

Queen music history assignment

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Queen became one of the most well known Rock and Pop groups for the next 18 years and had a host of number one successes written by every member of the group. Although still touring with original members Brian May and Roger Taylor, the Queen most recognized by its extravagant stage shows and music videos came to an end with the death of lead singer 'Freddie Mercury' in 1991. Queen were responsible for fourteen albums covering a varied array of genres such as Rock, Progressive Rock, Rock and Roll, Pop, Classical, Disco and Funk. Queen's first album 'Queen' featured a wide mixture of musical styles.

The opening song 'Keep Yourself Alive,' also the band's first single, written by Brian May was a rock song featuring the standard I, 'V, V chord progression but also marking several sounds that would become some of Queen's trademarks for years to come. For example the intro and solo section involves Brian May using his trademark delay effect with the production feature of layered guitar. Also the song 'My Fairy King' by Freddie Mercury which featured the same guitar production but also operatic vocal arrangement with the use of layered vocals by the band.

The lyrical theme varies over these songs such as 'Liar' by Freddie Mercury, a standard rock song with a love theme. 'Modern Times Rock and Roll' a heavy metal song by Roger Taylor written simply about the music and 'My Fairy King,' by Freddie Mercury written about a mythical world. The mythical theme and folklore would feature heavily in Queen's earlier works through 'Ogre Battle' on the Queen II album, 'In The Lap of The Gods' on Sheer Heart attack and 'The Prophets Song' on A Night At The Opera.

Many songs such as these could be called progressive rock in the use of production techniques such as layered vocals, guitars and long musical interludes during the music. At the same time, these albums featured an array of songs written by other members of the band such as 'Father to Son' by Brian May which appeared on the Queen II album which lyrically was about a father explaining life to his son and 'You're My Best Friend' by John Deacon, a love song written when he was married in 1975. The release of the album 'A Day at the Races' saw a turning point in the musical development of Queen.

Where previously many songs had featured a prog rock and operatic arrangement, 'My Fairy King', 'Bohemian Rhapsody,' and lyrically had little Queen Music History By Jackbooted mainly on a love theme. This album featured songs such as 'Tie Your Mother Down' by Brian May which was a rock and roll standard and 'The Millionaire Waltz' a waltz time and again operatic rock song by Freddie Mercury it did not however feature any of the more mythically based songs from previous albums and focused more on a love theme throughout. The songs also had more standard solo section lengths rather than long drawn out layered guitar solos or piano interludes.

Queen's next album, News of The World would see some of the bands most well known songs and the transition into writing much more anthem based songs such as We Will Rock You and We Are the Champions. Similarly with the next two albums Jazz (1980) and The Game (1978) whose tracks continued on the rock trend for Queen with songs such as 'Don't Stop Me Now' and 'Crazy Little Thing Called Love'. In 1982 however Queen would

attempt to write an album with a Disco and Pop theme throughout with a large usage of synthesized instruments such as a drum machine.

Although ‘ Hot Space’ was seen as a failure for the band musically it did show the bands understanding and ability to write other genres of music and produced one of their greatest hits, ‘ Under Pressure. The song ‘ Body language’ for example was recorded without any guitar on the track and The Bass line of ‘ Dancer’ was played on a keyboard synthesizer by Brian May. The album was not received well by the Queen fans or the critics, “ Hot Space takes all the things that Queen were known for and either removes them or treats them to ridiculous subversion.

So that means drum machines instead of booming tom-toms, ludicrous brass arrangements instead of opulent guitar histrionics and, more than ever before, an obsession with sex. You know, rather than ogres and dragons and flouncing about” Don’t Talk! In defense of Queens Hot Space, Daniel Ross. It can be argued however that the attempt to write a full album in a genre of music with growing popularity showed Queens ability to follow the trends of the time “ 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. Interview David Wig ‘ 1986’ After the release of ‘ Hot Space’ the members of Queen took a 2 year break from the band to work on solo projects although none reached any real success. Queens next two albums would see a return to their rock based albums with a mixture of Pop and Disco instrumentation. ‘ The Works’ and ‘ A Kind of Magic’ albums contained heavy rock tracks such as ‘ Hammer to Fall’ and ‘ Don’t Lose Your Head,’ pop and disco such as ‘ Radio Gaga’ as well as softer ballads such as ‘ One Year

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of Love' and 'Is This The World We Created. These albums were two of the bands most successful and also the 'Magic' album would be the last the band would tour with as Freddie Mercury was diagnosed with HIV and could no longer tour due to ill health. Although seen as much as a live performance band as an album band, Queen would release two more successful studio albums, 'The Miracle' and 'Innuendo' which again featured a variety of songs and instrumentation from the rock song 'I Want it All', the progressive rock instrumental 'Chinese Torture', The Disco 'Scandal' and the Pop song 'I'm Going Slightly Mad. Songs were usually written by an individual and as shown by an interview with Brian May, "strangely in those days we didn't really talk about what the songs were about, in retrospect it may have been quite interesting." 'Brian May (2002) We are the Champions: The Politics of Sports and Popular Music by Ken McLeod. We do however know that some songs were relevant to the bands success and media relations for example the song 'Scandal' is about the media attention surrounding Freddie Mercury's failing health and Brian Mays divorce and remarriage at the time.

Lyrical similarities can be found between Queens early progressive rock lyrics which leaned towards folklore and works of fiction to other bands of the time such as T-Rexes with the song 'Ride a White Swan' "Wear a tall hat like a Druid in the old days, Wear a tall hat and a tattooed gown, Ride a white swan like the people of the Belton, Wear your air long babe, you can't go wrong." And 'She Was Born To Be My Unicorn' "Darkly ghosts host, Haggard vizier of the moats, Seeks the candled shores of Gods. One salient feature of the music by Queen is the use of layered vocal harmonies shown in songs such as 'Bohemian Rhapsody' and 'Somebody to Love' The use of

vocals by the band gave the impression of a choir singing when in fact only the four members of Queen are. This effect was relatively new at the time of these songs especially 'Bohemian Rhapsody' and was achieved by many different harmonies being sung into a multi track recorder and constantly overdubbing one another. Once the track was mixed and panned correctly the effect of a large choral vocal ensemble can be heard.

This is a technique which Queen would use for the rest of their albums with songs such as 'Bicycle' (1978) and 'Need Your Loving Tonight' (1979).

Another salient feature of Queen is the use of the delay effect by guitarist Brian May. The effect appears on many solos of Queen's work but can be most prominently heard during the 'Brighton Rock' instrumental and the solo to 'Killer Queen.' Digital delay units were not available at the time of the recording of these songs and May used twin tape delays often overdubbed with a third recording to give the effect of three guitars playing at the same time.

Tape or Analogue delay systems worked by taking the one note played by the guitar then the tape deck playing that note back at a set time from the original note and so on. May, especially in long instrumentals, would often play the first note of a chord then as the tape played that delay he would play the second note of a chord and so on. By the time third delay was played back, a full chord was being sounded by a single guitar which he could then sustain and play over the top of. [Http://www. Questions. Info/the-book/queen-the-four-of-them-as- musicians/Brian-may](http://www.questions.info/the-book/queen-the-four-of-them-as-musicians/Brian-may). HTML Queen have influenced many artists since their last studio album in 1991. Bands of varied genres are known to have covered Queen's work or given them credited for <https://assignbuster.com/queen-music-history-assignment/>

their own musical creations. The Heavy Metal band Metallic covered the queen song Some people to offer credit to Queen as one of their key musical influences are ' The Killers, ' Green Day,' ' Lady Gaga, ' Boo Fighters,' ' Guns & Roses' and many more. One key feature of Queen was their flamboyant live shows and performances by lead sing Freddie Mercury.

Mercury wore striking and sensational clothing on stage from leotards to studded arm bands as well as using a trademark half microphone stand which he often used as a prop for his on stage actions. This idea of a visual performance as well as musical is a staple for most contemporary commercial music with extravagant shows from artists such as ' Lady Gaga' or ' Robbie Williams. ' The lack of meaning surrounding many of Queen's lyrics throughout their career is also omitting which has been continued into contemporary music.

The song ' One Vision' ends simply with the words " Fried Chicken" also it is commonly believed that the lyrics to ' Bohemian Rhapsody' were merely written to fit the music and hold no meaning. Other songs by Queen such as ' Somebody to Love' were although meaningful to the listener where relevant, the lyrics were very much generic and standard to that genre. This is still the case with most contemporary commercial music and to those who have credited Queen with being one of their key influences with songs such as Micas ' Grace Kelly and Lady Saga's ' Do What You Want.

Queen released a wide array of albums covering varied genres from their rock, classical and progressive rock roots of the Albums ' Queen' and ' A Day At The Races ' and the Rock themed ' News of The World. ' A disco album '

Hot Space’ and the pop and rock based ‘ The Miracle’ and ‘ Innuendo. ‘
Uniquely each member of queen wrote at least one number one song which is testament to their commercial knowledge and musical abilities as individuals as well as a group. Queens flamboyant portrayal of themselves mainly shown through lead singer ‘ Freddie Mercury’s’ larger than life take performances and vocal style also added to their commercial success.

A testament to queens long lasting influences on the music world is shown through the many artists both contemporary and of the time that cite queen as one of their key influences in their own music whether through song writing or performance. We are the Champions: The Politics of Sports and Popular Music by Ken McLeod Freddie Mercury Interview Walt David Wig ‘ 1986’ [http://www. Questions. Info/the-book/queen-the-four-of-them-as-musicians/Brian- may. HTML](http://www.Questions.Info/the-book/queen-the-four-of-them-as-musicians/Brian-may.HTML) Don’t Talk! In defense of Queens Hot Space, Daniel Ross