

Review: Bohemian Rhapsody

[Lydia Hallsworth](#) is underwhelmed by this chronicle of Queen's journey to Live Aid

Thursday 1 November 2018



Image: Twentieth Century Fox

Review: Bohemian Rhapsody

5/10

Director: Bryan Singer

Starring: Rami Malek, Lucy Boynton, Ben Hardy

Length: 2h 14

Rating: 12A

The 1975 hit single Bohemian Rhapsody, along with its music video, makes such a bold statement about popular music and experimentation that it is almost embarrassing that a film with such a formulaic and uninspiring 'rise to stardom' narrative now shares its namesake.

It's ambiguous as to whether Bohemian Rhapsody is intended as a story about Queen as a whole or as a biopic about Freddie Mercury himself – neither of which have been done with much conviction. Whether down to the directorial change from Bryan Singer to Dexter Fletcher in the last few weeks of production, or a general reluctance to create controversy, Bohemian Rhapsody limits itself to a broad sweep of Queen's journey and a few choice details of Freddie Mercury's life up until 1985. Though plenty of opportunity to dive deep into the drama of Mercury's infamous parties, Bohemian Rhapsody is disappointingly tame and presents only light-hearted glimpses of the glamour surrounding Queen while shirking away from tackling, head-on, issues of sexuality, media identity and the AIDS epidemic.

Rami Malik's performance as Freddie Mercury, however, is scintillating, and arguably reason enough to see the film. From Mercury's signature ability to hold a crowd to his nuances in movement, Malik captures Mercury's ambition, cheek and flair with such ease that the cheesy false teeth are quickly forgotten, and

the audience is drawn in to believing that they are watching a true Rock star.

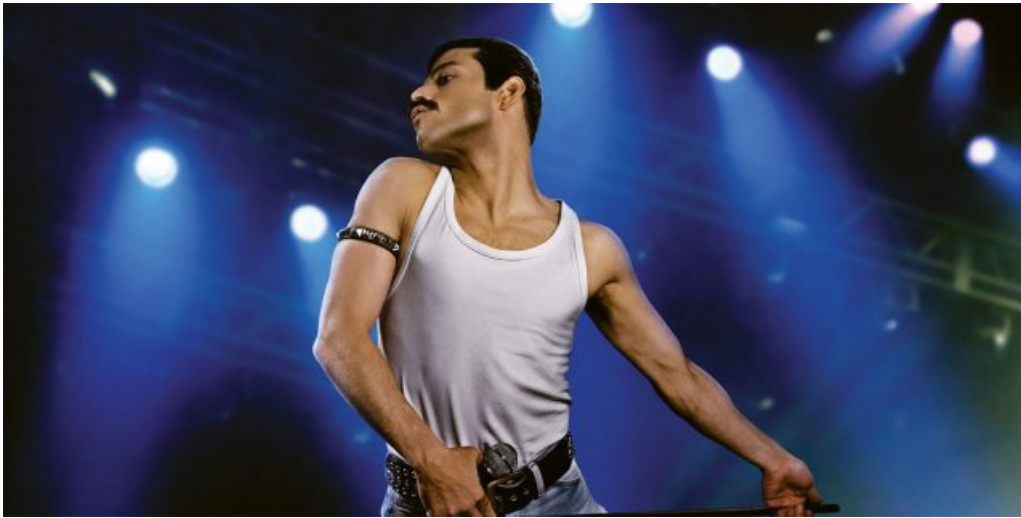


Image: Twentieth Century Fox

Though some creative licence is to be expected, the alteration of the timeline is frustrating at the least and possibly even mildly offensive in its implication that the revelation of Freddie Mercury's AIDS diagnosis was the incentive for his Live Aid performance. In reality, the diagnosis did not come until two years after the performance. This decision creates an unrealistic neatness to the narrative and somewhat undermines the significance of Queen's re-united performance.

Nevertheless, the film is a pleasurable experience as can be expected from a piece peppered with Queen hits. The Live Aid scene is particularly visually impressive and implies a sense of Queen's social significance and their ability to unify the crowd that fits well with the central themes of the film. The characters played in supporting roles are also believably illustrated and well-acted, which almost makes it a greater shame that screen time wasn't given to tell some real stories.

For a story about embracing yourself and the importance of friendship with a dollop of rock and roll, Bohemian Rhapsody will have you singing all the way home. However, if you are looking for a gritty exposé into Freddie Mercury's secrets, this film will not rock you.



Most Read **Discussed**

1. [Short Film Sunday: All These Creatures](#)
2. [TV Review: Endeavour – Series 3 Episode 2: 'Arcadia'](#)
3. [TV Review: Vera Series 5 Episode 2: 'Old Wounds'](#)
4. [Film meets fact – why is historical accuracy important?](#)
5. [TV Review: Endeavour – Series 3 Episode 4: 'Coda'](#)
6. [TV Review: Endeavour Series 2 Episode 2](#)

Write for Nouse Film & TV

[Get in touch with the editors](#)

[Join the Facebook group](#)

More in Film & TV

[Short Film Sunday: All These Creatures](#)

[Interview: Get Ready With Me director Jonatan Etzler](#)

[Short Film Sunday: Fauve](#)

[Netflix sued by Satanic Temple](#)

[Vintage Sundays Review: The Wizard of Oz](#)

[Review: Manbiki Kazoku \(Shoplifters\)](#)

- [About Nouse](#)
- [Who's Nouse](#)
- [Website Credits](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Student Discounts](#)
- [Print Editions](#)
- [Mini-Sites](#)
- [Nouse on Twitter](#)
- [Nouse on Facebook](#)
- [Nouse on Google+](#)

