy setting for the music video. May wrote "We Will Rock You" specifically to be stadium rock.⁶³ Despite the accusation that because of the number of people involved, stadium rock could not approach the personal nature of, for example, punk bands playing in small venues, Bennett notes that audience participation was in fact central to stadium rock. The simple "stomp-stomp-clap" rhythm of "We Will Rock You" provides a perfect example of this facet: Bennett even notes that the studio recording replicates a live performance with overdubs of the voices so it sounds like a large audience is singing along.⁶⁴ This participatory aspect only increased the power Queen held over their audience. One review of the album articulates this perspective: "This group has come to make it clear exactly who is superior and who is inferior. Its anthem, 'We Will Rock You,' is a marching order: you *will not* rock us, we *will* rock you. Indeed, Queen may be the first truly fascist rock band."⁶⁵ While this negative tone clearly implies a bias towards punk and against stadium rock, it still identifies the masculine-coded statement of power inherent in "We Will Rock You."

This dynamics of power carries over to the use of Queen's songs at sporting events: "We Will Rock You" and "We Are the Champions" have become commonplace at these

⁶³ Ibid., 288.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 289.

⁶⁵ Dave Marsh, "Jazz," *Rolling Stone*, February 8, 1979, accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-album-reviews/jazz-188987/>.

events that are culturally associated with an aggressive version of masculinity and heterosexuality. “We Will Rock You” specifically gets the crowd revved up by allowing them to become cheerleaders and physically express their excitement and thirst for victory. The lyrics are about different phases within the life of a man, specifically one who consistently has either mud or blood on his face: the first verse describes a boy playing rough in the street, the second describes a young man inciting some sort of protest, and the last describes an old beggar who needs to be put back into his place by, presumably, younger men. In each verse’s subject matter, there is an underlying current of aggression and roughness. Mercury’s “We Are the Champions” has lyrics which can easily apply to the winners of a sporting contest: “We are the champions, my friends/And we'll keep on fighting 'til the end/We are the champions/We are the champions/No time for losers/'Cause we are the champions of the world.” Like “We Will Rock You,” it also uses the verses to highlight the idea of adversary and difficulty through which a man, interpreted here as an athlete, must pass. Although these songs were written without any direct allusion to sports, the masculine-coded subject matter of the lyrics and their categorization as rock songs allow them to fit in easily at stadium sporting events.

Besides this assertion of masculinity, many of Queen’s rock songs and videos include expression of heterosexual desires. For example, the lyrics of “Fat Bottomed Girls” by May are about the speaker’s (here articulated through Mercury’s voice) sexual preference for larger women. The official video begins with a slow moving shot from Mercury’s reflection in the floor up to his head. He is standing with his legs spread apart, and he spreads them further as the shot moves up. He wears tight leather pants, suspenders without a shirt, and a

long chain necklace. At the end of the video he climbs up by Taylor's drum set and dances by thrusting his hips with the beat and throwing his head back on the final note. This kind of sexually suggestive aggressive dancing contrasts directly with the "Killer Queen" Top of the Pops video, in which Mercury suggests a more feminine-coded type of sexual provocation by using eye contact and moving his hands slowly along the microphone stand. To support his aggressive dancing musically, "Fat Bottom Girls" features overdriven guitar, pounding drums emphasizing each beat, and intensely delivered lyrics from Mercury. "Fat Bottom Girls" was released as the B side to the single "Bicycle Race" by Mercury, which has a music video featuring a bicycle race composed of naked women. While popular opinions on the meaning of the song's lyrics vary from drugs to gay anal sex to bisexuality (because of the similarity of the words "bicycle" and "bisexual"), the video was created by a group of men and suggests a fascination with female bodies.⁶⁶ If "I want to ride my bicycle" is in fact a euphemism for sex, the video as a male objectification of women's sexuality along with the line "fat bottomed girls, they'll be riding today," implies that sex to be heterosexual.

Perhaps Queen's most masculine song and video was a piece Mercury wrote for the film *Highlander*, "Princes of the Universe."⁶⁷ The song was used during the opening titles of the movie, and the lyrics are about the film's main themes. *Highlander's* plot concerned immortal men who must kill each other through beheading until there is only one left. The main character, Connor MacLeod, originally came from medieval Scotland and ultimately

⁶⁶ "Queen- Bicycle Race," *Song Meanings*, accessed March 11, 2019, <https://songmeanings.com/songs/view/13151/>.

⁶⁷ Queen Official, "Queen – Princes of the Universe (Official Video)," Youtube video, 3:55, posted December 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEJ8lpCQbyw>.

beheads his evil nemesis in 1980s New York City. This climactic battle takes place on the roof of the Silvercup studios, where the studios' large sign is destroyed. In general, the movie is violent and male-centered; the main female characters are simply MacLeod's love interests.

Queen's music video also takes place on Silvercup studios' roof in front of the sign, and video of them playing is interspersed with clips from the movie. Although the lyrics are directly related to the movie's plot ("I am immortal, I have inside me blood of kings") the song was released on the 1986 album *It's a Kind of Magic*, which, while including the songs Queen wrote for *Highlander*, was far from a soundtrack. Taken both as an independent song, and in relation to the themes of the film, the song is based in masculine and heterosexual stereotypes. The lyrics concern themes mentioned before, such as power and struggle against adversary: "we're the princes of the universe/Here we belong, fighting for survival/We've come to be the rulers of you all." Although the lyrics "Princes of the Universe" were inspired by a potential title for the film, they fit in with Queen's many references to royalty throughout their oeuvre even beyond their name, from the song "Great King Rat" on their first album to lyrics such as "hitman is king" from "The Hitman" on the final album made before Mercury's death. "Princes of the Universe" purposely avoids references to female royalty, mentioning kings and princes, but no queens or princesses. In the video, Mercury is wearing tight jeans with a wide leather belt and a military green sleeveless button up over a white t-shirt. The other three have on beige overcoats, similar to a common outfit of MacLeod's in the film. May wears a white shirt and black tie loosened at the neck. In addition, the guitar in the video is a white Washburn RR11V instead of May's usual Red

Special, visually evoking the V shape of guitars used by heavy metal musicians such as Randy Rhodes or Michael Schenker. (See Figure 17.) In this way May detaches himself from the vocal and symphonic guitar style he was known for and aligned himself with the masculine-coded genre of heavy metal. His solo towards the end uses techniques of heavy metal shredding, including quick alternate picking and a heavily distorted sound.



Figure 17: Masculine stances and May’s Washburn RR11V in the official video for “Princes of the Universe.”

Screenshot from the YouTube video “Queen – Princes of the Universe (Official Video)” posted by Queen Official.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Throughout the video for “Princes of the Universe,” each band member’s physical comportment is coded masculine. The first shot of the band is their silhouettes from behind in wide and confident stances. Throughout the video, a rough wind constantly agitates their hair and clothes. Mercury takes several power poses, including thrusting his arm in the air, an action repeated throughout the video by Mercury and in one instance by May after a power chord. The video features close-ups of Mercury’s face, which is generally set in a somewhat ferocious pseudo-squint. At one point Mercury briefly uses his detached microphone stand to sword fight with Christopher Lambert, the actor who played MacLeod in the film. The clips used from the movie are violent and/or grand and powerful. These images are reinforced by Mercury’s vocals, which sound like almost constant shouting. Besides brief moments of a more operatic sound, there is distortion and grit in his voice to match the sound of the distorted guitar and powerful cymbals. In general the range is high: however, Mercury never switches into falsetto, instead nearly screaming at the top of his full voice. For example, in the first line of the first verse “And here we are/We’re the princes of the universe” the range is already high, staying around the E, F-sharp and G-sharp above middle C, however on the word “the” the melody line jumps up to the C-sharp an octave above middle C (C-sharp5), a high range for a tenor to sing in full voice.

“Princes of the Universe” is unquestionably heavy metal, and this style combines with the visuals in the music video and the lyrics to create ultra-masculine associations. There is also a heterosexual implication simply by connection with the film, which featured a heterosexual hero who at one point goes to rescue his kidnapped damsel in distress. In addition, the lyrics include the lines “got your world in my hand/I’m here for your love and

I'll make my stand" and during May's guitar solo Mercury shouts various things including "bring on the girls, c'mon, c'mon, c'mon." Many of Queen's most popular songs fit easily into the masculine and heterosexual genre of hard rock, perhaps leading to the assumption that this is who the band "really" was. However, putting these songs into the context of Queen's entire oeuvre, this masculinity and heterosexuality appears also to be a performance.

Queen's Characters

Mercury's use of different genres was a way for him to safely express his non-heteroconforming sexuality during a homophobic time. The fact that the other members of the band participated in this expression to differing extents highlights the performative nature of Queen's music. In the official video for "Body Language" they all associate with gay culture of the time through the use of disco, all-leather dress, and the video's setting in a gay bathhouse. Conversely, in "Princes of the Universe" they all associate with straight culture through the use of heavy metal and the heterosexuality of *Highlander's* main character. On stage, each performed a certain version of themselves which may or may not have corresponded with who they identified as (or performed as) off-stage.

In a way, Queen's changing styles of appearance and music compare to the various stock characters of a theatre practice such as commedia dell'arte. In commedia dell'arte, there is a list of various characters who each have predictable clothing and manners of acting. Mercury created his own list of stock characters for himself: as summarized in the official video for "The Miracle," Mercury's outfits often took on an extreme or exaggerated version of the look he was trying to emulate. For example, watching the child-Mercury wearing the

all-leather mustached look highlights the irony and becomes almost comical, yet it displays the “all or nothing” nature of Mercury’s onstage presentation. This connects back to Queen’s start as a glam rock band, since glam sought to reveal the constructed nature of gender expression as distinct from sexual identity. Just as the Top of the Pops “Killer Queen” video constructed feminine and masculine identities for the band members through contrast, the band’s changing presentation over time highlighted the constructed nature of each of those presentations.

However, Queen’s onstage characterization differs from that of a glam artist such as Bowie, who gave his characters names and identities, specifically giving Ziggy Stardust an otherworldly name and identity. Because Bowie incorporated different characters over the course of his career, it is easy to see the theatrical, constructed nature of his glam performances as separate from his own personal identity. In leaving his various onstage characters nameless, Mercury does not provide this wall of separation between himself as an offstage, nuanced individual and himself as an archetypal figure on stage. In this way he suggests that these “characters” he plays on stage are in fact facets of his own personality, or, in another view, that his personality was also a performance. This dual interpretation is highlighted by the fact that the name Freddie Mercury was not Mercury’s birth name; his parents named him Farrokh Bulsara. He gained the nickname Freddie at boarding school and adopted the surname Mercury after starting Queen. “Freddie Mercury” was not a stage name; however, Mercury’s adoption of a new name just after forming Queen indicates the intertwined connection between Queen’s theatricality and Mercury’s identity.

CHAPTER 4

PERFORMING ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY

The lyrics of Brian May's song "White Man" on the 1976 album *A Day at The Races* are from the viewpoint of an indigenous person living in a country colonized by some European empire. (For a list of songs by Queen see the Appendix.) The lyrics read: "We trod soft on the land/But the immigrant built roads/On our blood and sand [...] White man, White man/Our country was green and all our rivers wide/White man, White man/You came with a gun and soon our children died." This direct critique of colonialism places the issue of ethnicity at the forefront, since the lyrics suggest an American location only by mentioning the "red man." While May was white himself, born and raised in England (a country infamous for colonization), his band-mate Freddie Mercury spent the first 18 years of his life in countries colonized by England. "White Man" was somewhat unusual for Queen, who mainly stayed away from political or social issues. Instead their aim was to, as their 1978 song demanded, "Let Me Entertain You."¹ In a 1981 interview, Mercury reflected:

I think Queen songs are pure escapism, like going to see a good film – after that, they can go away and say that was great, and go back to their problems. I don't want to change the world with our music. There are no hidden messages in our songs, except for some of Brian's. I like to write songs for fun, for modern consumption. People can discard them like a used tissue afterwards. You listen to it, like it, discard it, then on to the next. Disposable pop, yes.²

¹ Another exception is May's song "Put Out the Fire" on the album *Hot Space* which was against gun ownership.

² "Interview," *Melody Maker*, May 1981, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 15, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/05-02-1981-melody-maker/>.

“White Man” seems to fit into the “some of Brian’s” category that Mercury mentions here. As shown by this quote, this type of song was in the minority; the majority of Queen’s music was intended to function as escapism, which is essentially the opposite of social engagement.

Nancy Stockdale argues that Queen produced more politically and socially motivated songs than Mercury let on.³ She suggests that Mercury hid a critique of upper-class England in songs such as “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon” and “Seaside Rendezvous.”⁴ Stockdale theorizes that this critique was based on Mercury “[reversing] the imperial gaze, writing himself into the canon of dandies,” essentially using exaggerated trappings of dandyism to critique “Englishness.”⁵ On the other side, Stockdale understands Mercury’s song “Mustapha” as his “swan song,” expressing both his heritage and his “bohemian” present.⁶ However, this view limits Mercury’s expression of Englishness to that of a colonial subject forced into hiding subversive messages within an outward facade of assimilation and unfairly highlights the creative output that draws on his heritage as being more genuine. As Sule Okuroglu Ozun has shown, the identity of South Asian immigrants and their children is complex. Speaking specifically of South Asian people who emigrated to Britain just after the Second World War and the children they gave birth to once in Britain, he rejects the idea that identity formation was a “linear trajectory from a formerly colonized culture (minor) A to the

³ Stockdale, 83-84.

⁴ “Mercury cloaked his political commentary on the English ruling classes in a camp glam persona of a modern dandified rocker.” Ibid., 90.

⁵ Ibid., 91.

⁶ Ibid., 95.

superior (major) culture B.”⁷ Instead, he argues that these immigrants have many different sides to their identities, and that the process of identity formation is “a never-ending, back-and-forth movement between incompatible cultural and discursive positions.”⁸

Mercury was born Farrokh Bulsara in 1946 to a Parsi family from India living in Zanzibar, making him a first-generation Zanzibarian. While Zanzibar was not a colony, it was a protectorate of Britain. As a child, Mercury attended British schools in Zanzibar and India, the latter a boarding school from 1955-1963. In 1963, Zanzibar gained independence and the destabilized political climate engendered a revolution that forced the Bulsara family, as part of an ethnic minority, to emigrate to London in 1964. Essentially, Mercury was an immigrant twice over, as a first-generation Zanzibarian living in London. In addition to this complex background, the Parsi people migrated from Persia to India in the seventh century and remain an ethnic and religious minority there.⁹ The Parsi identity differs from a purely Indian identity and is based on a history of immigration. Because of this history, the cultural identities Mercury inhabited and moved among were perhaps even more fluid and transient than Ozun’s description of South Asians living in Britain. Just as Ozun suggests that these immigrants were “redefining South Asianness and Britishness,” Mercury was engaged in redefining both of those heritages, as well as Zanzibarianness and Persianness.¹⁰ Therefore,

⁷ Sule Okuroglu Ozun, “Temporal Dimensions of Identity: The Case of South Asian Diaspora Living in Britain,” *University of Bucharest Review* 11, No. 1 (2009): 133.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ For a brief overview of the Parsi heritage, see: “Parsi,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, September 28, 2018, accessed May 21, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Parsi>.

¹⁰ Ibid., 136.

when he writes songs such as “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon,” he is performing an exaggeratedly British side of himself, rather than critiquing upper-class British culture. In addition, while a song such as “Mustapha” does draw on sounds from his Parsi and Zanzibarian heritage, it is no more sincere or indicative of his true identity than other songs.

This chapter delves into the multitudinous sides of Queen’s and particularly Mercury’s performances of nationality and ethnicity. First it examines how Queen performed Britishness, from Mercury’s use of the dandy image to May’s arrangement of the British national anthem. The next section addresses the various elements from Mercury’s heritage that influenced his songwriting in musical style and lyrics, using “Mustapha” and “All God’s People” as examples. The chapter closes by exploring the relationship of religion to nationality and ethnicity and discusses elements of the Zoroastrian faith and how it relates to Queen’s music, particularly the album *Queen II*.

Performing Britishness

In his book *The British Pop Dandy*, Stan Hawkins began his discussion by describing the non-musician who invented and popularized the dandy style, Beau Brummell (1778-1840). Brummell was fastidious about his appearance, a womanizer, and an idle man who enjoyed “[whiling] away his hours socializing with select groups.”¹¹ Echoing Sontag’s description of camp, Hawkins describes the dandy as

a creature of alluring elegance, vanity and irony [...] From mannerisms to ways of posing and performing, the dandy revels in artifice simply for style’s sake as a mischievous play with masks of calculated elegance. All the same, dandifying one’s

¹¹ Hawkins, 22-23.

act is linked to self-thinking, sensibility and narcissism that exudes a put-on sense of social elevation. [...] all the great dandies have been outsiders.¹²

This particularly British upper-class ideal became popular during and following Brummell's lifetime and many British musicians have appropriated the image as part of their musical act, either in evoking the dandy or critiquing him. Hawkins describes Noël Coward (1899-1973) as one musician who was influenced by the trends Brummell instigated. Coward's performances held an important place in shaping of the image of the British dandy and in influencing British popular music in general.¹³ Coward's performance style focused on the humorous transmission of lyrics, as he often let his voice rest somewhere between speaking and singing and always using exaggerated facial expressions to aid in his performance. In a 1955 TV performance of his song "Nina," he wears a tuxedo with a bow tie and large flower pinned to the lapel and uses carefully planned hand gestures, eye rolls, and eyebrow raises in order to depict Nina's refusal to dance.¹⁴ The way in which Coward makes these exaggerated and seemingly premeditated gestures seem natural and spontaneous highlights the constructedness and the charm in his portrayal of the dandy.

In questioning the validity of defining the dandy, Hawkins makes a list of musicians he has not identified as pop dandies. He includes Mercury in this list and asks "why not?" leaving the question open-ended. Mercury does not completely fit into the category of a "British Pop Dandy" because he only exhibits true dandyism in a select number of songs. In

¹² Ibid., 15.

¹³ Ibid., 26.

¹⁴ Fabtv, "Noel Coward sings "Nina" on Live TV ◊ 1955," Youtube video, 4:35, posted November 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxsEYFYgkZo>.

addition, the “dandy” features of those songs tend to be more in the musical style rather than in Mercury’s way of dressing, which is significant since fashion was so important to the dandy image. In addition, instead of using the dandy as his persona for an entire section of his career or his whole career, Mercury only used it sometimes to express a particularly British side of himself.

One musical group that Hawkins singles out as using the dandy image in a particularly British way is The Kinks:

Attempting to be as un-American as possible, The Kinks managed to turn everyday quips into satirical wit by mining the culture around them of everything quintessentially English: class distinction, social problems, political commentary and, most of all, a sense of humour that could only be British.¹⁵

Hawkins argues that The Kinks took on aspects of the dandy through music and fashion in order to critique the Mod culture of the 1960s.¹⁶ In particular, they drew from the quintessentially English genre of music hall for songs such as “Dandy” and “All My Friends Were There.”¹⁷ Their song “Sunny Afternoon” criticizes the dandy by focusing on what can happen to a man who idles his money away. Despite being famous simply for his social status, Beau Brummell ended up penniless and hated; likewise, the speaker in this song has his money taken away by the tax man before his girlfriend leaves with his car due to his alcohol problem. Unable to change his habits, he enjoys what he has left: “Now I’m sitting here/Sipping at my ice cold beer/Lazing on a sunny afternoon.” Stockdale notices that

¹⁵ Hawkins, 48.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 48-51.

Mercury's song "Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon" references this song directly through the use of a similar lyric.¹⁸ However, while Stockdale interprets Mercury's reference to "Sunny Afternoon" as a continuation of The Kinks' critique, "Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon" actually delights in the ostentatious flaunting of a character like Beau Brummell in his prime: "I come from London town, I'm just an ordinary guy/Fridays I go painting in the Louvre/I'm bound to be proposing on a Saturday night/I'll be lazing on a Sunday afternoon." As Mercury put it: "The concept of Queen is to be regal and majestic. Glamour is part of us and we want to be dandy."¹⁹ The music hall influence in the style of "Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon" gives it a British flair. Mercury delivers the lyrics so that his accent sounds particularly English, and the content of these lyrics describe an idle, wealthy man who proposes to a different girl each Saturday. In this way, Mercury takes on the caricature of the dandy in order to perform exaggerated Englishness; a comment on the official YouTube lyric video notes, "I searched 'That queen song where Freddie sounds like a englishman' and i [sic] found it."²⁰

Speaking of his song "Killer Queen," Mercury said, "with this single you almost expect Noel Coward to sing it. It's one of those bowler hat, black suspender belt numbers – not that Coward would wear that."²¹ In other songs as well, Mercury often adopted

¹⁸ Stockdale, 89.

¹⁹ "Standing Up For Queen."

²⁰ Queen Official, "Queen - Lazing On A Sunday Afternoon (Official Lyric Video)," Youtube video, 1:15, posted September, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU6EyXcFBxA>.

²¹ "Interview," 1974.

exaggeratedly theatrical “dandified” gestures similar to Coward’s. In the music video for “I’m Going Slightly Mad,” which parodies black and white horror films, Mercury wears a nineteenth-century style suit with a cravat, cummerbund, and a white flower, this fashion choice perhaps his most overt non-musical reference to the dandy. His facial expressions and hand gestures evoke Coward’s, for example, from 0:44-0:52, he turns his head petulantly away, raises his eyebrows, shakes his head quickly, and flamboyantly opens and closes his gloved hands.²² In “Seaside Rendezvous” Mercury also evokes Coward through his sometimes spoken delivery of the lyrics, for example “c’est la vie, mesdames et messieurs,” “it’s so fashionable,” and “so très charmant, my dear,” exaggerating the English pronunciation of the word “dear” without the American “r” sound at the end.

Mercury’s dandy-styled songs were relatively subtle in comparison with other ways Queen performed Britishness. Most obviously, at almost every show from at least 1974 on, they used a pre-recorded track of May and Taylor playing “God Save the Queen,” the British national anthem, as their outro. The national anthem changes lyrics depending on whether a Queen or King is in power at the time; however, since 1952, Elizabeth II has sat on the British throne, and thus for many generations, it has been a Queen rather than a King who is the face of one of the most powerful empires. In addition, the British Empire greatly expanded under Victoria, another Queen. Therefore, naming a London-based band “Queen” has a strong association with most people’s conception of a powerful Britain. John Ingham, interviewing Mercury in 1976, emphasized the nationalistic connotations of the name over the sexual ones: “that most British named of groups, Queen. (Ignore that in the early days the

²² Queen Official, “Queen - I’m Going Slightly Mad (Official Video),” Youtube video, 4:31, posted October 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od6hY_50Dh0.

name caused snickers due to its, uh, ‘homo’ connotations. Times change.)”²³ Mercury also stressed the literal interpretation of the name rather than the gay associations by using words and phrases to describe Queen’s name such as “strong and universal,” “powerful,” “regal,” “splendid,” and “a good British regal rock band.”²⁴

Sometimes, as in the footage of Queen live in Montreal in 1981, the band simply said goodbye to the crowd as the outro played and they left the stage.²⁵ However, the video from Queen’s 1986 performance at Wembley Stadium in London incorporates a more obvious performance of nationality.²⁶ The band usually ended their concerts with “We Are the Champions,” followed by the “God Save the Queen” outro. At this concert, as the rest of the band holds out the final cadence of “We Are the Champions,” Mercury dons a red cape trimmed with ermine and a tall jeweled crown just like the one on Queen’s logo. (See Figure 18.) He uses the microphone stand as his scepter and walks regally up to the edge of the stage. He takes the crown off and holds it over the crowd in a gesture of power. Once the final chord is finished Mercury says “Thank you, beautiful people. Goodnight, God bless you.” “God Save the Queen” then starts as the band bows before the audience, who

²³ John Ingham, “Mercury Rising: The Queen Interview,” *Sounds*, January 1976, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 19, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/01-xx-1976-sounds/>.

²⁴ “British Rock Quartet Known For Black and White Garb,” *The Advocate*, March 1976, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 19, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/03-09-1976-the-advocate-oh-british-rock-quartet-2/>; Rush; “Standing Up For Queen.”

²⁵ *Queen Rock Montreal*, produced by Justin Shirley-Smith (Burbank, CA: Hollywood Records, 2007), DVD.

²⁶ Queen Official, “Queen - We Are The Champions (Live At Wembley Stadium, Saturday 12 July 1986),” Youtube video, 4:10, posted January 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFbAVJiPPEA>.

immediately begin to sing along to the track with the words of their national anthem. The band acts somewhat silly as they leave the stage; Mercury puts the crown on Taylor's head, pointing and laughing at him before walking out in an overly pompous way. They all leave as Mercury holds his "scepter" up high and the cape begins to fall off his shoulder. These antics might seem to make a mockery of the British throne, but the patriotic and enthusiastic audience singing their national anthem gives the scene a kind of nostalgic gravitas.



Figure 18: Mercury during “God Save the Queen” at Wembley Stadium.

Screenshot from the YouTube video “Queen - We Are The Champions (Live At Wembley Stadium, Saturday 12 July 1986)” posted by Queen Official.²⁷

The use of “God Save the Queen,” especially when combined with “We Are the Champions” can be read in different ways: if the “we” refers to the band, Queen is the most

²⁷ Ibid.

powerful band in the world, thus deserving nationalistic praise usually reserved for the British Queen; or, if the “we” refers to the British people, Queen acts as a representative of Britain, encouraging nationalistic pride. Either way, the use of these two songs together links Queen and Britain. This notion is confirmed by the presence of a few different fans waving the Union Jack earlier in the concert, showing that Queen and patriotism are connected in their mind. Mercury was known for using the flag in his concerts, for example, at a performance in Budapest he uses it as a cape, proudly displaying it as he stands in a wide powerful stance.²⁸ When he turns around, he reveals that the other side depicts the Hungarian flag, referencing the location of the performance. In essence, Mercury appointed Queen as a cultural diplomat, representing Britain to the rest of the world.

Performing Persianness and Zanzibarianness

The song “White Man” discussed at the chapter’s opening displays an interesting racial portrait of the band. Just as Deacon, who identified as straight, wrote some of the songs in which Mercury could perform queerness, this song by May seems to give Mercury the platform to sing as someone from a colonized country. However, May’s song offers a relatively simplistic view of colonization: the colonizer came, took over, and destroyed, while the colonized hurts and feels angry. It depicts mainly the physical ramifications of colonization rather than the cultural ones. When Mercury composed songs relating to his colonial heritage, they tended to be in a different tone. Mercury's song “Mustapha” on the 1978 album *Jazz* is in a mix of languages, including English, Arabic, Persian, and words that

²⁸ *Hungarian Rhapsody: Queen Live in Budapest.*

have no meaning: “Mustapha Mustapha - Allah-I na stolei/Mustapha Mustapha - Achar es na sholei/Mustapha Mustapha - Mochamut dei ya low eshelei.” The musical style in the introduction imitates *adhan*, the muslim call to prayer. As Mercury sings without accompaniment, he elongates some syllables while others are shorter and decorated by ornaments. Also, as in Arabic music, the song focuses on melody rather than harmony, with the piano doubling the voice’s first entrance. The pitch collections used do not conform to traditional western scales, and while also not subscribing to Arabic music theory, they do imitate the *adjam* and *maqam* that make up Arabic scales. For example at 1:08, the accompaniment plays a figure that consists of D, E-flat, F-sharp, and G: these notes would make up the *jins hijaz*, and although it could also be part of the G-minor harmonic scale, the absence of the rest of that scale gives it more of an Arabic sound. Mercury was not Muslim, however Zanzibar is almost completely Muslim and until most Arabic people fled at the same time as the Bulsara family, there was an influential Arabic population there beforehand as well.²⁹ The Muslim calls to prayer would have resounded around the city where Mercury grew up. Although Mercury did not know the theory behind traditional Arabic music, this song displays his familiarity with and adept imitation of the overall sound of Arabic music.

“Mustapha” certainly references Mercury’s heritage, as Stockdale notices. However, to say that “Mustapha” is somehow more serious and genuine than songs such as “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon” overlooks the purposeful silliness of “Mustapha.” Mercury himself

²⁹ “Shirazi and Arabs of Zanzibar,” *Minority Rights Group International*, accessed March 25, 2019, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/shirazi-and-arabs-of-zanzibar/>.

reportedly said that the lyrics were about nothing.³⁰ “Mustapha” is an exaggerated take on Arabic music and Muslim call to prayers, just as “Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon” is an exaggerated take on English dandyism. In each of these exaggerations, Mercury explores a different side of his identity. In his now infamous review of the album on which it appears, Dave Marsh wrote of “Mustapha”:

It begins with a parody of a muezzin’s shriek and dissolves into an approximation of Arabic music. This is part of Queen’s grand design. Freddie Mercury is worldly and sophisticated, a man who knows what the muezzin sounds like. More to the point, you don’t. What trips the group up, as usual, is the music. “Mustapha” is merely a clumsy and pretentious rewrite of “Hernando’s Hideaway,” which has about as much to do with Middle Eastern culture as street-corner souvlaki.³¹

While many now dismiss this negative review as hilarious in view of Queen’s (and *Jazz*’s) popular success, Marsh’s dismissal contains a grain of truth. While musically “Mustapha” has much more to do with Middle Eastern culture than Marsh might at first assume, Mercury’s sophistication and knowledge of the world are somewhat lorded over the audience. However, Marsh misses the comical nature of this “parody.” While sincerely based in real features of Arabic music, there are many other features that render the song exaggerated and funny. Most obvious is the fact that the words are from a combination of languages and do not actually transmit a story or message. Towards the middle, the word “mustapha” is repeated by choral tracking, alternating with solo phrases from Mercury. He delivers the lyrics in a determined and over-pronounced way, and just before the final

³⁰ While the original source cannot be located yet, several different online commenters provide this information: “translation for Mustapha?,” queenzone.com, accessed April 14, 2019, <http://www.queenzone.com/forum/600596/mustapha-lyrics.aspx>; “Mustapha (Queen song),” enacademic.com, accessed April 14, 2019, <http://enacademic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/11781228>.

³¹ Marsh.

“mustapha” is held out by the chorus, he sings the lyrics “ai ai ai ai ahelei,” sounding like the colloquial phrase “ai ai ai” (sometimes spelled “ay ay ay”) used to indicate disappointment. Interpreting the song in this way fits with Mercury’s purposefully silly lyrics in other songs, like in the otherwise serious song “One Vision” where the lyrics “fried chicken” replace the final iteration of the title line.

Although Mercury downplayed his foreign heritage in interviews with the press (“‘O you sod,’ he squeals. ‘Don’t ask me about it. Read my bios. Oh, it’s so mundane. Ask me about something else.’”³²), he did not actively try to hide it. One of Mercury’s oft-quoted statements regarding his heritage is “I’ll always walk around like a Persian Poppinjay [sic] and no one’s gonna stop me.”³³ “Mustapha” says the same thing, only through music. Not only does it display Mercury’s “Persian” side through an Arabian-influenced musical style and Persian-influenced lyrics, but it also displays Mercury’s “popinjay” side through its exaggerated and extroverted character.

Another song that displays Mercury’s heritage is “All God’s People” on the 1991 album *Innuendo*, Mercury’s last album with Queen before his death. He originally wrote the song, which was titled “Africa By Night,” for either a solo project or the *Barcelona* album with the opera singer Montserrat Caballé. Since it did not appear on either of those, it was reworked to become a Queen song. Queen also gives songwriting credits to Mike Moran,

³² Tony Stewart, “Freddie Mercury: Is This Man a Prat?,” *New Musical Express*, June 1977, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 18, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/06-18-1977-nme/>.

³³ Nick Ferrari, “I am the Champion: Why Fantastic Freddie Stole Live Aid Show,” *The Sun*, July 1985, accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 18, 2019, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/07-19-1985-the-sun/>.

who worked with Mercury on solo projects and specifically on this song. The musical style and instrumentation show influence from African music, specifically *taarab*, the traditional music of Zanzibar. *Taarab* is made from a conglomeration of musical styles, showing elements of African, Arabic, Indian, Latin, Indonesian, and European musics.³⁴ Originally it was a way to transmit complex Swahili poetry.³⁵ Like Arabic music, it used *maqam* and *ajnas*.³⁶ The instrumentation for *taarab* was originally a small ensemble, but by its height, it was common for a large orchestra including violins, cellos, bass, accordion, keyboard, bongos, and various African instruments to accompany the vocalist and choir.³⁷

“All God’s People” displays many different aspects of classical *taarab* music. The percussion in *taarab* is usually pitched and at a consistently quick speed. Taylor plays the bongos, providing a pitched and fast percussion line supporting vocal and synthesizer melodies that are longer and more flowing. Periodically, low-pitched drums punctuate the flowing of the higher pitched drums. Just as *taarab* uses a choir and a soloist, “All God’s People” features a solo line from Mercury that is backed by the rest of the band as a choir, produced through overlapped tracking. As in *taarab*, the choir and soloist generally sing the same melody, although Mercury provides ornamentation and rhythmic delay or anticipation, essentially creating heterophony, referencing the arabic influence in *taarab*. A synthesizer provides a string-like timbre that imitates the orchestral accompaniment of *taarab*. In both

³⁴ Hilda Kiel, “Travel on a Song- the Roots of Zanzibar *Taarab*,” *African Music: Journal of International Library of African Music* 9, No. 2 (2012): 77.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

³⁶ These are the scales that make up Arabic music.

³⁷ Kiel, 78-79.

“All God’s People” and classical *taarab*, harmony is generally suggested by the melody rather than actual chord-producing instruments. At times Mercury’s vocal line is accompanied by the orchestra playing accompanimental figures in unison underneath. Because *taarab* originally focused on poetry transmission, the vocal line is syllabic and follows the structure of the text, a feature which is replicated in “All God’s People.”

A guitar solo almost halfway through the song begins symphonically before the texture abruptly changes to imitate the blues music of black America. A traditional rock drum kit emphasizes a heavy backbeat and replaces the bongos. A piano joins in the texture and the guitar features more prominently and more distorted. While the timbre of Mercury’s voice remains the same, powerful and gritty, the backing chorus disappears, and the vocal lines are less soaring. Mercury’s solo part throughout sounds improvisatory; however, in the first section, his solo part embellished the melody provided by the chorus, and in this blues-influenced section, it is more declamatory and tends to remain on one note for a line and then go to a higher note at the end of the phrase. The lyrics change to be more narrative, imitating the lyrics of traditional blues songs: “Yeah yeah - yes there was this magic light/I said to myself/I’d better go to bed and have an early night/Then I, then I, then I, then I went into a dream.” This section is short, only about 30 seconds long, and afterwards it abruptly returns to the texture and melodies of the first section through a synthesizer instrumental section before the voices re-enter. Towards the end, the texture gradually thins out, and the percussion becomes prominent, with echoes of voices and guitars singing small phrases or playing single notes until the entire piece fades away.

In these ways, “All God’s People” displays direct stylistic inspiration from African music, confirmed by its earlier title, “Africa by Night.” Mercury also explores the relationship between Africa and African-American music by including a section of blues. Through this connection he also reflects on the heritage of rock, an important part of its history being when people such as Sam Phillips saw money making opportunities in getting a white musician like Elvis Presley to sing the music of black Americans, particularly the blues. In this way, “All God’s People” speaks to a more complicated side of colonialism than “White Man.” When Britain colonized America, it brought the African slave trade there, which, through the resulting mix of cultures and a long history of international cultural movements engendered the most popular type of music in the world. The lyrics complement this interpretation, by asking for global love, harmony, and freedom particularly from people in power:

Don't turn your back on the lesson of the Lord
All prime ministers (yeah) and majesty around the world, yeah
Open your eyes, look, touch and feel
Rule with your heart
Live with your conscience
Love, love and be free
Love, love and be free
We're all God's people.

The song provides a nuanced statement in that it communicates the plea for social freedom and tolerance of all people (Love, love and be free/We’re all God’s people) while addressing the complicated and often dark history of cultural interactions purely through the stylistic dialogue between African *taarab* and American blues. Mercury’s own history of moving among different cultures gives him a unique perspective on the subject, thus enabling him to,

perhaps inadvertently, create a song with a social statement much more nuanced than May's "White Man."

Performing Religion

While specific religions are not equivalent to specific nationalities or ethnicities, there can be intimate connections. Zoroastrianism is central to the Parsi identity and the religion is part of what characterizes Parsis as a separate group of people within India. In a film made of a 1987 classroom discussion, Zoroastrian priest Dasturji Firoze Kotwal explained that a Zoroastrian can only be born into the Zoroastrian faith. They do not want converts, specifically because of the relationship between their religion and their ethnic identity: "We are very small in number. If we go out converting people, then we shall be submersed in that vast ocean and we shall lose our indigenous traits and characteristics. . . It [Zoroastrianism] is in my blood."³⁸ A central tenet of Zoroastrianism is the duality between good, represented by light, and evil, represented by darkness. Zoroastrians believe that humankind is on a mission to fight evil on earth until the end of time, when good will finally win and even hell will be destroyed. Zoroastrianism is one of the oldest monotheistic faiths, and this feature, along with its emphasis on the good/evil duality and the concept of a final day of reckoning, may have influenced the Abrahamic faiths.³⁹ Mercury was raised in the Zoroastrian faith and

³⁸ Fereydoun Rasti Zoroastrianism & Iran, "A CLASSROOM CONVERSATION WITH A ZOROASTRIAN PRIEST(Dasturji Dr. Firoze Kotwal)," Youtube video, 48:31, posted September 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UtL0aTn8Hc>.

³⁹ For an overview of the Zoroastiran religion, see: Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, "Zoroastrianism," Encyclopædia Britannica, May 17, 2019, accessed May 21, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Zoroastrianism/Practices-and-institutions>.

underwent the *navjote* induction ceremony as a child, but attended a British Catholic school in Zanzibar, and as an adult did not publicly profess attachment to any religion.⁴⁰ The Zoroastrian religion specifically prohibits homosexual acts, which may have had an influence on Mercury's faith as an adult.

Perhaps the artistic product that most resonated with Mercury's Zoroastrian upbringing is Queen's second album, *Queen II*, released in 1974. While heavy metal bands such as Black Sabbath had at that point gained popularity by writing songs with dark subject matter, *Queen II* was different in featuring both a "white" side and a "black" side. In Queen's early performing years, the band members wore only black or white on stage, leading to a headline in 1976 that identified Queen as "The British Quartet Known for Black and White Garb."⁴¹ At a concert in 1974, Mercury asked the crowd: "Have you all got your black fingernails? (Cheers) Who's got the white ones? (Cheers) You seem to be over there—tell you what, right now, we'd like to carry on with something else from *Queen II*, would you like that? (Cheers) Okay, this one's called 'Father to Son.'"⁴² Mercury wore black fingernail polish and wrote all the songs on the "black" side of the album. May wore white fingernail polish and wrote all the songs on the "white" side except the last, "The Loser in the End," which Taylor wrote. In general the "black" side's lyrics contain more fantasy than the

⁴⁰ Richards and Langthorne, 15-16.

⁴¹ "British Rock Quartet Known For Black and White Garb."

⁴² *Live at the Rainbow '74*, produced by Justin Shirley-Smith (London: Eagle Rock Entertainment, 2014), DVD.

“white” side, with titles such as “Ogre Battle,” “The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke,” and “Seven Seas of Rhye.”

Queen’s first two albums are stylistically close to heavy metal and progressive rock, often putting heavy metal sections within the more extended forms and unusual instrumentations of progressive rock. Heavy metal began in the late 1960s and early 70s as a purposefully dark genre in musical style, subject matter, and visual appearance. Helen Farley notes that while heavy metal’s predecessors (for example the blues in America and “power blues” in England) made lyrical reference to the devil, the band Black Sabbath, which is considered the first heavy metal band, “made the diabolical relationship visually explicit as well.”⁴³ In essence, dark imagery became a central part of the entire heavy metal aesthetic. In a video from 1970 of a live performance of Black Sabbath’s song “War Pigs,” the band begins playing on a darkened stage with a ominous red glow.⁴⁴ Guitarist Tony Iommi is wearing a large cross around his neck. Each of the musicians’ movements are rather violent, and when not singing, vocalist Ozzy Osbourne gyrates savagely, swinging his hair around as if possessed. The lyrics are dark and evoke religious themes: “Day of judgement, God is calling/On their knees the war pigs crawling,/Begging mercies for their sins/Satan, laughing, spreads his wings.”

Queen II includes a few songs stylistically associated with heavy metal, most notably “Father to Son” on the “white” side and “Ogre Battle” on the “black” side. The band’s

⁴³ Helen Farley, “Demons, Devils and Witches: The Occult in Heavy Metal Music,” in *Heavy Metal Music in Britain*, ed. Gerd Bayer (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 80.

⁴⁴ Black Sabbath, “Black Sabbath - ‘War Pigs’ Live Paris 1970” 7:31, posted January 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3b6SGoN6dA>.

decision to wear only white and black on stage alluded to the dark themes of heavy metal. In addition, this early look incorporated features such as Mercury's chain-link hand covering, evoking elements of heavy metal fashion. Mercury, as the composer of the "black" side, and the wearer of the black fingernail polish, stood as the band's darker heavy metal spokesperson. May's more background role on the "white" side was rarely foregrounded in performance, particularly because Mercury still sang the solo parts for the "white" songs in concert. Just as the band originally wore black and then added in white for contrast, the invention of the "white" side seemed designed to highlight the "dark side" and intensify the subtle heavy metal associations that were already in place.

Many metal bands used Christian imagery such as the cross worn by Iommi, specifically highlighting statements about evil and sinfulness. Queen's eponymous first album engaged directly with Christianity, showing the influence of heavy metal, and the cultural influence of Mercury's education and the culture in which his bandmates were raised. One of Mercury's songs on *Queen* is named "Jesus" and the lyrics are about Jesus' healing of a leper and the story of the wise men who travel to pay homage to baby Jesus. The song "Great King Rat" describes King Rat as an awful person, and yet pleads: "Don't believe all you read in the Bible/You sinners get in line/Saints you leave far behind/Very soon you're gonna be his disciple." *Queen II* shied away from Christian references, and concentrated instead on fantasy-like evocations. In its emphasis on the duality of "white" and "black," it evokes the Zoroastrian duality of good and evil represented by light and dark. In addition, even on the "black" side, it seems to suggest that humankind is essentially good, and thus must choose to align with evil, another Zoroastrian belief. In essence, Mercury

placed himself in this category, using the heavy metal aesthetic to perform his status as a sinful outsider to the Zoroastrian faith because of its condemnation of homosexual acts. In a purposefully goading remark to an interviewer, Mercury actively chooses the “evil” side:

Interviewer: Do you think you’re going to get to heaven ?

Freddie: No, I don’t want to.

Interviewer : You don’t want to ?

Freddie: No, hells [sic] much better. Look at the interesting people that you’re going to meet down there. You’re going to be there too, you know.⁴⁵

Not only did Mercury understand that he was not a typical heterosexual family man, but he also knew he would rather spend time with people, like himself, that the Zoroastrian faith condemned.⁴⁶

Although using the visual aesthetic and at times the musical style of heavy metal, Mercury broke with the traditional darkness of the subject matter to perform his condemnation in an exaggerated way, making it fun and romanticized. The lyrics on the songs from the “black” side of *Queen II* are nowhere near as dark as “War Pigs” by Black Sabbath. For example, the images that Mercury depicts in “The Fairy Feller’s Master-Stroke,” are a different kind of sinful:

And a satyr peers under lady's gown
He's a dirty fellow
What a dirty laddie-oh
Tatterdemalion and the junketer
There's a thief and a dragonfly trumpeter
He's my hero ah

⁴⁵ “XX-XX-1985 – Unknown.”

⁴⁶ This is echoed in Mercury’s 1985 solo album *Mr. Bad Guy*, which includes songs titled “My Love is Dangerous” and “Man Made Paradise” the latter suggesting that Mercury had to create his own paradise- and perhaps also purposefully implying his homosexuality as the instigator.

Fairy dandy tickling the fancy
Of his lady friend
The nymph in yellow (can we see the master stroke)
What a queer fellow

The musical style in this song is more reminiscent of progressive rock than heavy metal, using an unusual form and an instrumentation that includes a harpsichord. However, in live performance, the song had a heavier timbre.⁴⁷ Mercury's song "Ogre Battle" is more purely heavy metal, and its lyrics are a little darker than "Master-Stroke," yet still whimsical: "Now once upon a time - an old man told me a fable/When the piper is gone - and the soup is cold on your table/And if the black crow flies to find a new destination/That is the sign [...] Come to the ogre-battle-fight." May's guitar solo in the middle is heavily distorted and riff-based. A musically simulated ogre fight includes screams from Mercury and Taylor. Through using the heavy metal musical style and on-stage appearance yet with more fanciful lyrics, Queen performed sinfulness in a more positive light.

The songs "White Queen" by May and "March of the Black Queen" by Mercury provide a concentrated example of the differences between the band's conception of what a "white" side versus a "black" side should be, as far as subject matter goes. "White Queen" is a melancholy ballad concerning a beautiful yet sad woman whom the speaker cannot reach. The woman has an implied purity: "The White Queen walks and the night grows pale/Stars of lovingness in her hair." The lyrics refer to her both as the "White Queen" and as a "Goddess." Mercury's Black Queen, on the other hand, seems to be into BDSM: the speaker tells her "My life is in your hands I'll fo and I'll fie/I'll be what you make me I'll do what you

⁴⁷ Bob Harley, "Queen - Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke (Live @ the Rainbow 1974)" 2:52, posted September 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NluN7URbsS0>.

like/I'll be a bad boy I'll be your bad boy/I'll do the march of the Black Queen.” These darker lyrics are accompanied by the section most stylistically similar to heavy metal in the piece through the guitar’s overdriven timbre, the noise produced by Taylor’s cymbals, and the repetitive nature of the melodic line. Although “March of the Black Queen” contains many different styles and is in a complicated form, when performing live Queen extracted this heavy metal section and played it as part of a medley, performing it even heavier with more emphasis on the combined noise-like timbre of cymbals and overdriven guitar.⁴⁸ Like Black Sabbath’s live performance of “War Pigs,” the stage is bathed in red light, with a white spotlight on Mercury as he sings. His movements are more conservative than usual, as he delivers the lyrics standing mostly in one place and clutching the microphone.

Besides describing the Black Queen as a dominatrix, the lyrics also situate her as racially black, a problematic construction on the morally “dark” side of the album. Equating race with morality, even when presented in a positive light, is never a good idea. In addition, Mercury uses a racial slur within a colloquial phrase meaning “brown sugar” as well as a stereotypical depiction of black dialect in the words “honey chile”:

Put them in the cellar with the naughty boys
Little nigger sugar then a rub-a-dub-a-baby oil
Black on black on every finger nail and toe
We've only begun - begun
Make this make that keep making all that noise
Ooh march to the Black Queen
Now I've got a belly full
You can be my sugar baby
You can be my honey chile.

⁴⁸ *Live at the Rainbow '74*.

However, Mercury's intent seemed to be to exaggerate and perform the "sin" of being an outcast, whether religious, as in his case, or social, as might be the case for any racial minority. In this clumsy way, the lyrics of this song articulate his desire to participate in a social order constructed of the marginalized, those considered wrong or sinful by some group of people. In addition, it re-frames being a religious or social outcast as desirable and powerful. The speaker of the lyrics talks about the Black Queen, but they also use first person: "I reign with my left hand I rule with my right/I'm lord of all darkness I'm queen of the night/I've got the power now to do/The march of the Black Queen." Both the speaker and the Black Queen are equally outsiders and equally powerful. In this way, Mercury performs a specific aspect of the faith in which he was raised: through heavy metal's association with the demonic, he performs his and others' condemnation within that belief system and re-frames that community as powerful and desirable.

In the middle of the song, the texture changes drastically and suddenly to a choral, hymn-like sound accompanied by sparse piano. The vocal parts are in a consistently higher register. Mercury sings:

A voice from behind me reminds me
Spread out your wings you are an angel
Remember to deliver with the speed of light
A little bit of love and joy
[...]
In each and every soul lies a man
And very soon he'll deceive and discover
But even to the end of his life
He'll bring a little love

These lyrics suggest that the speaker is basically a good person and that although every man "deceives" at some point, his true mission is love and joy. This notion aligns with

Zoroastrian thought, which asserts that humans are good and have chosen to come to earth to fight evil. Hell is the punishment for wrongdoing, but this is not an eternal punishment because hell will be destroyed at the end of days. This middle section is complemented by the final stanza, which although performed in a different musical style, refers to the choice the speaker has, yet frames the dark option as more fun and exciting: “Forget your sing a-longs and your lullabies/Surrender to the city of the fireflies/Dance to the devil in beat with the band.” In these ways, Mercury performs his Parsi ethnicity by referencing Zoroastrian imagery within the context of heavy metal.

Queen’s Identity

Queen’s and Mercury’s ability to perform different sides of their cultural identities has perhaps accounted for their ability to connect with audiences from disparate cultures. For example, when Queen arrived at the Japanese leg of their 1975 tour, they found a hugely enthusiastic audience and after they finished their eight shows there, they were topping the Japanese charts. The admiration mutual, Mercury established his lifelong hobby of collecting Japanese art.⁴⁹ In honor of their Japanese fans, May wrote the song “Teo Torriatte,” which includes lyrics in Japanese, for the 1976 album *A Day at the Races*. A live video of the song being performed in Japan shows a very enthusiastic audience, who screams with excitement when the piece is announced, and then claps along, even though it is a slow

⁴⁹ Richards and Langthorne, 111.

ballad.⁵⁰ The crowd sings loudly during the chorus, Mercury often falling silent and letting them carry the song.

May also wrote the song “Las Palabras De Amor” with lyrics in Spanish for their Latin American fans, which appeared on the 1982 album *Hot Space*. In 1981, they toured South America for the first time, becoming the first western rock band to visit Buenos Aires.⁵¹ Argentina was at that time in the midst of a conflict between the “military dictatorship against suspected left-wing military opponents.”⁵² While Mercury, May, and Deacon ate dinner with the dictator, Taylor refused. Later in the tour, they played at the Estádio do Morumbi in São Paulo, Brazil, to 131,000 fans, which at that time broke the record as the largest paying audience for a rock concert.⁵³

One of Queen’s most controversial appearances was in Sun City, South Africa, in 1984 where their appearance suggested support of apartheid. Although they denied this and emphasized that they did not play to segregated audiences and some money was donated to a local school for black deaf and blind children, the reaction from critics and fans was overall negative.⁵⁴ Queen consistently asserted that they were more concerned with entertainment

⁵⁰ My Queen Collection, “Queen | Teo Torriatte (Live in Tokyo 1979 - Remastered),” Youtube video, 4:15, posted June 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDynFluHPJs>.

⁵¹ Richards and Langthorne, 182.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 183-184.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 250.

than politics. When asked “What about the theory, held by some, that rock stars in your position should use their power to try to shape the world for the better?,” Mercury replied:

Leave that to the politicians. Certain people can do that kind of thing, but very few. John Lennon was one. Because of his status he could do that kind of preaching and effect [sic] people’s thoughts. But to do this you have to have a certain amount of intellect and magic together, and the John Lennons are few and far between. People with mere talent, like me, have not got the ability or power.⁵⁵

He continues by saying his main responsibility as a rock performer is to entertain audiences. This kind of statement, replicated in interviews with other members of the band, could be a marketing ploy avoiding the fact that Queen’s decision to play in places like South Africa and dictator-dominated Argentina might simply be a way to make money and increase their popularity around the world.⁵⁶ Even if so, they contrasted their job of providing entertainment with politicians, whose jobs concerned correcting unjust laws.

Despite this political ambivalence, many around the world have taken Queen’s songs to heart as political statements. For example, “I Want to Break Free” is understood in South America as “a political message about the evils of dictatorship.”⁵⁷ Because Queen theatricalized facets of identity, their songs became generalized statements that can be applied to various aspects of humanity. Through the theatricality of “I Want to Break Free,” Queen was able to create a song that resonated with those who wanted to break free from dictatorship, and also with people who wanted to break free from societal prescriptions about gender. Some, like Stockdale, may read Mercury’s dandy-influenced songs as political

⁵⁵ “Interview,” May 1981, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/03-09-1976-the-advocate-oh-british-rock-quartet-2/>.

⁵⁶ Richards and Langthorne, 210.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 254.

statements about colonization and the British upper class, while others see it simply as “the one where Freddie sounds like an Englishman.”

While Mercury and Queen may have found inspiration in aspects of their identity, the music they created was generally founded in taking whatever kernel of inspiration they had and then creating an exaggerated version of it. Because Queen and particularly Mercury performed so many different archetypes on-stage, it left audiences unsure about who they “really” were. As an interviewer mused in 1986:

What’s Roger Taylor’s reality I wonder; telling old jokes over his tea, or reminiscing about Venezuela? And which is Freddie Mercury? Is he the nice chap having the chat with me in the cab, or is he the snide rock star baiting the groupie, or the art collector, or the man with his silly crown? Or, is he, as *Smash Hits* claim, Lord Lucan?

Lord Lucan was a British aristocrat who was a professional gambler and although he did not usually win, liked to spend money extravagantly. Eventually he murdered a woman he believed in the dark to be his wife and then disappeared, with many alleged “sightings” since then. Many crazy stories are made up about celebrities, however, the nickname given by *Smash Hits* is somewhat telling. Not only does it bequeath British upper-class dandy associations to a Parsi Zanzibarian immigrant, but it also demonstrates Mercury’s elusive and ever-changing nature. This elusivity was because while he performed different aspects of his ethnicity and nationality on stage, these were still theatrical performances rather than expressions of true identity. Both the dandy and the singer of “Mustapha” are exaggerated archetypes: while both are “Mercury,” also neither are “Mercury.” Instead of deciding for him who Mercury actually was— was he British or was he a colonized man trying to fit in?— it is more valuable to consider whether or not the characters he played onstage were effective.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Layered Performances

Because of the multifaceted aspects of Queen's theatricality, their music has layers of different performative meaning. As May revealed when asked about "We Are the Champions":

You know, songs aren't always about what the words say. Messages in songs can appear different. I always see that as the difference between prose and poetry. Prose can mean exactly what it says, while poetry can mean the opposite. That goes for this song. Freddie's stuff is often tongue-in-cheek anyway, as you know. This song is very theatrical.¹

In this quote, May equates the non-literalism of poetry with musical theatricality. He suggests that the theatrical nature of "We Are the Champions" allows the song to transcend or transform its lyrics into a deeper, more poetic meaning. In this sense, theatricality is not only about exaggeration and playing a role, but also about metaphor and elusive meaning. Queen exploited this multiplicity, creating songs with layers of theatricality so that in each layer, their audience perceives both grandeur and hidden meanings. Mercury always resisted revealing what his songs were "really" about and delighted in the various interpretations of his pieces. Speaking specifically of "Bohemian Rhapsody," he mused:

I think that's very rewarding, to be honest. It's nice to hear somebody has gone that far to try and interpret a song. I like them to make up their own. If I were to come up with my interpretation, put my views to it, it would just shatter their illusions and things, so... They've got a competition on the radio back home; people had to write in

¹ Horide.

what they thought the song was about. Hundreds and hundreds of letters came in. Some were really amazing.²

Mercury seemed to understand that in order to connect with his fans' emotions, he needed to let them have a certain amount of control over the music by extracting himself from the finished product. While he used different aspects of himself as inspiration, through the process of writing and performing songs he moved beyond his own identity to create and then play exaggerated characters. As W. Anthony Sheppard writes about masks, "ultimately, a mask is a powerful disembodied signifier that is radically transferrable. Separate from any specific human realization, it functions as a concrete sign of a transcendent identity, regardless of wearer."³ Mercury and Queen essentially dramatized aspects of identity, creating their performances as exaggerated "masks," which their audience could then pick up and wear. In this way, Queen's theatricality achieved universality and resulted in the band's appreciation by diverse fans, who each gravitated to different aspects of their theatricality.

Mercury's song "Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy" provides one example of this theatrical multiplicity. (For a list of Queen songs see the Appendix.) In the song, Mercury uses the dandy and the music hall style to perform gender, sexuality, and nationality. Musically it shows influence from music hall, featuring a steady 4/4 beat from Taylor with emphasis on all four beats. There is a prominent piano part which generally repeats blocked chords in a straight rhythmic pattern, only sometimes adding syncopation. Mercury delivers the melody at a speaking tempo, and the rhythm is designed so that the lyrics come across

² Mitchell Cohen, "Queen: The New British Invasion," *Phonograph Record*, March 1976, accessed online, March 27, 2019, queenarchives.com, <http://queenarchives.com/qa/03-xx-1976-phonograph-record/>.

³ Sheppard, 25.

with natural inflection. For example, in the first phrase “I can dim the lights and sing you songs full of sad things” the words which would naturally be spoken more quickly are performed as sixteenth notes, “the lights,” “sing you,” and “full of.” In addition, the natural places in the sentence to rest are given longer notes on the words “lights,” “songs,” and at the end. There is also an emphasis on traditional tonic dominant relationships; for example, an often-repeated device occurs first at 0:14, where the harmony is the tonic E-flat, moving for only one beat to the dominant seventh chord before returning to the E-flat in the following measure.

The subject matter of “Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy” recalls not only music hall character songs, but also musical theater songs in which a character describes themselves, such as “I Cain’t Say No” from *Oklahoma* by Rodgers and Hammerstein. The lyrics of the song are about a “good old fashioned lover boy” who is essentially describing himself. “Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy” features overlaid vocal tracking during the chorus to voice a choir of observers, who ask, “ooh, love, ooh, lover boy, whatcha doing tonight, hey boy?” to which Mercury’s solo line replies “set my alarm, turn on my charm; that’s because I’m a good old fashioned lover boy.” Just as in musical theatre songs such as “Wouldn’t it be Lovely” from *My Fair Lady* by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Lowe, the solo line of the main character is supported by a choir. The theatricality of a solo versus choral texture is made even more performative through allowing it to evoke a genre such as musical theater.

“Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy” also falls within Queen’s glam rock style, and thus through their performance, the band evokes femininity but also heterosexuality. In live performances, the song was performed as part of a medley of different glam songs including

“Killer Queen,” “Millionaire Waltz,” “You’re My Best Friend,” and “Bring Back That Leroy Brown,” often with Mercury wearing the skin-tight harlequin bodysuits he became famous for in the mid to late ‘70s. This slender article of clothing places him directly into the glam aesthetic not only through its feminine connotations, but also through its character-based associations with the harlequin from *commedia dell’arte*. In “Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy,” Mercury outlines and embodies a character: not the harlequin, but the dandy. The lyrics of the song reference a specific dandy by name, the Italian-American silent movie actor Rudolph Valentino (1895-1926): “we can do the tango just for two/I can serenade and gently play on your heartstrings/be your Valentino, just for you.” Known as a fastidious dresser, beloved by women, and financially well off, Valentino fit into the dandy category. The song’s evocation of Valentino served the purposes of highlighting the dandy’s feminine heterosexuality. Valentino was a sex symbol for his adoring female fans, and was often viewed by men as effeminate because he was primarily known as an object of sexual desire.⁴ At that time especially, it was only acceptable for women to be objectified by sexual desire, if the same happened for a man, particularly if his sex appeal was his main claim to fame, he was perceived as more feminine.⁵

While Valentino’s male American audience viewed this femininity as dangerous, Mercury actively chose to emulate him in “Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy.”⁶ The lyrics

⁴ Gaylyn Studlar, “Discourses of Gender and Ethnicity: The Construction and De(con)struction of Rudolph Valentino as Other,” *Film Criticism* 13, No. 2 (Winter 1989): 21.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

evoke the title character as feminized; his main activities are singing sad songs and fancily pattering on the telephone. Although presumably an adult, he is identified as a boy rather than a man, depriving him of a certain amount of masculinity. In addition, the lyrics “I’d like for you and I to go romancing/Say the word, your wish is my command” insinuate that as in Valentino’s earlier films, the “Lover Boy” in question is characterized by powerlessness and the desire to please his lover.⁷ Each of these aspects evoke cultural views about femininity to a certain degree. Despite what Valentino’s male audience might claim, Valentino identified as heterosexual, and his on-screen characters were also always heterosexual. While the lyrics of “Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy” emphasize the speaker’s effeminacy, they also highlight the traditional heterosexual stereotypes that he fulfills. For example, when dining at the Ritz, “I will pay the bill, you taste the wine/Driving back in style, in my saloon will do quite nicely.” Both paying for the meal and driving are traditionally the man’s responsibilities in a heterosexual relationship.

Besides evoking Valentino’s feminine yet heterosexual nature, “Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy” also takes advantage of Valentino’s dandy traits in order to perform Britishness. The lyrics’ emphasis on the “Lover Boy’s” passivity, status as a heterosexual love object, and presumed wealth (due to his dinner at the Ritz) situate him as a British, upper-class, dandy-like figure. In addition, the use of the music hall style situates the song as particularly British. Hawkins notes that there was a specific type of music hall performer called a swell who intentionally parodied the British upper classes and their “social pastimes of going to the

⁷ Elisabetta Girelli, “Before The Sheik: Rudolph Valentino and Sexual Melancholia,” *Film International* 13, No. 2 (June, 2015): 7.

racés, drinking champagne, gambling and womanizing.”⁸ Just as one of the most well-known swells, George Leybourne, emphasized the consumption of champagne in his song “Champagne Charlie,” Mercury in “Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy” emphasizes the womanizing.

“Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy” provides just one example of a song in which different layers of theatricality operate— the layers can be peeled back on any Queen song. While Queen’s music is difficult to categorize because of their chameleon-like use of different styles ranging from glam rock, to disco, to heavy metal, the one thing connecting all of their music is their multi-layered theatricality.

Innuendo

After being diagnosed with AIDS in 1987, Mercury faced his own mortality while still young and actively creative. He was forced into a premature backwards look and reflection on his career, producing songs and music videos that consider his place within Queen over time. The video for Queen’s 1989 song “The Miracle” reprises Mercury’s most famous outfits, from the harlequin bodysuit to his moustache and tight jeans. Because Mercury’s death also meant the “death” of Queen, he took the rest of the band with him on this retrospection. Taylor wrote the song “These are the Days of Our Lives,” for 1991’s *Innuendo*, which included nostalgic, backwards-looking lyrics:

Sometimes I get to feelin'
I was back in the old days, long ago
When we were kids, when we were young
Things seemed so perfect, you know?

⁸ Hawkins, 49-50.

The days were endless, we were crazy, we were young
The sun was always shinin', we just lived for fun
Sometimes it seems like lately, I just don't know
The rest of my life's been, just a show.

May wrote “The Show Must Go On” for the same album with lyrics ostensibly describing Queen’s continuation in the face of Mercury’s AIDS, echoing “Vesti la Giubba” and “It’s A Hard Life”: The show must go on [...] Inside my heart is breaking/My make-up may be flaking/But my smile still stays on.” In the broadest reflection on their career-long theatricality, Queen’s title track on *Innuendo* examines their multi-layered performativity in explicit detail.

“Innuendo’s” video incorporates a myriad of elements referencing theatricality: dolls, medieval jesters, toy theaters, movie theaters, and masks.⁹ In the beginning of the video, the perspective of the viewer slowly enters a toy theater, moving beyond red curtains that swing open to let the viewer in, past a set of double doors and another red curtain before finally entering a darkened movie theater full of dolls who are watching Queen perform on the screen. On the screen, each member of Queen appears as a stylized drawing: Mercury sketched out with a pencil, Deacon as a Picasso-esque painting, May as a pixelated newspaper print, and Taylor as a splash of watercolor. These two-dimensional representations add a level of theatricality in that the drawings represent the band, but they are not “really” the band. In between scenes of the band performing, the screen shows different masks, one after the other. The masks appear and disappear quickly and are interspersed with Mercury’s and Deacon’s faces as depicted by the pencil drawing and

⁹ Queen Official, “Queen - Innuendo (Official Video),” Youtube video, 6:46, posted October 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2N0TkfrQhY>.

Picasso painting, yet their faces are so embedded within the display of masks it would be easy to miss their appearance.

Harkening back to some of Queen's earlier music such as "Bohemian Rhapsody" or "The March of the Black Queen," "Innuendo" has an extended form with several contrasting sections. The music video formally follows these sections by changing subject matter with stylistic shifts in the music. An inner section features flamenco guitar played by Steve Howe of the band Yes, and the accompanying video takes place outside of the toy theater. In this flamenco portion, masked clay jesters dance around and perform acrobatic feats. The camera does a quick zoom into one of the jesters' eyes, which reveals a spinning clay head with many different faces, eventually becoming a kaleidoscopic image of falling masks. The lyrics to accompany the rotating mask-head are: "you can be anything you want to be/Just turn yourself into anything you think that you could ever be/Be free with your tempo, be free, be free/Surrender your ego be free, be free to yourself." The combination of image and lyrics at this point in the song implies that identity is theatrical. The song suggests that through putting on a mask you do not conceal your true self; instead you choose to transform into a different version of yourself. As the video ends, the camera leaves the toy theater backwards, but it never exits, as the image of the curtain closing behind the camera repeats itself until the picture fades away.

Through the myriad of references to performance and theatricality in 1991's "Innuendo," Queen again asks the question posited by glam at the beginning of their career: if the characterization of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationality through music is performance, what precludes life off-stage from also being performance? Mercury's

statement concerning his own malleable identity shows not only why he wrote music in styles as diverse as heavy metal and disco, but also displays how performativity extended beyond his musical identity: “I sort of change from day to day like a chameleon and each day is different to me and I look forward to that, you know. I don’t want to be the same person everyday [sic].”¹⁰ Throughout their career, Queen explored the relationship of identity and theatricality through their music, which, while varying greatly in style and genre, was always performed with both conviction and playfulness.

Because of Queen’s ability to transform identity into archetype, their audiences were able to understand the band’s music in a way that specifically related to each audience member’s own identity. Queen’s relationship with their audience is somewhat different than other rock acts in that they invited performativity from the crowd. May described his desire to encourage the audiences’ performance with his song “We Will Rock You” in a 2017 interview:

There were two occasions that inspired it. One I've spoken about a lot, which was at Bingley Hall [near Birmingham, England] where the audience sang every song and then we went off stage and they carried on singing and then they sang [the de facto Liverpool F.C. football anthem] “You'll Never Walk Alone.” It was a transitional time in rock. You went to see Led Zeppelin and The Who, you'd bang your head but you didn't sing along, that wasn't cool. This was an invitation to sing along.

A light went off and I thought, "We shouldn't fight this, we should embrace it!" People didn't do that at the time at rock concerts. I thought, “How interesting -- if I wrote something, the audience could participate it to the point that they could lead the band?” I went to sleep and woke up with “We Will Rock You” in my head. When

¹⁰ “XX-XX-1985 – Unknown.”

you're at a show you can hardly move, but you can stomp your feet and chant and clap and lead us.¹¹

Not only did the audience at Bingley Hall perform by singing along with Queen, but after the band left the stage they spontaneously took it upon themselves to perform a song not even by Queen. As shown by May's quote, the band embraced this participation rather than fought it, specifically writing songs for the audience to perform. In addition, Mercury was known for vocalizing and encouraging the audience to repeat musical phrases, letting them access both his vocality and his theatricality.

Beyond this theatricality of vocal performance, the audience also participated in Queen's theatricality of identity through their emotional understanding of Queen's music. Because Mercury never revealed a "true" meaning of "Bohemian Rhapsody," each listener has the freedom to construct a personal interpretation and in a way that resonates with a singular identity. Auslander pinpoints the audience's agency in their understanding of what a specific performer means to them:

Performers, then, are valuable to a particular audience not because they can demonstrate definitively that they belong to the same identity category as the members of that audience but because they give those audience members material from which to construct the performers' identities in terms of their own identities and desires.¹²

¹¹ Gil Kaufman, "Queen's 'We Will Rock You/We Are The Champions' 40 Years Later: A History of the Biggest Jock Jam Single of All Time," *Billboard*, September 22, 2017, accessed April 3, 2019, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/rock/7972856/queen-we-will-rock-you-we-are-the-champions-jock-jam-interview>.

¹² Auslander, 233-4.

Auslander is speaking specifically about glam's relationship to gender and sexuality, however, this idea applies broadly to Queen's music and their relationship with their audience throughout their career. Queen provided the material for members of their audience who identify as homosexual, bisexual, heterosexual, British, African, Indian, Parsi, South American, Japanese, as well as many other groups. Auslander briefly notes that the construction of a performer's identity can extend to and influence the audience's construction of their own identity.¹³ Fundamental to Queen's popularity are the ways that Queen dramatized performance of the self in diverse ways on-stage, thereby inviting their audience to construct and perform their own identities as well.

Queen blurred the lines between the stage and "real life," employing personal identity and public theatricality both on and off stage. Their dramatization of identity in music painted many different pictures in broad brush strokes, allowing diverse people to recognize themselves in Queen's music. Queen continuously participated in self-creation that evolved and changed and did so publicly as one of the most famous bands of their time. The various ways in which the members of Queen constructed their identity on the world stage not only helped make Queen's music attractive to audiences, but it also allowed those audiences to consider their own evolving identities. Mercury often remarked that Queen's goal was to create escapist entertainment and "disposable pop" through putting on a theatrical show that distracted from life's problems.¹⁴ In this endeavor they succeeded; however, because their theatrical show also addressed identity in deep and multifaceted ways, their music went

¹³ Ibid., 234.

¹⁴ "Interview," 1981.

beyond entertainment to inspire diverse interpretations with social and political implications that resonate to this day.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF SONGS FROM STUDIO ALBUMS OR SINGLES

year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
1973	<i>Queen</i>	Son and Daughter		May				
1973	<i>Queen</i>	Doing All Right		May/Staffel				
1973	<i>Queen</i>	Great King Rat		Mercury				
1973	<i>Queen</i>	Liar	yes	Mercury				yes
1973	<i>Queen</i>	Jesus		Mercury				
1973	<i>Queen</i>	Modern Times Rock 'n' Roll		Taylor				
1973	<i>Queen</i>	My Fairy King		Mercury				
1973	<i>Queen</i>	Seven Seas of Rhye...		Mercury			instrumental, also on <i>Queen II</i> with vocals	
1973	<i>Queen</i>	The Night Comes Down		May				
1973	<i>Queen</i>	Keep Yourself Alive	yes	May				yes
1973	single	Mad the Swine	yes	Mercury				
1974	<i>Queen II</i>	Funny How Love Is		Mercury				
1974	<i>Queen II</i>	White Queen (As it Began)		May				
1974	<i>Queen II</i>	Seven Seas of Rhye	yes	Mercury	10	-	an instrumental version on <i>Queen</i>	
1974	<i>Queen II</i>	Procession		May			instrumental intro to album	

year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
1974	<i>Queen II</i>	Father to Son		May				
1974	<i>Queen II</i>	Someday One Day		May				
1974	<i>Queen II</i>	Ogre Battle		Mercury				
1974	<i>Queen II</i>	The Fairy Fellers Master-Stroke		Mercury				
1974	<i>Queen II</i>	Nevermore		Mercury				
1974	<i>Queen II</i>	The March of the Black Queen		Mercury				
1974	<i>Queen II</i>	The Loser in the End		Taylor				
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	Lily of the Valley	yes	Mercury				
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	Brighton Rock		May				
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	Misfire		Deacon				
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	Now I'm Here	yes	May	11	-		yes
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	Dear Friends		May				
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	She Makes Me (Stormtroopers in Stilettoes)		May				
1974	<i>Sheer Heart</i>	Bring Back That Leroy Brown		Mercury				

year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
	<i>Attack</i>							
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	Flick of the Wrist		Mercury				
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	In the Lap of the Gods		Mercury				
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	In the Lap of the Gods... Revisited		Mercury				
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	Killer Queen	yes	Mercury	2	12		
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	Stone Cold Crazy		Queen				
1974	<i>Sheer Heart Attack</i>	Tenement Funster		Taylor				
1974	Single	See What A Fool I've Been	yes	May			influenced by "That's How I Feel" by Sonny Terry	
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	The Prophet's Song		May				
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	You're My Best Friend	yes	Deacon	7	16		yes
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	39		May				
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	Good Company		May				
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	Sweet Lady		May				

	<i>the Opera</i>							
year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	God Save the Queen		May - arr.				
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	Bohemian Rhapsody	yes	Mercury	1	9		yes
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	Love of my Life		Mercury				yes
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	Death on Two Legs (Dedicated to...)		Mercury				
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	Lazing on a Sundy Afternoon		Mercury				
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	Seaside Rendezvous		Mercury				
1975	<i>A Night at the Opera</i>	I'm in Love with my Car		Taylor				yes
1976	<i>A Day at the Races</i>	Long Away	yes	May				
1976	<i>A Day at the Races</i>	Somebody to Love	yes	Mercury	2	13		yes
1976	<i>A Day at the Races</i>	White Man		May				
1976	<i>A Day at the Races</i>	You and I		Deacon				
1976	<i>A Day at the Races</i>	Tie Your Mother Down	yes	May	31	49		yes
1976	<i>A Day at the Races</i>	Teo Torriatte (Let Us Cling Together)	yes	May				
1976	<i>A Day at the Races</i>	Good Old Fashioned Lover	yes	Mercury	17	-		

year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
		Boy						
1976	<i>A Day at the Races</i>	The Millionaire Waltz		Mercury				
1976	<i>A Day at the Races</i>	You Take my Breath Away		Mercury				
1976	<i>A Day at the Races</i>	Drowse		Taylor				
1977	<i>News of the World</i>	Spread Your Wings	yes	Deacon	34	-		yes
1977	<i>News of the World</i>	Who Needs You		Deacon				
1977	<i>News of the World</i>	We Will Rock You	yes	May	2	4		yes
1977	<i>News of the World</i>	All Dead, All Dead		May				
1977	<i>News of the World</i>	It's Late	yes	May	-	74		
1977	<i>News of the World</i>	Sleeping on the Sidewalk		May				
1977	<i>News of the World</i>	We are the Champions	yes	Mercury	2	4		yes
1977	<i>News of the World</i>	Get Down, Make Love		Mercury				
1977	<i>News of the World</i>	My Melancholy Blues		Mercury				
1977	<i>News of the World</i>	Fight from the Inside		Taylor				
1977	<i>News of the World</i>	Sheer Heart Attack		Taylor				
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	If You Can't Beat Them		Deacon				
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	In Only Seven		Deacon				

year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	Fat Bottomed Girls	yes	May	11	24		yes
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	Dead on Time		May				
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	Dreamers Ball		May				
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	Leaving Home Ain't Easy		May				
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	Don't Stop Me Now	yes	Mercury	9	86		yes
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	Bicycle Race	yes	Mercury	11	24		yes
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	Jealousy	yes	Mercury				
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	Let Me Entertain You		Mercury				
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	Mustapha	yes	Mercury				
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	Fun It		Taylor				
1978	<i>Jazz</i>	More of That Jazz		Taylor				
1980	<i>The Game</i>	Another One Bites the Dust	yes	Deacon	7	1		yes
1980	<i>The Game</i>	Need Your Loving Tonight	yes	Deacon	-	44		
1980	<i>The Game</i>	Save Me	yes	May	11	-		yes
1980	<i>The Game</i>	Dragon Attack		May				
1980	<i>The Game</i>	Sail Away Sweet Sister		May				
1980	<i>The Game</i>	Play The Game	yes	Mercury	14	42		yes
1980	<i>The Game</i>	Crazy Little Thing Called	yes	Mercury	2	1		yes

year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
		Love						
1980	<i>The Game</i>	Don't Try Suicide		Mercury				
1980	<i>The Game</i>	Coming Soon		Taylor				
1980	<i>The Game</i>	Rock It (Prime Jive)		Taylor				
1980	single	A Human Body	yes	Taylor				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Execution of Flash		Deacon				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Flash's Theme	yes	May	10	42		yes
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Battle Theme		May				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Crash Dive on Mingo City		May				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Flash to the Rescue		May				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Flash's Theme Reprise		May				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	The Hero		May				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	The Wedding March		May				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Marriage of Dale and Ming		May/Taylor				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Arboria		Mercury				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Football Fight		Mercury				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Ming's Theme		Mercury				

year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	The Kiss		Mercury				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	The Ring		Mercury				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Vultan's Theme		Mercury				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Escape From the Swamp		Taylor				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	In the Death Cell		Taylor				
1981	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	In the Space Capsule		Taylor				
1981	single	Soul Brother	yes	Mercury				
1982	<i>Hot Space</i>	Under Pressure	yes	David Bowie/Queen	1	29		yes
1982	<i>Hot Space</i>	Back Chat	yes	Deacon	40	-		yes
1982	<i>Hot Space</i>	Cool Cat		Deacon/Mercury				
1982	<i>Hot Space</i>	Dancer		May				
1982	<i>Hot Space</i>	Las Palabras De Amor (The Words of Love)	yes	May	17	-		
1982	<i>Hot Space</i>	Put Out the Fire		May				
1982	<i>Hot Space</i>	Body Language	yes	Mercury	25	11		yes
1982	<i>Hot Space</i>	Life is Real (Song for Lennon)		Mercury				

year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
1982	<i>Hot Space</i>	Staying Power	yes	Mercury				
1982	<i>Hot Space</i>	Calling all Girls	yes	Taylor	-	60		yes
1982	<i>Hot Space</i>	Action This Day		Taylor				
1984	<i>The Works</i>	I Want to Break Free	yes	Deacon	3	45		yes
1984	<i>The Works</i>	Hammer to Fall	yes	May	13	-		yes
1984	<i>The Works</i>	Tear it Up		May				
1984	<i>The Works</i>	Is This the World we Created?		May/Mercury				
1984	<i>The Works</i>	Machines (Back to Humans)		May/Taylor				
1984	<i>The Works</i>	It's a Hard Life	yes	Mercury	6	72		yes
1984	<i>The Works</i>	Keep Passing the Open Windows		Mercury				
1984	<i>The Works</i>	Man on the Prowl		Mercury				
1984	<i>The Works</i>	Radio Ga Ga	yes	Taylor	2	16		yes
1984	single	Thank God It's Christmas	yes	May and Taylor	21	-		
1984	single	I Go Crazy	yes	May				
1985	single	Blurred Vision	yes	Queen				
1986	<i>A Kind of Magic</i>	One Year of Love	yes	Deacon				

year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
1986	<i>A Kind of Magic</i>	Friends will be Friends	yes	Deacon/Mercury	14	-		yes
1986	<i>A Kind of Magic</i>	Pain is so Close to Pleasure	yes	Deacon/Mercury				
1986	<i>A Kind of Magic</i>	Who Wants to Live Forever	yes	May	24	-		yes
1986	<i>A Kind of Magic</i>	Gimme the Prize (Kurgan's Theme)		May				
1986	<i>A Kind of Magic</i>	Princes of the Universe	yes	Mercury				yes
1986	<i>A Kind of Magic</i>	One Vision	yes	Queen	7	61		yes
1986	<i>A Kind of Magic</i>	A Kind of Magic	yes	Taylor	3	42		yes
1986	<i>A Kind of Magic</i>	Don't Lose your Head		Taylor				
1986	single	A Dozen Red Roses for my Darling	yes	Taylor			instrumental	
1989	<i>The Miracle</i>	Scandal	yes	May	25	-		yes
1989	<i>The Miracle</i>	Was it All Worth It		Mercury				
1989	<i>The Miracle</i>	The Miracle	yes	Queen	21	-		yes
1989	<i>The Miracle</i>	I Want It All	yes	Queen	3	50		yes
1989	<i>The Miracle</i>	The Invisible Man	yes	Queen	12	-		yes
1989	<i>The Miracle</i>	Khashoggi's Ship		Queen				

year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
1989	<i>The Miracle</i>	My Baby Does Me		Queen				
1989	<i>The Miracle</i>	Party		Queen				
1989	<i>The Miracle</i>	Rain Must Fall		Queen				
1989	<i>The Miracle</i>	Breakthru	yes	Taylor/Mercury intro	7	-		yes
1989	single	Hijack my Heart	yes	Queen				
1989	single	Stealin'	yes	Queen				
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	Headlong	yes	May	14	-		yes
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	I'm Going Slightly Mad	yes	Mercury	22	-		yes
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	Delilah		Mercury				
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	Innuendo	yes	Queen	1	-		yes
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	The Show Must Go On	yes	Queen	16	-		yes
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	All God's People		Queen				
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	Bijou		Queen				
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	Don't Try So Hard		Queen				
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	I Can't Live With You		Queen				
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	The Hitman		Queen				
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	There are the Days of our Lives		Taylor				yes
1991	<i>Innuendo</i>	Ride the Wild Wind		Taylor				
1991	single	Lost	yes	May				

		Opportunity						
year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
1995	<i>Made In Heaven</i>	Too Much Love Will Kill You	yes	Lamers/Mary/Musker	15	-	Album created after Mercury's death	yes
1995	<i>Made In Heaven</i>	Mother Love		May/Mercury			Album created after Mercury's death	
1995	<i>Made In Heaven</i>	I was Born to Love You	yes	Mercury			Album created after Mercury's death	
1995	<i>Made In Heaven</i>	Made in Heaven		Mercury			Album created after Mercury's death	
1995	<i>Made In Heaven</i>	A Winter's Tale	yes	Queen	6	-	Album created after Mercury's death	yes
1995	<i>Made In Heaven</i>	It's A Beautiful Day		Queen			Album created after Mercury's death	
1995	<i>Made In Heaven</i>	It's a Beautiful Day (Reprise)		Queen			Album created after Mercury's death	
1995	<i>Made In Heaven</i>	Let Me Live	yes	Queen	9	-	Album created after Mercury's death	

year	Album	Song	Released as single?	songwriter	UK charts	US charts	comments	music video?
1995	<i>Made In Heaven</i>	My Life has been Saved		Queen				
1995	<i>Made In Heaven</i>	You Don't Fool Me	yes	Queen	17	-	Album created after Mercury's death	
1995	<i>Made In Heaven</i>	Heaven for Everyone	yes	Taylor	2	-	Album created after Mercury's death	yes

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Antonio_p82. "Queen - Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon (Live in Boston 30/01/1976)." Youtube video, 1:31. Posted March 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uK5YV_4WYQQ.
- Armstrong, William. "Amy Beach: New Gems in the Old Classics." *Etude Magazine*, February 1904. Accessed online, etudemagazine.com, March 31, 2019. <http://etudemagazine.com/etude/1904/02/amy-beach---new-gems-in-the-old-classics.html>.
- Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*, edited by Derek Scott. Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009.
- Auslander, Philip. *Performing Glam Rock: Gender and Theatricality in Popular Music*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006.
- Bellman, Jonathan. "Indian Resonances in the British Invasion, 1965-1968." in *The Exotic in Western Music*, edited by Jonathan Bellman, 292-306. Boston: Northeastern University, 1998.
- Bennett, Andy. "'Let me Know You're Out There!' Male Rock Vocal and Audience Participation." In *Perspectives on Males and Singing*, edited by Scott Harrison, Graham Welch, and Adam Adler, 287-295. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2012.
- "Beguiling Variety Crowns Queen's Divergent Efforts." *The Daily Oklahoman*, August 1982. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, April 8, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/08-26-1982-the-daily-oklahoman/>.
- Bennett, Anthony. "Music in the Halls." In *Music Hall: Performance and Style* Milton Keynes: Open University Press. 1986, 1-22.
- Bizzo, Nicola. "A Video-Iconographical Journey Through Queen's Production." *Music In Art: International Journal for Music Iconography* 32 No. 1/2 (Spring-Fall 2007): 205-224.
- blablably. "QUEEN - Live In Paris 1979 (Full Concert)." Youtube video, 1:02:57. Posted June 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJkN7Brkzg>.
- Black Sabbath. "Black Sabbath - 'War Pigs' Live Paris 1970." Youtube video, 7:31. Posted January 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3b6SGoN6dA>.
- Block, Adrienne Fried. *Amy Beach Passionate Victorian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

- Bob Harley. "Queen - Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke (Live @ the Rainbow 1974)." Youtube video, 2:52. Posted September 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NluN7URbsS0>.
- Braae, Nick. "Keeping Themselves Alive: Identifying and Analyzing Queen's Musical Development, 1973-1980." *Popular Music History* 9, No. 3 (December 2014): 248-269.
- Braae, Nick. "Queen's Classical Music References (1973-76) or Was Queen a Progressive Rock Band?" In *Prog Rock in Europe: Overview of a Persistent Music Style*, edited by Philippe Gonin, 117-130. Dijon, France: Éditions Universitaires de Dijon, 2016.
- Branch, Andrew. "All the Young Dudes: Educational Capital, Masculinity, and the Uses of Popular Music." *Popular Music* 31, No. 1 (January 2012): 25-44
- "British Rock Quartet Known For Black and White Garb." *The Advocate*, March 1976. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 19, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/03-09-1976-the-advocate-oh-british-rock-quartet-2/>.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Carla Maffioletti. "Mein Herr Marquis sung by Carla Maffioletti." Youtube video, 5:11. Posted February 2009. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFfGcxphj2o>.
- Carr, Paul and Hand, Richard. "'Twist'n Frugg in an Arrogant Gesture': Frank Zappa and the Musical-Theatrical Gesture." *Popular Musicology Online* 5 (2000)
- "Frank Zappa and Musical Theatre: Ugly Ugly O'phan Annie and Really Deep, Intense, Thought-Provoking Broadway Symbolism." *Studies in Musical Theatre* 1, No. 1 (2007): 41-56.
- Cohen, Mitchell. "Queen: The New British Invasion." *Phonograph Record*, March 1976. Accessed online, March 27, 2019, queenarchives.com. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/03-xx-1976-phonograph-record/>.
- Coon, Caroline. "Freddie Mercury: Queen Bee." *Melody Maker*, December 1974. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 30, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/12-21-1974-melody-maker/>.
- Crumpton, Taylor. "The History of Camp is Black and Queer." Afropunk. May 09, 2019. Accessed May 22, 2019. <https://afropunk.com/2019/05/black-queer-camp/>.

- De Boer, Jennifer Anne. "On the Margins of the Mainstream: Queen, the Rock Press, and Gender." Master's thesis, McMaster University, 2000.
- "Description and Sound of Distortion." *CVT Research Site*. Accessed March 26, 2019. <https://cvtresearch.com/effects/distortion/>.
- Desler, Anne. "History Without Royalty? Queen and the Strata of the Popular Music Canon." *Popular Music* 32, No. 3 (October 2013): 385-405.
- Dilling-Hansen, Lise. "'My Artpop Could Mean Anything': An Investigation of the Gender and Body Performances of Lady Gaga and of the Negotiation Practices and Affective Responses of the Gaga Fans." Doctoral Dissertation, Aarhus Universitet, Institut for Kommunikation og Kultur, 2015.
- Drew, Stephen. "Who Wants to Live Forever: Glam Rock, Queen and Fantasy Film." In *The Music of Fantasy Cinema*, edited by Janet Halfyard, 58-78. Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2012.
- Duchesne-Guillemain, Jacques. "Zoroastrianism." Encyclopædia Britannica. May 17, 2019. Accessed May 21, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Zoroastrianism/Practices-and-institutions>.
- Eastman, Jason T. "Southern Masculinity in American Rock Music." In *Perspectives on Males and Singing*, edited by Scott Harrison, Graham Welch, and Adam Adler, 271-286. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2012.
- Entertainment Tonight. "Watch Freddie Mercury's Rare 1982 ET Interview (Exclusive)." Youtube video, 3:03. Posted October 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywyzFJYGOig>.
- Fabtv. "Noel Coward sings 'Nina' on Live TV ◊ 1955." Youtube video, 4:35. Posted November 2009. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxsEYFYgkZo>.
- Farley, Helen. "Demons, Devils and Witches: The Occult in Heavy Metal Music." In *Heavy Metal Music in Britain*, edited by Gerd Bayer, 73-88. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.
- Fast, Susan. "Michael Jackson's Queer Musical Belongings." *Popular Music and Society* 35, No. 2 (May 2011): 281-300.
- Faulk, Barry. *British Rock Modernism, 1967-1977*. Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010.
- Fereydoun Rasti Zoroastrianism & Iran. "A CLASSROOM CONVERSATION WITH A ZOROASTRIAN PRIEST(Dasturji Dr. Firoze Kotwal)." Youtube video, 48:31. Posted September 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Utl0aTn8Hc>.

- Ferrari, Nick. "I Am the Champion: Why Fantastic Freddie Stole Live Aid Show." *The Sun*, July 1985. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 18, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/07-19-1985-the-sun/>.
- Fouché, Paul et. al. "Queen's Great Pretender: A Psychohistorical Sketch of Freddie Mercury." *Journal of Psychohistory* 46, No. 1 (Summer 2018): 17-36.
- "The Four Kings of Queen." *Music Star*, June 1974. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 13, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/06-15-1974-music-star/>.
- "Freddie Mercury Joins the Bigtime: What It's Like to Lead the British Touring Pack." *Circus Magazine*, March 1977. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 19, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/03-17-1977-circus-magazine/>.
- FrettFavre. "The World of Julie Andrews - The Honeysuckle and the Bee." Youtube video, 3:32. Posted July 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgarw2UrPwg>.
- Frith, Simon and McRobbie, Angela. "Rock and Sexuality." In *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word*, edited by Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin, 371-389. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Hauptfuhrer, Fred. "The Mercury That's Rising in Rock is Freddie the Satiny Seductor of 'Queen.'" *People Magazine*, December 1977. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 13, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/12-05-1977-people-magazine/>.
- Geyrhalter, Thomas. "Effeminacy, Camp and Sexual Subversion in Rock: The Cure and Suede." *Popular Music* 15, No. 2 (May 1996): 217-224.
- Girelli, Elisabetta. "Before The Sheik: Rudolph Valentino and Sexual Meloncholia." *Film International* 13, No. 2 (June, 2015): 6-18.
- Gould, Elizabeth S. "Queer Transversal: The Spectacle Adam Lambert." In *Musical Encounters with Deleuze and Guattari*, eduted by Pirkko Moisala, 107-128. New York: Bloomsbury, 2017.
- Hawkins, Stan. *The British Pop Dandy: Masculinity, Popular Music and Culture*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.
- Herbst, Christian et al. "Freddie Mercury- Acoustic Analysis of Speaking Fundamental Frequency, Vibrato, and Subharmonics." *Logopedics Phoniatics Vocology* 42, No. 1 (April 2017): 29-38.

- Hilderbrand, Lucas. ““Luring Disco Dollies to a Life of Vice’: Queer Pop Music’s Moment.” *Journal of Popular Music Studies: Trans/Queer* 25, No. 4 (December 2013): 415-438.
- Horide, Rosy. “Queen Deserve Rock’s Royal Crown?” *Circus Magazine*, January 1978. Accessed online, March 27, 2019, queenarchives.com. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/01-19-1978-circus-magazine/>.
- Hungarian Rhapsody: Queen Live in Budapest*. Produced by Justin Shirley-Smith. Burbank, CA: Hollywood Records, 2012. DVD.
- imputanium. “Freddie Mercury Interview Musical Prostitute part 1.” Youtube video, 9:55. Posted February 2007. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wk9hPubD1Q>.
- Ingham, John. “A Riot At The Opera: Queen Triumphant.” *Sounds*, November 1975. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 13, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/11-29-1975-sounds/>.
- “Mercury Rising: The Queen Interview.” *Sounds*, January 1976. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 19, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/01-xx-1976-sounds/>.
- “Interview.” *Melody Maker*, May 1981. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 15, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/05-02-1981-melody-maker/>.
- “Interview.” *New Musical Express*, November, 1974. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 30, 2019. http://www.queenarchives.com/index.php?title=Freddie_Mercury_-_11-02-1974_-_NME.
- Jahr, Cliff. “Elton John, Lonely at the Top: Rolling Stone’s 1976 Cover Story.” *Rolling Stone*, 1976. Accessed April 14, 2019. <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/elton-john-lonely-at-the-top-rolling-stones-1976-cover-story-238734/>.
- Jarman-Iverns, Freya. “Notes on Musical Camp.” In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*, edited by Derek B. Scott, 189-203. Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009.
- John Merriman. “Pavarotti - Vesti La Giubba.” Youtube video, 3:58. Posted June 2010. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0PMq4XGtZ4>.
- Johnson, Martha. “Reflections of Inner Life: Masks and Masked Acting in Ancient Greek Tragedy and Japanese Noh Drama.” *Modern Drama* 35, No. 1 (Spring 1992): 20-34.

- John Worfolk. "Beryl Reid - Old Time Music Hall Singalong." Youtube video 7:24. Posted October 2012.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBYq5a4Ks5U&list=RDqMGqgCgcaOQ&index=10>.
- Kaufman, Gil. "Queen's 'We Will Rock You/We Are The Champions' 40 Years Later: A History of the Biggest Jock Jam Single of All Time." *Billboard*. September 22, 2017, accessed April 3, 2019.
<https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/rock/7972856/queen-we-will-rock-you-we-are-the-champions-jock-jam-interview>.
- Kearney, Mary Celeste. *Gender and Rock*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Kendrick, John. *Musical Theatre: A History*. New York: Continuum, 2008.
- Kiel, Hilda. "Travel on a Song- the Roots of Zanzibar *Taarab*." *African Music: Journal of International Library of African Music* 9, No. 2 (2012): 77-93.
- Klinkmann, Sven-Erik. "Swedish Rock in Finland: 'The Sound Which is Not?'" In *Rockin' the Borders: Rock Music and Social, Cultural and Political Change*, edited by Björn Horgby, 89-116. Newcastle Upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars, 2010.
- Kuhlke, Olaf. "The Geography of Canadian Shield Rock: Locality, Nationality and Place Imagery in the Music of the Rheostatics." In *Sound, Society, and the Geogrphy of Popular Music*, edited by Ola Johansson, 161-184. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.
- Lacava, Jaques D. "The Theatricality of the Blues." *Black Music Research Journal* 12, No. 1 (Spring, 1992): 127-139.
- Leoncavallo, Ruggero. *Pagliacci*. New York: Schirmer, 1906.
- Lenig, Stuart. "The Theatre of Rock." *Popular Music and Society* 17, No. 1 (1993): 1-21.
- Lipsitz, George. *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place*. London: Verso, 1994.
- Live at the Rainbow '74*. Produced by Justin Shirley-Smith. London: Eagle Rock Entertainment, 2014. DVD.
- Lynch, John. "'Support our Boys': AIDS, Nationalism and the Male Body." *Paragraph* 26, No. 1/2 (March-July 2003): 175-187.

- Mahon, Maureen. *Right to Rock: The Black Rock Coalition and the Cultural Politics of Race*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2004.
- The Making of A Night at the Opera*. Directed by Matthew Longfellow. London: Eagle Rock Entertainment, 2005. DVD.
- Malden, Aubrey. "The Fred Factor- The Insightful Marketing Story About a Man Who Changed the World of Rock." *Communicare* 31, No. 1 (July 2012): 61-75.
- Marke B. "The Musical Legacy of Gay Bathhouses." *Red Bull Music Academy*. Posted April 25, 2017. Accessed March 11, 2018. <http://daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2017/04/gay-bathhouse-musical-legacy>.
- Marsh, Dave. "Jazz." *Rolling Stone*, February 8, 1979. Accessed March 11, 2019. <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-album-reviews/jazz-188987/>.
- Marshall, P. David. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.
- McAlpine, Fraser. "The Brits and Cross-Dressing: A History." BBC America. 2014. Accessed May 21, 2019. <http://www.bbcamerica.com/anglophenia/2014/11/brits-cross-dressing-history>.
- McLaughlin, Noel. "Pop and the Periphery: Nationality, Culture and Irish Popular Music" Doctoral Dissertation, University of Ulster, 1999.
- McLeod, Ken. "Bohemian Rhapsodies: Operatic Influences on Rock Music." *Popular Music* 20, No. 2 (2001): 189-203.
- McLeod, Ken. "'We Are the Champions': Masculinities, Sports and Popular Music." *Popular Music and Society* 29, No. 5 (December 2006): 531-547.
- Migels1000. "Queen - Lazing on a Sunday Afternoon (Live in Tokyo, Japan '76)." Youtube video, 1:28. Posted February 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NETASm__pU.
- Morris, Mitchell. "'Cabaret', America's Weimar, and Mythologies of the Gay Subject." *American Music* 22, No. 1 (Spring 2004): 145-157.
- "Mustapha (Queen song)." enacademic.com. Accessed April 14, 2019. <http://enacademic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/11781228>.
- My Queen Collection. "Queen | Teo Torriatte (Live in Tokyo 1979 - Remastered)." Youtube video, 4:15. Posted June 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDynFluHPJs>.

- Official Sweet Channel. "Sweet - Little Willy - Top Of The Pops/Disco 1972 (OFFICIAL)." Youtube video, 3:04. Posted November 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NM6I-pmV0RA>.
- Ozun, Sule Okuroglu. "Temporal Dimensions of Identity: The Case of South Asian Diaspora Living in Britain." *University of Bucharest Review* 11, No. 1 (2009): 131-137.
- "Parsi." Encyclopædia Britannica. September 28, 2018. Accessed May 21, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Parsi>.
- Penn, William H. *The Honeysuckle and the Bee*. Chicago: Sol Bloom, 1901.
- Pohly, Linda. "Barbra Streisand and the Theatricality of Popular Song: Vocal Technique and a Director's Eye." *The American Music Research Center Journal* 6 (1996): 69-87. *Popular Music: Gender and Sexuality* 20, No. 3 (October 2001).
- Promane, Barry C. "Freddie Mercury and Queen: Technologies of Genre and the Poetics of Innovation." Doctoral dissertation, The University of Western Ontario, 2009.
- "Queen- Bicycle Race." *Song Meanings*. Accessed March 11, 2019. <https://songmeanings.com/songs/view/13151/>.
- Queen Official. "Queen - Another One Bites The Dust (Live)." Youtube video, 3:52. Posted January 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NV1bCvfkO3E>.
- "Queen - Body Language (Official Video)." Youtube video, 4:41. Posted October 2008. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2EDkv_dyeI.
- "Queen - I'm Going Slightly Mad (Official Video)." Youtube video, 4:31. Posted October 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od6hY_50Dh0.
- "Queen - Innuendo (Official Video)." Youtube video, 6:46. Posted October 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2N0TkfrQhY>.
- "Queen - I Want To Break Free (Official Video)." Youtube video, 4:31. Posted September 2008. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4Mc-NYPHaQ>.
- "Queen - Killer Queen (Top of the Pops, 1974)." Youtube video, 3:11. Posted August 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZBtPf7FOoM>.
- "Queen - Lazing On A Sunday Afternoon (Official Lyric Video)." Youtube video, 1:15. Posted September, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU6EyXcFBxA>.

- "Queen - Liar (Official Video)." Youtube video, 6:34. Posted September 2008.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oU7rqB9E_0M.
- "Queen – Princes of the Universe (Official Video)." Youtube video, 3:55. Posted December 2008. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEJ8lpCQbyw>.
- "Queen - The Miracle (Official Video)." Youtube video, 5:22. Posted September 2008.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DaY8-Mui0I>.
- "Queen - We Are The Champions (Live At Wembley Stadium, Saturday 12 July 1986)." Youtube video, 4:10. Posted January 2014.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFbAVJiPPEA>.
- Queen. *Queen: 13 Note-for-Note Keyboard Transcriptions From the Original Recordings* Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2016.
- Queen Rock Montreal*. Produced by Justin Shirley-Smith. Burbank, CA: Hollywood Records, 2007. DVD.
- Reynolds, Simon. "London Glam City: Poseurs, Dreamers, Heroes, and Monsters, from the Bromley Contingent and Blitz to the Batcave and Leigh Bowery." In *Totally Wired: Post-Punk Interviews and Overviews*, edited by Simon Reynolds, London: Faber and Faber, 2009.
- Richards, Matt and Langthorne, Mark. *Somebody to Love: The Life, Death, and Legacy of Freddie Mercury*. San Francisco: Weldon Owen, 2016.
- Rizzoli, Bianca. "Fan and Journalist Discourses on the Music of Queen: An International Perspective." Doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa, 2005.
- Rosand, Ellen. "The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem of Lament." *The Musical Quarterly* 65, No. 3 (July 1979): 346-359.
- Routledge International Encyclopedia of Queer Culture*. Edited by David A. Gerstner. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Rush, Don. "Part 2: The Queen Tapes." *Circus Magazine*, March 1977. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 13, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/03-17-1977-circus-magazine/>.
- sektar. "Queen - Brian May "Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner + Love Of My Life" London O2 Arena 17 Jan 2015." Youtube video, 6:34. Posted January 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZWbcmu7Uxw>.

- Sheppard, W. Anthony. *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001..
- “Shirazi and Arabs of Zanzibar.” *Minority Rights Group International*. Accessed March 25, 2019. <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/shirazi-and-arabs-of-zanzibar/>.
- Sontag, Susan. "Notes on 'Camp.'" In *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, 275-292. New York: Picador, 1966.
- “Standing Up For Queen.” *Melody Maker*, July 1973. accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 13, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/07-28-1973-melody-maker/>.
- “Staying Power.” *Queen Songs Recording and Songwriting*. Accessed March 11, 2019. <https://www.queensongs.info/song-analysis/songwriting-analyses/modern-era-queen/hot-space/staying-power>.
- Stewart, Tony. “Freddie Mercury: Is This Man a Prat?” *New Musical Express*, June 1977. Accessed online, queenarchives.com, March 18, 2019. <http://queenarchives.com/qa/06-18-1977-nme/>.
- Stockdale, Nancy L. "No Escape From Reality: The Postcolonial Glam of Freddie Mercury." In *Global Glam and Popular Music: Style and Spectacle from the 1970s to the 2000s*, edited by Ian Chapman, 83-97. New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Strauss, Johann Jr. *Die Fledermaus*, arranged by Richard Genée. Leipzig: Friederich Schreiber, 1875.
- Studlar, Gaylyn. “Discourses of Gender and Ethnicity: The Construction and De(con)struction of Rudolph Valentino as Other.” *Film Criticism* 13, No. 2 (Winter 1989): 18-35.
- Tattleman, Ira. “Staging Sex and Masculinity at the Mineshaft.” *Men and Masculinities* 7, No. 3 (January 2005): 300-309.
- “translation for Mustapha?” queenzone.com. Accessed April 14, 2019. <http://www.queenzone.com/forum/600596/mustapha-lyrics.aspx>.
- Vela, Janina Ann. “Is Ziggy Stardust Camp?: David Bowie as a Case Study in Music and Camp.” Masters Thesis, Texas State University-San Marcos, 2010.
- Waksman, Steve. “Arenas of the Imagination: Global Tours and the Heavy Metal Concert in the 1970s.” In *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the World*, edited by Jeremy Wallach, 227-246. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.

----- . “Black Sound, Black Body: Jimi Hendrix, the Electric Guitar, and the Meanings of Blackness.” *Popular Music and Society* 23, No. 1 (Spring 1999): 75-113.

----- . “Every Inch of my Love: Led Zeppelin and the Problem of Cock Rock.” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 8 (1996): 5-25.

Whiteley, Sheila. “Which Freddie? Constructions of Masculinity in Freddie Mercury and Justin Hawkins.” In *Oh Boy! Making Masculinity in Popular Music*, edited by Freya Jarman-Ivens, 21-37. New York: Routledge, 2007.

“XX-XX-1985 – Unknown.” queenarchives.com, 1985. Accessed March 13, 2019.
<http://queenarchives.com/qa/xx-xx-1985-unknown-2/>.

Zagorski-Thomas, Simon. "The Stadium in Your Bedroom: Functional Staging, Authenticity, and the Audience-led Aesthetic in Record Production." *Popular Music* 29, No. 2 (May 2010): 251-266.

VITA

Grace Kate Odell grew up in Moonville, SC. She attended the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, graduating high school in 2012. In 2016, she received a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from Furman University where she studied with David Gross. In 2019, she will receive a Master of Music in Piano Performance and a Master of Music in Musicology from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.