

= Freddie Mercury =

Freddie Mercury (born Farrokh Bulsara ; 5 September 1946 ? 24 November 1991) was a British singer , songwriter and record producer , known as the lead vocalist and co @-@ principal songwriter of the rock band Queen . He also became known for his flamboyant stage persona and four @-@ octave vocal range . Mercury wrote and composed numerous hits for Queen (" Bohemian Rhapsody , " " Killer Queen , " " Somebody to Love , " " Don 't Stop Me Now , " " Crazy Little Thing Called Love , " and " We Are the Champions . ") ; occasionally served as a producer and guest musician (piano or vocals) for other artists ; and concurrently led a solo career while performing with Queen .

Mercury was born of Parsi descent in the Sultanate of Zanzibar and grew up there and in India until his mid @-@ teens , before moving with his family to Middlesex , England ? ultimately forming the band Queen in 1970 with Brian May and Roger Taylor . Mercury died in 1991 at age 45 due to complications from AIDS , having acknowledged the day before his death that he 'd contracted the disease .

In 1992 Mercury was posthumously awarded the Brit Award for Outstanding Contribution to British Music , with a tribute concert held at Wembley Stadium , London . As a member of Queen , he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2001 , the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2003 , the UK Music Hall of Fame in 2004 , and the band received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2002 . In 2002 , he was placed at number 58 in the BBC 's poll of the 100 Greatest Britons . Consistently voted one of the greatest singers in the history of popular music , Mercury was voted best male singer of all time in a 2005 poll organised by Blender and MTV2 ; was ranked at 18 on the 2008 Rolling Stone list of the 100 greatest singers ever ; was elected in 2009 as the best rock singer of all time by Classic Rock ; ? and was described by AllMusic as " one of rock 's greatest all @-@ time entertainers , " with " one of the greatest voices in all of music . "

= = Early life = =

Mercury (born Farrokh Bulsara ; Gujarati : ?????? ?????? , Phar?kh Bals?r? ?) was born in the British protectorate of Sultanate of Zanzibar , East Africa (now part of Tanzania) . His parents , Bomi (1908 ? 2003) and Jer Bulsara (1922 ?) , were Parsis from the Gujarat region of the then province of Bombay Presidency in British India . The family surname is derived from the town of Bulsar (now known as Valsad) in southern Gujarat . As Parsis , Mercury and his family practised the Zoroastrian religion . The Bulsara family had moved to Zanzibar so that his father could continue his job as a cashier at the British Colonial Office . He had a younger sister , Kashmira .

Mercury spent most of his childhood in India and began taking piano lessons at the age of seven . In 1954 , at the age of eight , Mercury was sent to study at St. Peter 's School , a British @-@ style boarding school for boys , in Panchgani near Bombay (now Mumbai) . One of his formative musical influences at the time was Bollywood singer Lata Mangeshkar . At the age of 12 , he formed a school band , The Hectics , and covered rock and roll artists such as Cliff Richard and Little Richard . A friend from the time recalls that he had " an uncanny ability to listen to the radio and replay what he heard on piano . " It was also at St. Peter 's where he began to call himself " Freddie " , and in February 1963 he moved back to Zanzibar where he joined his parents at their flat .

At the age of 17 , Mercury and his family fled from Zanzibar for safety reasons due to the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution , in which thousands of Arabs and Indians were killed . The family moved into a small house in Feltham , Middlesex , England . Mercury enrolled at Isleworth Polytechnic (now West Thames College) in West London where he studied art . He ultimately earned a diploma in Art and Graphic Design at Ealing Art College (now the Ealing campus of University of West London) , later using these skills to design the Queen heraldic arms . A British citizen at birth , Mercury remained so for the rest of his life .

Following graduation , Mercury joined a series of bands and sold second @-@ hand clothes in the Kensington Market in London with girlfriend Mary Austin . He also held a job at Heathrow Airport . Friends from the time remember him as a quiet and shy young man who showed a great deal of

interest in music . In 1969 he joined the Liverpool @-@ based band Ibex , later renamed Wreckage . He lived briefly in a flat above the Liverpool pub , The Dovedale Towers . When this band failed to take off , he joined a second band called Sour Milk Sea . However , by early 1970 this group had broken up as well .

In April 1970 Mercury joined guitarist Brian May and drummer Roger Taylor who had previously been in a band called Smile . Despite reservations of the other members and Trident Studios , the band 's initial management , Mercury chose the name " Queen " for the new band . He later said , " It ? s very regal obviously , and it sounds splendid . It ? s a strong name , very universal and immediate . I was certainly aware of the gay connotations , but that was just one facet of it . " At about the same time , he changed his surname , Bulsara , to Mercury . Mercury designed Queen 's logo , called the Queen crest , shortly before the release of the band 's first album . The logo combines the zodiac signs of all four members : two lions for Leo (Deacon and Taylor) , a crab for Cancer (May) , and two fairies for Virgo (Mercury) . The lions embrace a stylised letter Q , the crab rests atop the letter with flames rising directly above it , and the fairies are each sheltering below a lion . There is also a crown inside the Q and the whole logo is over @-@ shadowed by an enormous phoenix . The whole symbol bears a passing resemblance to the Royal coat of arms of the United Kingdom , particularly with the lion supporters .

= = Career = =

= = = Singer = = =

Although Mercury 's speaking voice naturally fell in the baritone range , he delivered most songs in the tenor range . His vocal range extended from bass low F (F2) to soprano high F (F6) . He could belt up to tenor high F (F5) . Biographer David Bret described his voice as " escalating within a few bars from a deep , throaty rock @-@ growl to tender , vibrant tenor , then on to a high @-@ pitched , perfect coloratura , pure and crystalline in the upper reaches . " Spanish soprano Montserrat Caballé , with whom Mercury recorded an album , expressed her opinion that " the difference between Freddie and almost all the other rock stars was that he was selling the voice . " She adds , His technique was astonishing . No problem of tempo , he sang with an incisive sense of rhythm , his vocal placement was very good and he was able to glide effortlessly from a register to another . He also had a great musicality . His phrasing was subtle , delicate and sweet or energetic and slamming . He was able to find the right colouring or expressive nuance for each word .

A research team undertook a study in 2016 to understand the appeal behind Mercury 's voice . Led by Professor Christian Herbst , the team noted Mercury 's notably faster vibrato and use of subharmonics , particularly in comparison to opera singers . The research team studied vocal samples from 23 commercially available Queen recordings , his solo work , and a series of interviews of the late artist . They also used an endoscopic video camera to study a rock singer brought in to imitate Mercury 's singing voice .

= = = Songwriter = = =

Mercury wrote 10 of the 17 songs on Queen 's Greatest Hits album : " Bohemian Rhapsody , " " Seven Seas of Rhye , " " Killer Queen , " " Somebody to Love , " " Good Old @-@ Fashioned Lover Boy , " " We Are the Champions , " " Bicycle Race , " " Don 't Stop Me Now , " " Crazy Little Thing Called Love " and " Play the Game " .

The most notable aspect of his songwriting involved the wide range of genres that he used , which included , among other styles , rockabilly , progressive rock , heavy metal , gospel and disco . As he explained in a 1986 interview , " I hate doing the same thing again and again and again . I like to see what 's happening now in music , film and theatre and incorporate all of those things . " Compared to many popular songwriters , Mercury also tended to write musically complex material . For example , " Bohemian Rhapsody " is acyclic in structure and comprises dozens of chords . He also wrote six

songs from Queen II which deal with multiple key changes and complex material . " Crazy Little Thing Called Love , " on the other hand , contains only a few chords . Despite the fact that Mercury often wrote very intricate harmonies , he also claimed that he could barely read music . He wrote most of his songs on the piano and used a wide variety of different key signatures .

= = = Live performer = = =

Mercury was noted for his live performances , which were often delivered to stadium audiences around the world . He displayed a highly theatrical style that often evoked a great deal of participation from the crowd . A writer for The Spectator described him as " a performer out to tease , shock and ultimately charm his audience with various extravagant versions of himself . " David Bowie , who performed at the Freddie Mercury Tribute Concert and recorded the song " Under Pressure " with Queen , praised Mercury 's performance style , saying : " Of all the more theatrical rock performers , Freddie took it further than the rest ... he took it over the edge . And of course , I always admired a man who wears tights . I only saw him in concert once and as they say , he was definitely a man who could hold an audience in the palm of his hand . " Queen guitarist Brian May wrote that Mercury could make " the last person at the back of the furthest stand in a stadium feel that he was connected . "

One of Mercury 's most notable performances with Queen took place at Live Aid in 1985 , during which the entire stadium audience of 72 @,@ 000 people clapped , sang and swayed in unison . Queen 's performance at the event has since been voted by a group of music executives as the greatest live performance in the history of rock music . The results were aired on a television program called " The World 's Greatest Gigs " . Mercury 's powerful , sustained note during the a cappella section came to be known as " The Note Heard Round the World " . In reviewing Live Aid in 2005 , one critic wrote , " Those who compile lists of Great Rock Frontmen and award the top spots to Mick Jagger , Robert Plant , etc all are guilty of a terrible oversight . Freddie , as evidenced by his Dionysian Live Aid performance , was easily the most godlike of them all . "

Over the course of his career , Mercury performed an estimated 700 concerts in countries around the world with Queen . A notable aspect of Queen concerts was the large scale involved . He once explained , " We 're the Cecil B. DeMille of rock and roll , always wanting to do things bigger and better . " The band was the first ever to play in South American stadiums , breaking worldwide records for concert attendance in the Morumbi Stadium in São Paulo in 1981 . In 1986 , Queen also played behind the Iron Curtain when they performed to a crowd of 80 @,@ 000 in Budapest , in what was one of the biggest rock concerts ever held in Eastern Europe . Mercury 's final live performance with Queen took place on 9 August 1986 at Knebworth Park in England and drew an attendance estimated as high as 160 @,@ 000 . With the British national anthem " God Save the Queen " playing at the end of the concert , Mercury 's final act on stage saw him draped in a robe , holding a golden crown aloft , bidding farewell to the crowd .

= = = Instrumentalist = = =

As a young boy in India , Mercury received formal piano training up to the age of nine . Later on , while living in London , he learned guitar . Much of the music he liked was guitar @-@ oriented : his favourite artists at the time were The Who , The Beatles , Jimi Hendrix , David Bowie , and Led Zeppelin . He was often self @-@ deprecating about his own skills on both instruments and from the early 1980s onward began extensively using guest keyboardists for both Queen and his solo career . Most notably , he enlisted Fred Mandel (a Canadian musician who also worked for Pink Floyd , Elton John and Supertramp) for his first solo project , and from 1985 onward collaborated with Mike Moran (in the studio) and Spike Edney (in concert) .

Mercury played the piano in many of Queen 's most popular songs , including " Killer Queen , " " Bohemian Rhapsody , " " Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy , " " We Are the Champions , " " Somebody To Love " and " Don 't Stop Me Now . " He used concert grand pianos and , occasionally , other keyboard instruments such as the harpsichord . From 1980 onward , he also made frequent

use of synthesisers in the studio . Queen guitarist Brian May claims that Mercury was unimpressed with his own abilities at the piano and used the instrument less over time because he wanted to walk around onstage and entertain the audience . Although he wrote many lines for the guitar , Mercury possessed only rudimentary skills on the instrument . Songs like " Ogre Battle " and " Crazy Little Thing Called Love " were composed on the guitar ; the latter featured Mercury playing acoustic guitar both onstage and in the studio .

= = = Solo career = = =

In addition to his work with Queen , Mercury put out two solo albums and several singles . Although his solo work was not as commercially successful as most Queen albums , the two off @-@ Queen albums and several of the singles debuted in the top 10 of the UK Music Charts . His first solo effort involved his contribution to the Richard " Wolfie " Wolf mix of Love Kills on the 1984 album (the song also used as the end title theme for National Lampoon 's Loaded Weapon 1) and new soundtrack to the 1927 Fritz Lang film Metropolis . The song , produced by Giorgio Moroder , debuted at the number 10 position in the UK charts .

Mercury 's two full albums outside the band were Mr. Bad Guy (1985) and Barcelona (1988) . Mr. Bad Guy debuted in the top ten of the UK Album Charts . In 1993 , a remix of " Living on My Own , " a single from the album , posthumously reached number one on the UK Singles Charts . The song also garnered Mercury a posthumous Ivor Novello Award from the British Academy of Songwriters , Composers and Authors . Allmusic critic Eduardo Rivadavia describes Mr. Bad Guy as " outstanding from start to finish " and expressed his view that Mercury " did a commendable job of stretching into uncharted territory . " In particular , the album is heavily synthesiser @-@ driven in a way that is not characteristic of previous Queen albums .

His second album , Barcelona , recorded with Spanish soprano Montserrat Caballé , combines elements of popular music and opera . Many critics were uncertain what to make of the album ; one referred to it as " the most bizarre CD of the year . " The album was a commercial success , and the album 's title track debuted at No. 8 in the UK and was also a hit in Spain . The title track received massive air play as the official anthem of the 1992 Summer Olympics (held in Barcelona one year after Mercury 's death) . Caballé sang it live at the opening of the Olympics with Mercury 's part played on a screen , and again prior to the start of the 1999 UEFA Champions League Final between Manchester United and Bayern Munich in Barcelona .

In addition to the two solo albums , Mercury released several singles , including his own version of the hit " The Great Pretender " by The Platters , which debuted at No. 5 in the UK in 1987 . In September 2006 a compilation album featuring Mercury 's solo work was released in the UK in honour of what would have been his 60th birthday . The album debuted in the UK top 10 .

In 1981 ? 1983 Mercury recorded several tracks with Michael Jackson , including a demo of " State of Shock , " " Victory " and " There Must Be More to Life Than This " . None of these collaborations were officially released , although bootleg recordings exist . Jackson went on to record the single " State of Shock " with Mick Jagger for The Jacksons ' album Victory . Mercury included the solo version of " There Must Be More To Life Than This " on his Mr. Bad Guy album . In November 2011 , Brian May announced that a series of duets that Mercury recorded with Jackson were to be released in 2012 . He later updated the release date to autumn of 2013 and then to 2014 .

In addition to working with Michael Jackson , Mercury and Roger Taylor sang on the title track for Billy Squier 's 1982 studio release , Emotions in Motion and later contributed to two tracks on Squier 's 1986 release , Enough Is Enough , providing vocals on " Love is the Hero " and musical arrangements on " Lady With a Tenor Sax " .

= = Personal life = =

= = = Relationships = = =

In the early 1970s , Mercury had a long @-@ term relationship with Mary Austin , whom he met through guitarist Brian May . He lived with Austin for several years in West Kensington , London . By the mid @-@ 1970s , the singer had begun an affair with a male American record executive at Elektra Records and , in December 1976 , Mercury told Austin of his sexuality , which ended their romantic relationship . Mercury moved out of the flat they shared , into 12 Stafford Terrace in Kensington and bought Austin a place of her own nearby . They remained close friends through the years , with Mercury often referring to her as his only true friend . In a 1985 interview , Mercury said of Austin , " All my lovers asked me why they couldn 't replace Mary [Austin] , but it 's simply impossible . The only friend I 've got is Mary and I don 't want anybody else . To me , she was my common @-@ law wife . To me , it was a marriage . We believe in each other , that 's enough for me . " He also wrote several songs about Austin , the most notable of which is " Love of My Life . " Mercury 's final home , Garden Lodge , 1 Logan Place , a twenty @-@ eight room Georgian mansion in Kensington set in a quarter @-@ acre manicured garden surrounded by a high brick wall , had been picked out by Austin . In his will , Mercury left his London home to Austin , rather than his partner Jim Hutton , saying to her , " You would have been my wife and it would have been yours anyway . " Mercury was also the godfather of Austin 's oldest son , Richard .

During the early- to mid @-@ 1980s , he was romantically involved with Barbara Valentin , an Austrian actress , who is featured in the video for " It 's a Hard Life " . By 1985 , he began another long @-@ term relationship with hairdresser Jim Hutton (1949 ? 2010) . Hutton , who was tested HIV @-@ positive in 1990 , lived with Mercury for the last six years of his life , nursed him during his illness and was present at his bedside when he died . Hutton said Mercury died wearing the wedding band that Hutton had given him .

= = = Friendship with Kenny Everett = = =

Radio DJ Kenny Everett first met Mercury in 1974 when he invited the singer onto his breakfast show on Capital London . As two of Britain 's most flamboyant , outrageous and best @-@ loved entertainers , they shared much in common and instantly became close friends . Everett would play a major role in Queen 's early success when , in 1975 , armed with an advance copy of the single " Bohemian Rhapsody " , Mercury went to see Everett . While privately Everett doubted any station would play the song due to its length at over 6 minutes , he said nothing to Mercury and placed the song on the turntable , and , after hearing it , enthused : " forget it , it 's going to be number one for centuries " . While Capital Radio hadn 't officially accepted the song , the anarchic Everett would talk incessantly about a record he had but couldn 't play , before the song " accidentally " started playing , with Everett stating : " Oops , my finger must 've slipped . " Capital 's switchboard was jammed with callers wanting to know when the song was going to be released ? on one occasion Everett aired the song 36 times in one day .

During the 1970s , their friendship became closer , with Everett becoming advisor and mentor to Mercury , and Mercury as Everett 's confidante , helping him to accept his sexuality . Throughout the early- to mid @-@ 1980s , they continued to explore their homosexuality , as well as experimenting in drugs , and although they were never lovers , they did experience London night life on a regular basis together . By 1985 , they had fallen out over a disagreement on their using and sharing of drugs , and their friendship was further strained when Everett was outed by his biographer Audrey Lee " Lady Lee " Middleton , with Mercury taking Lee 's side . With both suffering from failing health , Mercury and Everett started talking again in 1989 , and they were able to reconcile their differences .

= = = Sexual orientation = = =

While some commentators claimed Mercury hid his sexual orientation from the public , others claimed he was " openly gay . " In December 1974 , when asked directly , " So how about being bent ? " by the New Musical Express , Mercury replied , " You 're a crafty cow . Let 's put it this way : there were times when I was young and green . It 's a thing schoolboys go through . I 've had my

share of schoolboy pranks . I 'm not going to elaborate further . " Homosexual acts between adult males over the age of 21 were decriminalised in the United Kingdom in 1967 , only seven years earlier . In the 1980s , he would often distance himself from his partner , Jim Hutton , during public events . In October 1986 , The Sun claimed Mercury had " confessed to a string of one @-@ night gay sex affairs . "

During his career , Mercury 's flamboyant stage performances sometimes led journalists to allude to his sexuality . Dave Dickson , reviewing Queen 's performance at Wembley Arena in 1984 for Kerrang ! , noted Mercury 's " camp " addresses to the audience and even described him as a " posing , pouting , posturing tart . " In 1992 , John Marshall of Gay Times expressed the following opinion : " [Mercury] was a ' scene @-@ queen , ' not afraid to publicly express his gayness , but unwilling to analyse or justify his ' lifestyle ' ... It was as if Freddie Mercury was saying to the world , ' I am what I am . So what ? ' And that in itself for some was a statement . " In an article for AfterElton , Robert Urban stated : " Mercury did not ally himself to ' political outness , ' or to LGBT causes . "

= = = Personality = = =

Although he cultivated a flamboyant stage personality , Mercury was shy and retiring when not performing , particularly around people he did not know well , and granted very few interviews . Mercury once said of himself : " When I 'm performing I 'm an extrovert , yet inside I 'm a completely different man . " While on stage , Mercury basked in the love from his audience ; Kurt Cobain 's suicide note mentions how he both admired and envied the way Mercury " seemed to love , relish in the love and adoration from the crowd . "

In 1987 Mercury celebrated his 41st birthday at the Pikes Hotel , Ibiza , several months after discovering that he had contracted HIV . Mercury sought much comfort at the retreat and was a close friend of the owner , Anthony Pike , who described Mercury as " the most beautiful person I 've ever met in my life . So entertaining and generous . " According to biographer Lesley @-@ Ann Jones , Mercury " felt very much at home there . He played some tennis , lounged by the pool , and ventured out to the odd gay club or bar at night . " The party , held on 5 September 1987 , has been described as " the most incredible example of excess the Mediterranean island had ever seen , " and was attended by some 700 people . A cake in the shape of Gaudi 's Sagrada Família was provided for the party , although the original cake collapsed and was replaced with a 2 @-@ metre @-@ long sponge with the notes from Mercury 's song " Barcelona " . The bill , which included 232 broken glasses , was presented to Queen 's manager , Jim Beach .

= = Illness and death = =

In October 1986 the British press reported that Mercury had his blood tested for HIV / AIDS at a Harley Street clinic . A reporter for The Sun , Hugh Whittow , questioned Mercury about the story at Heathrow Airport as he was returning from a trip to Japan . Mercury denied he had a sexually transmitted disease . According to his partner Jim Hutton , Mercury was diagnosed with AIDS shortly after Easter of 1987 . Around that time , Mercury claimed in an interview to have tested negative for HIV . Despite the denials , the British press pursued the rampant rumours over the next few years , fuelled by Mercury 's increasingly gaunt appearance , Queen 's absence from touring and reports from former lovers to various tabloid journals ? by 1990 the rumours about Mercury 's health were rife . At the 1990 Brit Awards held at the Dominion Theatre , London , on 18 February , a visibly frail Mercury made his final public appearance on stage when he joined the rest of Queen to collect the Brit Award for Outstanding Contribution to Music . Towards the end of his life , he was routinely stalked by photographers , while The Sun featured a series of articles claiming that he was ill ; notably in an article from November 1990 that featured an image of a haggard @-@ looking Mercury on the front page accompanied by the headline , " It 's official ? Freddie is seriously ill . "

However , Mercury and his inner circle of colleagues and friends , whom he felt he could trust , continually denied the stories , even after one front page article published on 29 April 1991 , showed Mercury appearing very haggard in what was by then a rare public appearance . It has been

suggested that he could have made a contribution to AIDS awareness by speaking earlier about his situation and his fight against the disease . Mercury kept his condition private to protect those closest to him , with Brian May confirming in a 1993 interview he had informed the band of his illness much earlier . Filmed in May 1991 , the music video for " These Are the Days of Our Lives " features a very thin Mercury , in what are his final scenes in front of the camera . The rest of the band were ready to record when Mercury felt able to come in to the studio , for an hour or two at a time . May says of Mercury : ? He just kept saying . ' Write me more . Write me stuff . I want to just sing this and do it and when I am gone you can finish it off . ? He had no fear , really . ? Justin Shirley @-@ Smith , the assistant engineer for those last sessions , states : ? This is hard to explain to people , but it wasn't sad , it was very happy . He [Freddie] was one of the funniest people I ever encountered . I was laughing most of the time , with him . Freddie was saying [of his illness] ' I ? m not going to think about it , I ? m going to do this.'

After the conclusion of his work with Queen in June 1991 Mercury retired to his home in Kensington , west London . His former partner , Mary Austin , had been a particular comfort in his final years , and in the last few weeks of his life made regular visits to his home to look after him . Near the end of his life Mercury was starting to lose his sight , and he deteriorated to the point where he could not get out of bed . Due to his worsening condition , Mercury decided to hasten his death by refusing to take his medication and continued taking only pain killers .

On 22 November 1991 , Mercury called Queen 's manager Jim Beach over to his Kensington home to discuss a public statement . The next day the following announcement was made to the international press on behalf of Mercury :

Following the enormous conjecture in the press over the last two weeks , I wish to confirm that I have been tested HIV positive and have AIDS . I felt it correct to keep this information private to date to protect the privacy of those around me . However , the time has come now for my friends and fans around the world to know the truth and I hope that everyone will join with me , my doctors and all those worldwide in the fight against this terrible disease . My privacy has always been very special to me and I am famous for my lack of interviews . Please understand this policy will continue .

On the evening of 24 November 1991 , a little over 24 hours after issuing that statement , Mercury died at the age of 45 at his home in Kensington . The official cause of death was bronchial pneumonia resulting from AIDS . Mercury 's close friend , Dave Clark of The Dave Clark Five , had taken over the bedside vigil when he died . Austin phoned Mercury 's parents and sister to break the news of his death , which reached newspaper and television crews by the early hours of 25 November .

On 27 November , Mercury 's funeral service was conducted by a Zoroastrian priest . In attendance at Mercury 's service were his family and 35 of his close friends , including the remaining members of Queen and Elton John . His coffin was carried into the chapel to the sounds of " Take My Hand , Precious Lord " / " You 've Got a Friend " by Aretha Franklin . Mercury was cremated at Kensal Green Cemetery , west London . In accordance with Mercury 's wishes , Mary Austin took possession of his ashes and buried them in an undisclosed location . The whereabouts of his ashes are believed to be known only to Austin , who has stated that she will never reveal where she buried them .

In his will , Mercury left the vast majority of his wealth , including his home and recording royalties , to Mary Austin and the remainder to his parents and sister . He left £ 500 @, @ 000 to his chef , Joe Fanelli ; £ 500 @, @ 000 to his personal assistant , Peter Freestone ; £ 100 @, @ 000 to his driver , Terry Giddings ; and £ 500 @, @ 000 to Jim Hutton . Austin continues to live at Mercury 's former home , Garden Lodge , Kensington , with her family . The outer walls of Garden Lodge in 1 Logan Place became a shrine to Mercury following his death , with mourners paying tribute by covering the walls in graffiti messages . Three years after his death , Time Out magazine reported , " Since Freddie 's death , the wall outside the house has become London 's biggest rock ' n ' roll shrine . " Today fans continue to visit to pay their respects with messages in letters appearing on the walls . Hutton was involved in a 2000 biography of Mercury , Freddie Mercury , the Untold Story , and also gave an interview for The Times in November 2006 for what would have been Mercury 's 60th

birthday .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Continued popularity = = =

The extent to which Mercury 's death may have enhanced Queen 's popularity is not clear . In the US , where Queen 's popularity had lagged in the 1980s , sales of Queen albums went up dramatically in 1992 , the year following his death . In 1992 , one American critic noted , " What cynics call the ' dead star ' factor had come into play ? Queen is in the middle of a major resurgence . " The movie Wayne 's World , which featured " Bohemian Rhapsody , " also came out in 1992 . According to the Recording Industry Association of America , Queen had sold 34 @. @ 5 million albums in the US by 2004 , about half of which had been sold since Mercury 's death in 1991 .

Estimates of Queen 's total worldwide record sales to date have been set as high as 300 million . In the UK , Queen has now spent more collective weeks on the UK Album Charts than any other musical act (including The Beatles) , and Queen 's Greatest Hits is the highest selling album of all time in the UK . Two of Mercury 's songs , " We Are the Champions " and " Bohemian Rhapsody , " have also each been voted as the greatest song of all time in major polls by Sony Ericsson and Guinness World Records , respectively . Both songs have been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame ; " Bohemian Rhapsody " in 2004 and " We Are the Champions " in 2009 . In October 2007 the video for " Bohemian Rhapsody " was voted the greatest of all time by readers of Q magazine .

= = = Posthumous Queen album = = =

In November 1995 , Queen released Made in Heaven , an album featuring Freddie Mercury 's previously unreleased final recordings from 1991 ? as well as outtakes from previous years and reworked versions of solo works by the surviving members . The album cover features the Freddie Mercury statue that overlooks Lake Geneva in Montreux , Switzerland , where he had written and recorded his last songs at Mountain Studios . The sleeve of the album contains the words , " Dedicated to the immortal spirit of Freddie Mercury . "

Featuring tracks such as " Too Much Love Will Kill You " and " Heaven for Everyone " , the album also contains the song " Mother Love " , the last vocal recording Mercury made prior to his death , which he completed using a drum machine , over which May , Taylor and Deacon later added the instrumental track . After completing the penultimate verse , Mercury had told the band he " wasn 't feeling that great " and stated , " I will finish it when I come back , next time " , however he never made it back into the studio , so May later recorded the final verse of the song .

= = = Tributes = = =

A statue in Montreux , Switzerland , by sculptor Irena Sedlecka , was erected as a tribute to Mercury . It stands almost 10 feet (3 metres) high overlooking Lake Geneva and was unveiled on 25 November 1996 by Mercury 's father and Montserrat Caballé , with bandmates Brian May and Roger Taylor also in attendance . Beginning in 2003 fans from around the world have gathered in Switzerland annually to pay tribute to the singer as part of the " Freddie Mercury Montreux Memorial Day " on the first weekend of September . The Bearpark And Esh Colliery Band played at the Freddie Mercury statue on 1 June 2010 .

In 1997 the three remaining members of Queen released " No @-@ One but You (Only the Good Die Young) , " a song dedicated to Mercury and all those that die too soon . In 1999 a Royal Mail stamp with an image of Mercury on stage was issued in his honour as part of the UK postal service 's Millennium Stamp series .

In 2009 a plaque was unveiled in Feltham , where Mercury and his family moved upon arriving in England in 1964 . The star in memory of Mercury 's achievements was unveiled on Feltham High

Street by his mother Jer Bulsara and Queen bandmate Brian May . A tribute to Queen was on display at the Fremont Street Experience in downtown Las Vegas throughout 2009 on its video canopy . In December 2009 a large model of Mercury wearing tartan was put on display in Edinburgh as publicity for the run of *We Will Rock You* at the Playhouse Theatre .

A statue of Mercury stood over the entrance to the Dominion Theatre in London 's West End from May 2002 to May 2014 for Queen and Ben Elton 's musical *We Will Rock You* .

For Mercury 's 65th birthday Google dedicated their Google Doodle to him . It included an animation set to the Mercury penned song , " Don 't Stop Me Now . "

Referring to " the late , great Freddie Mercury " in their 2012 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction speech , Guns N ' Roses quoted Mercury 's lyrics from his song " We Are the Champions " ; " I ' ve taken my bows , my curtain calls , you ' ve brought me fame and fortune and everything that goes with it , and I thank you all . "

Tribute was paid to Queen and Mercury at the closing ceremony of the 2012 Summer Olympics in London . The band 's performance of " We Will Rock You " with solo artist Jessie J was opened with a remastered video of Mercury 's " call and response " routine from 1986 's Wembley Stadium performance , with the 2012 crowd at the Olympic Stadium responding appropriately .

The frog genus *Mercurana* , discovered in 2013 in Kerala , India , was named as a tribute because Mercury 's " vibrant music inspires the authors " . In addition , the site of the discovery is very near to where Mercury spent most of his childhood . A new species of the genus *Heteragrion* (Odonata : Zygoptera) from Brazil was named *Heteragrion freddiemercuryi* in his honour , with the etymology : " I name this species after Freddie Mercury , artistic name of Farrokh Bulsara (1946 ? 1991) , superb and gifted musician and songwriter whose wonderful voice and talent still entertain millions of people around the world . "

== Importance in AIDS history ==

As the first major rock star to die of AIDS , Mercury 's death represented a very important event in the history of the disease . In April 1992 the remaining members of Queen founded The Mercury Phoenix Trust and organised The Freddie Mercury Tribute Concert for AIDS Awareness , to celebrate the life and legacy of Mercury and raise money for AIDS research , which took place on 20 April 1992 . The Mercury Phoenix Trust has since raised millions of pounds for various AIDS charities . The tribute concert , which took place at London 's Wembley Stadium for an audience of 72 @, @ 000 , featured a wide variety of guests including Robert Plant (of Led Zeppelin) , Roger Daltrey (of The Who) , Extreme , Elton John , Metallica , David Bowie , Annie Lennox , Tony Iommi (of Black Sabbath) , Guns N ' Roses , Elizabeth Taylor , George Michael , Def Leppard , Seal , Liza Minnelli , and U2 (via satellite) . Elizabeth Taylor spoke of Mercury as " an extraordinary rock star who rushed across our cultural landscape like a comet shooting across the sky . " The concert was broadcast live to 76 countries and had an estimated viewing audience of 1 billion people .

== Appearances in lists of influential individuals ==

Several popularity polls conducted over the past decade indicate that Freddie Mercury 's reputation may , in fact , have been enhanced since his death . For instance , in a 2002 vote to determine who the UK public considers the greatest British people in history , Mercury was ranked 58 in the list of the 100 Greatest Britons , broadcast by the BBC . He was further listed at the 52nd spot in a 2007 Japanese national survey of the 100 most influential heroes . Despite the fact that he had been criticised by gay activists for hiding his HIV status , author Paul Russell included Mercury in his book *The Gay 100 : A Ranking of the Most Influential Gay Men and Lesbians , Past and Present* . In 2008 Rolling Stone ranked Mercury 18 on its list of the Top 100 Singers Of All Time . Mercury was voted the greatest male singer in MTV 's 22 Greatest Voices in Music . In 2011 a Rolling Stone readers ' pick placed Mercury in second place of the magazine 's Best Lead Singers of All Time .

== Portrayal on stage ==

On 24 November 1997 , a monodrama about Freddie Mercury 's life , titled Mercury : The Afterlife and Times of a Rock God , opened in New York City . It presented Freddie Mercury in the hereafter : examining his life , seeking redemption and searching for his true self . The play was written and directed by Charles Messina and the part of Mercury was played by Khalid Gonçalves (né Paul Gonçalves) and then later , Amir Darvish . Billy Squier opened one of the shows with an acoustic performance of a song he had written about Mercury titled " I Have Watched You Fly . "

= = = Portrayals in film and television = = =

= = = Proposed film = = =

Brian May announced in a September 2010 BBC interview that Sacha Baron Cohen , previously known for his comedic characters Borat , Ali G and Brüno , had been chosen to play Mercury in a film about his life . TIME commented with approval on his singing ability and resemblance to Mercury . The motion picture is being written by Peter Morgan , who had been nominated for Oscars for his screenplays The Queen and Frost / Nixon . The film , which is being co @-@ produced by Robert De Niro 's TriBeCa Productions , will focus on Queen 's formative years and the period leading up to the celebrated performance at the 1985 Live Aid concert . Filming was planned to begin sometime in 2011 .

In April 2011 Brian May confirmed that a lot of work was still being done in preparation for the film . He said that after holding back for a long time due to mixed feelings , the band had approved a team to start filming later in 2011 , and Baron Cohen 's eagerness had been the key to progress . However , in July 2013 , it was reported that Baron Cohen dropped out of the role due to " creative differences " between him and the surviving band members . Later , Queen guitarist Brian May said they split on good terms and gave the reason for the split that they felt Cohen 's presence would be " distracting . "

In December 2013 it was announced that Ben Whishaw , best known for playing Q in the James Bond film Skyfall , had been chosen to replace Cohen in the role of Mercury . It was also announced that British actor and director Dexter Fletcher would direct the film ; however , Fletcher subsequently withdrew from the project in March 2014 . Prior to Fletcher 's withdrawal , production on the film had been due to begin in the summer of 2014 ; any delays would cause further problems , with Whishaw already committed to begin work on the next James Bond film towards the end of the year .

= = = Other portrayals = = =

Mercury appeared as a supporting character in the BBC television drama Best Possible Taste : The Kenny Everett Story , first broadcast in October 2012 . He was portrayed by actor James Floyd .

= = Discography = =

Mr. Bad Guy (1985)

Barcelona (with Montserrat Caballé) (1988)