

A black and white photograph of the rock band Queen. The four band members are posed in a studio setting. From left to right: Brian May stands with his hands on his hips, wearing a white vest over a black shirt. Freddie Mercury sits in the center foreground, wearing a black tank top and leather pants, with his arms crossed. Roger Taylor stands behind him, wearing a dark jacket. John Deacon stands on the far right, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. Large, dark shadows of the band members are cast onto the wall behind them. The word "Queen" is written in a stylized, pink, cursive font across the top of the image.

Queen

A Reimagined Discography

Queen A Reimagined Discography is an alternate timeline discography ©2019 by Adam Stone. All these albums exist, in these forms on Adam's computer and MP3 playing devices. All these thoughts exist in his head. Feel free to discuss them with him.

Some of the fun of playing around with the discographies of Prince and U2 involved rearranging classic albums into new configurations. Prince and U2 each have a few albums which didn't really need to be reimagined, as they were already great. But it was fun to come up with new angles to approach the music from.

I love Queen. Freddie Mercury had one of the greatest voices in rock and roll history, and the entire band combined their efforts to make a few really creative and mesmerizing musical experiences, and some very straight forward jock jam classics. But they only had one good album. The other fourteen studio albums are all collections of one or two great songs, maybe a good song, and then mediocre songs in the style of whatever was trending: disco, new wave, prog rock, heavy metal. While their prog rock album, Queen II, is actually a very good progressive rock album, I'm no longer seventeen, and don't ever have the urge to listen to Rush, Dream Theater, early Genesis, or Queen II. And while I'm sometimes in the mood for disco or new wave, I'm never nostalgic for Queen's songs in those categories.

So, this discography is going to be brief, concise, and vastly different from their actual discography. Therefore, with the exception of the good album and a half (A Night At The Opera and A Day At The Races, which I've blended into one album), even the names of the Queen albums will be completely different from the originals.

The first two of the five album discography are roughly chronological, the final album is a concept album, and the third and fourth albums are stews of the delicious leftovers.

The first album, A Flick Of The Wrist, is a combination of Queen's debut album, and their third album, Sheer Heart Attack. If you like progressive rock, you should totally check out Queen II, on its own merits, but it stylistically clashes with everything else on this album, so I've left it out entirely.



When Prince drops the word "Prince" into his song, he is talking about his purpleness. Queen is not of the same ilk, despite also being royalty. So opening up with **Queen Killer** is not the same as starting out with "My Name Is Prince". This is not a thesis statement. This is a very 70s classic rock pop song. Noodly rock guitars, AM friendly keyboards, but Freddie Mercury classes up the song with his wide-ranging vocals, which is the highlight of the band, and the reason for their success, despite Dr. Brian May, Roger Taylor, and John Deacon all being fantastic musicians in their own rights. "Queen Killer" is just a fun little riff about praising an object of desire, she's never disparaged, her figure is never mentioned, it's just a "Hey there's this rich lady who's good at what she does, and while that might be sex, it might also be amateur magic, playing Trivial Pursuit, or hosting parties. She's just great! *Guaranteed to blow your mind.*"

It's A Hard Life falls right out of "Queen Killer"'s final chord. It's a generic "I'm sad because I've been dumped" song, but it has a great keyboard track, some cool background vocal tricks, and hints at Queen's operatic future. It also has a very 1970s guitar riff-off in the third quarter of the song. The lyrics are so generic, that it's impressive that Mercury is able to pack so much emotion in them.

Some hand clapping and light drumming lead us into **Liar**, the most 70s of all the Queen songs that survived into this discography. It launches into a guitar riff-off right away, and then the sweet AM style vocals croon in. This track is the most stark example of the "Am I talking about sex, religion or both?" category where both U2 and Prince flourished. Mercury doesn't go there as often, but he's all-in during this song. The staccato *liars* almost demand you sing along with them. The talking section (it's definitely not influenced by rap, it's just musical talking) where he switches the genders of his conversation from *father* to *mother* lead into an ending that you can almost imagine would have been a hard rock Billy Joel song, if Billy Joel could sing.

The bass and the guitar wind around each other in a very pleasing banjo-like progression as we segue into **Keep Yourself Alive**. The chorus is pretty weak, and the lyrics continue to be generic, but now generic self-help, instead of generic love. This is one of the songs where the instruments outshine Mercury's voice. Mixing it up from the previous songs is that the third quarter of the song has a drum-focus for a solid thirty seconds before the guitars come back in.

Now I'm Here has an echoey Marco Polo beginning, as Freddy Mercury tells you where he is. Sometimes it's *here*, sometimes it's *there*. He was super good at Hide & Go Seek. Once the echoes are over, we're solidly into 70s layered vocal rock. A heavy metal inspired guitar riff, and an overall feeling that you should be listening to this song in a tractor trailer truck, speeding down a highway in 1974. You are almost required to grow a mustache to sing along with this track.

A clearly ballady piano with a little country guitar twang rise out of "Now I'm Here" to give us **Doing All Right**, which could have come out of Andrew Lloyd Weber's Jesus Christ Superstar. It's not religious, it just has the spare instrumentation, and the very late 60s/early 70s trio background vocals that devolved out of R&B and Doo-wop to be utterly spineless "oooooh"ing. Then, of course, the guitars kick in, and we're in very familiar riffy territory.

Bring Back That Leroy Brown, with its honky-tonk piano and bass lines, is a nice little anomaly for early Queen. It's from a Western movie. It's from another planet. It's from Freddie Mercury's super brain, and Roger Taylor's expert hands.

We fall back solidly into 1970s classic AM rock with **Stormtroopers In Stiletto**s. It's Brian May on vocals, and mainly him and John Deacon on strings. Without Mercury's vocals, it could be from almost any band from that era. But the heavy breathing and drum outro give away the song's Queenness.

Freddy is back for the prog-rock influenced **Mad, The Swine**. Originally cut from their debut album, it showed back up on rereleases. It's really a precursor to Queen II, with its fantasy elements and more spacey guitar work. If this is your favorite track on the album, definitely check out their second album from their real world discography.

From prog rock to heavy metal, **Stone Cold Crazy** launches out of "Mad The Swine", trailing guitar riffs behind it. The combination of the guitars and Mercury's vocals are unlike anything else that was happening at the time, but once the late 70s/early 80s hit, this was a more common style of vocal for metal songs.

Misfire ooohs and ahhhs us back into layered Mercury pop. He spends much of the time in his smooth falsetto range, which isn't quite as cool as his screech falsetto, but works well with the rotarying guitar riffs.

Lap Of The Gods sounds like it's from a C level sci-fi movie soundtrack (where Queen will end up in just a few years). It's our first rare occasion to hear Mercury's voice distorted, to give it a more alien feel. I don't ever want to see the movie that would feature this song. Fun trivia fact, the really high falsetto scream in this song is the highest note on the album, and it's not even Freddy Mercury, it's Roger Taylor.

Taylor takes over the vocals for **Tenement Funster** (and Deacon takes over guitar from May), the first part of a trilogy of songs. **Flick Of The Wrist** is the second part, with really cool occasional octave spaced vocals, and Dr. May's background vocals. The trilogy concludes with **Lily Of The Valley**, a piano focused ballad about ... love, of course.

Mercury's letter to his sad peers, **Dear Friends**, is another piano ballad. It has a more Beatlesque feel than any other track on the album, as it lullabies us to the album's close

This is the best Queen album you're ever going to get that isn't just a Greatest Hits album. It has their best song. It has their most cohesive sound. It has their most creative arrangements. It's their most operatic, and it's tied with their best produced of these reimagined albums. And yet, it has only two actual hits.

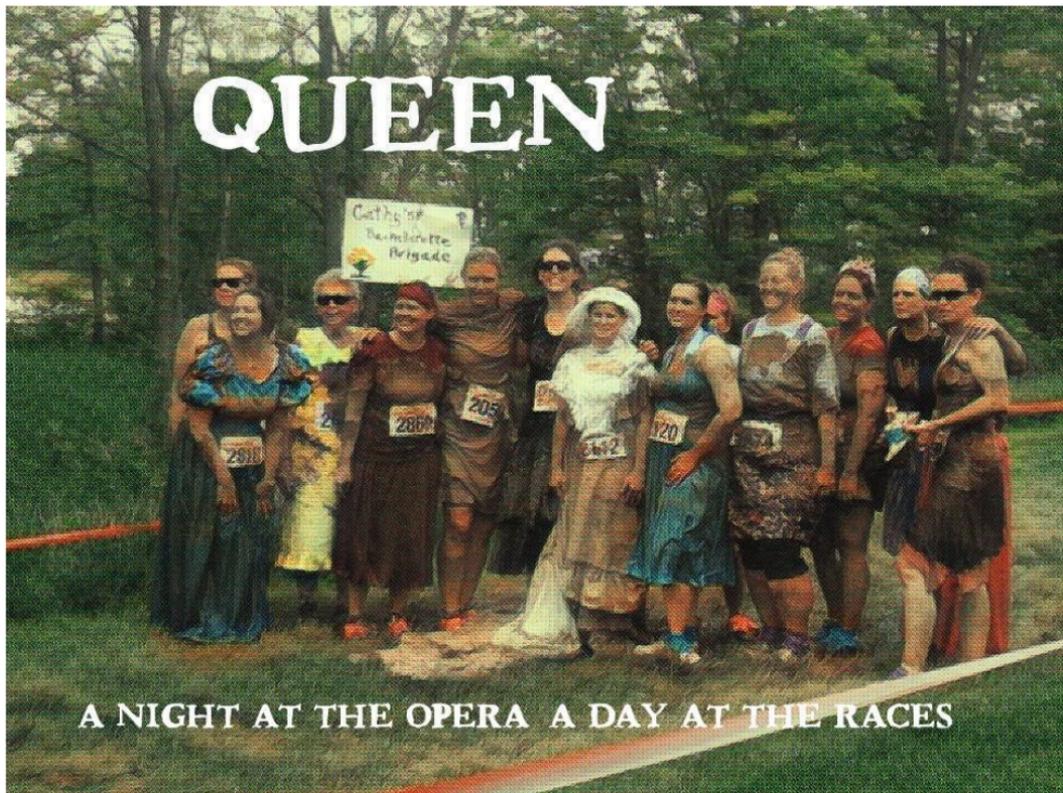
In the real world discography, I would argue, and find a lot of support for my theory, that A Night At The Opera is the best Queen album. Any top ten or top one hundred list of The Greatest Songs In Rock And Roll History that don't include Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" don't know what the fuck they're talking about.

If you're looking for a Queen album to put on at a party, this one is not the correct choice. You're going to want to go with Spread Your Wings (the next album) or Radio Gaga (the fourth album). But if you want the best album in the reimagined discography OR in their real discography A Night At The Opera is the place to go.

QUEEN

Catharine
Reynollette
Brigade

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA A DAY AT THE RACES



Whether you're British or American, it's a terrible time in world history to be patriotic about it. We're both shameful, racist nations. America has proven that Representative Democracy has an expiration date, and we've past it, and England has proved that trying to mix Representative Democracy and a Monarchy is just as poor an experiment. So why does this album open with **God Save The Queen?** (which is also the music to America [My Country 'Tis Of Thee] ... which would be a much better national anthem for The United States Of America) Well, one because this version rocks, and two because I choose to believe that, despite it's title, it's actually an instrumental version of "The Royal Canadian Kilted Yaksmen Theme Song". If the inclusion of the song offends you, please take a knee. No matter what anyone says, it's a respectful way to protest.

A trilling piano skips us away from any controversial or subversive thoughts, as we go **Lazing On A Sunday Afternoon**. Mercury's vocals sound like a tinned 40s recording while the harmonies and guitars sound decidedly 70s. It's a glorious earworm.

Sweet Lady is A Dr. May song written in a slightly complex time structure (for a rock band ... plenty of pianists and classical musicians seem to be able to handle it). It's an unrequited love song with heavy guitar riffs.

The first time I tried to mix these albums was in 2014, I was getting ready for a poetry tour, and I wanted a Queen road mix. I had never, until then, truly appreciated **I'm In Love With My Car**, a Roger Taylor song. It was inspired by a roadie who ... well ... listen to the song. It's been used in a few car commercials since I first began to appreciate it, but, more importantly, it's part of a fantastic scene from the TV adaptation of Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett's "Good Omens". There are a ton of Queen songs in the series, because according to Terry Pratchett, "All tapes left in a car for more than about a fortnight metamorphose into Best Of Queen albums."

As the revving car fades out, the piano fades in, then the guitars hit heavy. It's time for **Death On Two Legs**. Which hops back and forth from heavy sci-fi to light and fluffy pop in an entertaining way. It's Queen's only good diss track, against their former manager, whom they never named, but who sued them, and who

then wrote a book titled Death On Two Legs: Set The Record Straight. Dude, you're a manager in the music industry. As soon as you introduce yourself as such, people know you're a dogshit human being. I have, literally, never heard anyone say anything positive music management.

Let's get the taste of diss out of our mouths with a bright, sunshiny love song that Deacon wrote for his wife. **You're My Best Friend** just sounds like the ending credits theme for a movie about summer camps in the 1980s.

Keeping it poppy and friendly, we have a banjo strumming Dixieland song by Dr. May called **Good Company**, which seems competitive with the previous track, as it's about how great *his* wife is. It has a very Beatles White Album vibe, which I love. But as it goes on, the wife and friends leave him, and the song is more about how content he is with his business, and how he doesn't care that he's alone. I love it.

Seaside Rendezvous brings Mercury back to vocals, on another Beatlesque happy track. The middle song has an amazing vocal part where Mercury and Taylor ape a variety of instruments, such as kazoos, tubas, and clarinets for no damned good reason, other than it adds to the ridiculous fun of the song.

Ballady piano kicks in, and then a fucken harp as Mercury croons for the **Love Of My Life**, who has, of course, left him. Because lovers are like that. If they don't treat musicians so bad, what would they write about?

And now, perfection. Yes, it's their most successful (if you count the multiple times it's charted, it was not their most successful song during its first run) single, and best song, **Bohemian Rhapsody**. Even the muppet version of this song is amazing. The scene in Wayne's World where they sing along to "Bohemian Rhapsody" in the car, is the highlight of both Mike Meyers and Dana Carvey's film career.

Thus ends the A Night At The Opera portion of the album. I chose not to interweave the albums partly because they do both have slightly different feels and partly because there is only one way to follow "Bohemian Rhapsody" and that's to have it's closing gong overlap with the opening gong of **Tie Your Mother Down**, the first track from the A Day At The Races portion of the album. This is one of the tracks where I wish I had the original recordings to smooth out, because there's a jagged transition a little after the one minute mark, resulting from the limited technology at the

time, and the band's decision to sometimes physically cut and tape tracks together. Sometimes, like with "Bohemian Rhapsody", it ends up flawless. Othertimes, less so. But there's a whirlwind effect for the guitar riffs that I love.

Long Away ambles along the thick, thick, boundary of The Who and The Byrds, with Dr. May on vocals, it falls well on The Who side of things. It's as folky as I'm willing to put with when listening to Queen.

A piano breaks through the wall of guitar. Freddy is back on vocals, crooning about whether or not he thinks about you when he's gone. I mean. Yes. The soaring vocals really elevate the pedestrian love song lyrics. When the chorus hits, it's all Sgt Pepper's on **Teo Torriatte (Let Us Cling Together)**, even the ending sounds like Sgt. Pepper's production.

More piano. Scattershot bass riff. A playful back and forth between the instruments before Mercury comes in for the lighthearted **Millionaire's Waltz**. It's really spare for a track on this heavy mother of a record until it surrenders to bombast. The guitars thunder down, the vocals get pushed back in the mix, and then everything lightens back up, and gets heavier again. It's a fun ping pong match.

Mercury comes in acapella on **You Take My Breath Away**, for a long stretch before the piano comes in. Again the vocal range and the piano make you ignore how utterly basic the lyrics are. This could be from a Mercury solo record, as there are no other instruments aside from his voice and his piano.

White Man hasn't aged super well, even though its message is completely relevant. Mercury, himself, is of Indian (from India) descent, but this song is from the perspective of Native Americans, and it's about how awful British colonizers were as they were becoming Americans. And it's totally right. And it has a killer metal inspired guitar riff, and the chant of *White man, white man* is perfect. But lyrics like *You took away the sight to blind my simple eyes* and the repeated use of the word *simple* to describe the non-white people is a pretty dated stereotype. This was progressive and interesting in 1975, but it's a shame that song is just a few edits away from being a timeless takedown of colonization.

We go back to Roger Taylor for **Drowse**, another song in an unusual time signature, this time with added slide guitar. If "You Take My Breath Away" could have been a Freddie Mercury solo album cut, this one is definitely from a Roger Taylor side project.

Mercury and his piano come back for **Good Old Fashioned Loverboy**. It's another *think of me when I'm not with you* song.

We close out the album with another song with magic production. **Somebody To Love** is an amazing ballad. The vocal mix is astounding. The simple lyrics come off as more direct than empty. The drums are so perfect that you barely notice they're there. While there are several songs on this album that you can go "Oh, that sounds a bit like (name of another band)", this song, like "Bohemian Rhapsody" is one that just sounds like Queen. It could end a minute earlier and still be perfect, but I do like the over-the-top repeated chorus ending.

It's possible to make a sports arena playlist without any Queen on it, but you'd be a fool to do so. From the *stomp stomp CLAP stomp stomp CLAP* of "We Will Rock You" to the completely overplayed and, most likely, unnecessarily hyperolic "We Are The Champions" to the probably inappropriate "Another One Bites The Dust" when someone either strikes out, or their NASCAR vehicle has to pull over due to being completely on fire, there's a Queen song for every sports occasion.

Often "We Will Rock You" and "We Are The Champions" are packaged together, one immediately following the other, even though it makes no narrative sense, and the songs don't really flow into each other. So I've taken my favorite late 70s Queen songs and strung them between these two classics, not to provide a narrative, but to give them some breathing room, and make Queen's most anthemic album of this discography.



Queen

Spread Your Wings

I have cheated a bit. I know I said I was going to start with "We Will Rock You", and I sort of do, but I wanted to give it some sort of build-up before the clapping and stomping, so the album actually begins with an **Intro** containing the first twenty seconds of "Mustapha". This should also keep all of your racist relatives from stealing this fictional CD from your imaginary CD player.

Then *stomp stomp CLAP stomp stomp CLAP, **We Will Rock You***, probably Queen's most famous song for elementary students. It's pure banner waving aggression and braggadocio. By the time the guitar hums in, the song is almost over. It's an unnecessary flourish to the song that I wish had been kept off. But, eh, it's part of history now.

More Of That Jazz is a weird suite of songs wrapped into one. It's a Taylor song with him doing all of the vocals, and most of the instruments. Mercury isn't the only one who can bogart a studio. The guitar riff is straight 70s metal. But then, about three minutes into the song, there's a harsh cut into other tracks from the album for reasons I don't understand. It was the final track of the album Jazz, so I guess it served as a coda. Here, it's an aggressive appetizer.

Before I heard the original, Queen version of **Get Down, Make Love**, I heard a version of Nine Inch Nails' cover as part of a 90 minute long mix of NiN songs from the early 90s. The original is relatively tame, with its simple bassline, spare piano chord progression, and occasional drums and guitar riffage. The instruments only come together during the chorus.

A piano riff that Billy Joel left, forgotten, in a bar too well lit for anything dangerous to happen, gets picked up by Dr. Brian May, who was just there to use the rest room. He gives it to Freddy Mercury, **Jealousy** ends up sounding like almost every late 70s piano ballad.

Bicycle Race doesn't sound like anything but a weird Queen song. The lyrics are the most pop culture-focused you're likely to find in a song that's mostly Mercury talking about how much he wants to ride a bicycle. He also drops a reference to the impending "Fat Bottomed Girls" in this song, before closing it with, what else, bike bells.

And, lo, do the **Fat Bottomed Girls** show up right at the end with a choral acapella intro, followed by a guitar riff buried into one track of the stereo recording in a frustrating way. I almost edited

this into mono just to relieve the tension from the tonal imbalance. In 2000, I read a poll where this was voted The Worst Song Ever Recorded. In 2001 it was unseated by Eric Clapton's "Wonderful Tonight". Those are both sound choices. This song is completely ridiculous, but it's very much pro-fat bottomed girl. It's the 70s prototype for Sir Mix-A-Lot's "Baby Got Back". It ends with a fury of guitars.

It's Late is a historically weird little song. It's a Dr. May concept where he treats each verse as an act in a romantic farce. He also uses a guitar technique called "tapping" which is most associated with Eddie Van Halen, whose debut album, Van Halen, came out just a few months after the "It's Late" single. It's, by far, the longest track on the album, ending with a killer gatling drum effect.

Mercury croons **Don't Stop Me Now** with a beautiful staccato chorus. It's the theme song for hedonism and selfishness. But it's so fun, and it has such a magnificent jackknife guitar riff about two and a half minutes into the song.

I mix the climbing piano of **All Dead, All Dead** into the end of "Don't Stop Me Now". This is Brian May's solo work, as he sings, and plays both piano and guitar on this track that's ... ummm ... about the death of his cat.

The piano keeps on going into one of Deacon's songs, **Spread Your Wings**. It's pretty much High School Poetry 101. Inspirational song about flying dedicated to someone in the service industry that the egocentric narrator really believes in, man.

My Melancholy Blues tells the story of the aftermath of "Don't Stop Me Now". It's a bluesy piano ballad about what happens when all the partying stops, and you're left behind.

The final track on the album, as promised is **We Are The Champions**, which I always feel starts as if it's the second or third line of the song. It's another banner-waving braggadocio anthem, this time with guitars all the way down.

A Night At The Opera / A Day At The Races is the best album of this discography, but Radio Ga Ga is my favorite. It's a peppy collection of singles with sci-fi and synth instead of prog rock and fantasy. (Ok, there's a song about dragons, but the rest is sci-fi.)

Spread Your Wings was all arena-rock, and the title track of Radio Ga Ga is their biggest anthemic hit, but the rest of it is better suited for radio than Wembley Stadium.

Q
U
E
E
N

Radio
Gaga



A spaceship lands. Because this album is from outerspace. I mean, it has David Bowie on it. The song lands on the piano, of course, as Mercury invites us to ***Play The Game*** of love! Then more synth before the very May guitar riff lands. It's trademark Queen from beginning to end. With or without synths.

Hand clapping and bass lead us into the upbeat admonition to **Don't Try Suicide**. Every time I hear it, I think of the movie Heathers. But this is a way better song, informing you that *Nobody's worth it* and *You're just going to hate it*. *Nobody gives a damn* as a reason, hasn't aged well, but it's meant to be tongue-in-cheek. The breakdown in the middle of the song is amazing.

Sometimes, I put two songs together because it amuses me. That's why you get the stacatto bass and guitar, the synths leading you into **Another One Bites The Dust**. If you know me from slam in the late 90s / early 2000s, you know that I have a song based around an incident at my alma mater where a bunch of homophobes literally carved the word "Homo" into the back of a classmate who listened to Queen. I've refused to let that incident, or that poem ruin my enjoyment of this song. I love its

unnecessary spaciness at the end, Mercury's echoey fade in and outs before the final verse. Unless you saw me perform it at my second Cantab feature, or at one of my last gigs on the Cape, you may not know that I wrote the poem precisely to the song, so that if you play the song behind the poem, any time I reference a lyric or sing, it's actually synced up timewise.

The space opera portion of the discography continues as we go to the only truly beloved song from Queen's Flash Gordon Soundtrack: **Flash Gordon Theme**. It's a predecessor for their also somewhat underwhelming Highlander Soundtrack: A Kind Of Magic, which appears on the next album. There are a bunch of clips from the movie, including silly laser sound effects to keep this song buoyant, despite its very spare lyrics.

From sci-fi we crash back into the fantasy realm where Queen lived in the 70s, as **Dragon Attack** ambles into a staccato territory somewhere between Led Zeppelin's "Black Dog" and Guns N Roses's "Paradise City". It's basic message: heroin isn't a monkey on your back, it's a fucken dragon. It's inspired by the Chinese expression "chasing the dragon".

Next up, Vanilla Ice! It's the promised David Bowie duet, **Under Pressure**. Another of my absolute favorite Queen songs. If you've never seen Vanilla Ice explain his way around his outright theft of the bassline as a sample, check out Youtube. Totally worth it. I debated putting this on the next album, as it does fit, thematically, but I like having this on an album with less weight.

When the snapping fades out, the synths come back in, as Dr. May takes over the vocals for **Sail Away Sweet Sister**, which definitely sounds like a band sailing out of the 1970s very slowly. Weirdly, Queen never played this song live, but the aforementioned Guns N Roses have. It's almost good, but it quickly devolves into fucken terrible. I can't link you to it. You are unlikely to have offended me enough that this is suitable punishment.

Drums and synth crash through the outro waves for the title track, **Radio Ga Ga**. This is anthemic enough to have been on Spread Your Wings but it's such a mid-80s tentpole. The performance of it at LiveAid is considered one of the best live rock moments in history.

A synth robot from space intercedes to bring us into **Invisible Man**, a very unQueen like mix that takes pieces of The Flash Gordon Soundtrack and A Kind Of Magic and takes them to a pop single extreme.

Drums shatter the end of the song, as we go rockabilly with **Man On The Prowl**. This song would be out of place, except rockabilly is going to come back later. This is a feel good bouncy song about embracing your inner-turd and being a lazy cheat trying to get laid outside your relationship, despite not doing much work. Session keyboardist and pianist Fred Mandel absolutely slays the end of this song.

We hit a weird 80s soft rock dance zone for **Backchat**. It's a funk prog rock fusion by Deacon. It's by no means one of their most successful singles but it's the best non-Under Pressure song on Hot Space, and it's definitely worth the listen.

Hammer To Fall brings the Anthemic 70s rock back. There's a darkness to this song if you view this Radio Ga Ga album as an aware precursor to Was It All Worth It? which will be the final Queen album in the discography. As it's sort of about The Cold War, but more about waiting for the inevitability of death, which is the entirety of the next album.

The guitars stay heavy and classic Queen for **I Want It All**. It's another hedonism anthem demanding immediate and constant satisfaction. This is another song that could have easily been on Was It All Worth It? but the trilling breakdown in the middle just works better on this album. And the driving guitars at the end are too heavy for that album.

In addition to "All", **I Want To Break Free**. It's the final synth poppy cut on the album. I hate that it has made me think of sugar free Coca-Cola products now. On the plus side, the original video to this song is amazing, and it's where the cover of this Radio Ga Ga album comes from.

The rockabilly returns for Queen's first #1 American single, **Crazy Little Thing Called Love**. It's an Elvis tribute that according to the band's mythos, was written by Freddy Mercury in under ten minutes, while taking a bath and playing guitar, which he sucked at.

Closing out the album we set Mercury in front of a piano again for **Save Me**, a Dr. May song about the ending of a marriage. It may seem odd to end their most 80s album with a ballad from the late 70s but I really like it as the final song before the band's impending climactic album.

Really, I hope you enjoy this album, because, I can't stress this enough, the next album is filled with music I love but it's a major, major downer to end on.

This is it. The final Queen album in their discography. A long treatise on a slow and painful death. Kind of a bummer, but beautiful sounding. Like Bjork in Black Swan.



QUEEN



Was It All Worth It?

You'd think more Queen albums (especially if I'm organizing them) would start with an orchestral intro. But, here we are at the final album, and we're just getting to it. **Beautiful Day** is not the original version of the U2 song. It's a soft, lyrically straight-forward (because Freddy Mercury) song about the futility of trying to stop him from feeling great, but the music behind it makes you think that this is the ruse of someone extremely depressed.

Brian May wrote **Too Much Love Will Kill You** about the end of his first marriage, and the beginning of his first post-marriage relationship. But, during the lead ups to the release of the Bohemian Rhapsody movie, he talked about the band's concern about Freddy's "lifestyle" (and I don't read anything homophobic into his use of the word "lifestyle", I think he was referring to the quantity of dangerous sex practices, which is a rock and roll "lifestyle" issue, and not a homosexual "lifestyle" issue). So I'm choosing to see this song through that lens, that May wrote it about Mercury.

Innuendo provides the first familiar sounding Queen song. With echoing vocals, fairly basic lyrics, driving guitars, this is pure 70s prog rock. But with flamenco guitars in the middle. You read that right, Steve Howe from Yes and Brian May perform a flamenco breakdown, followed by their usual more metal guitars hitting the same flamenco rhythm before laughing us back into the melody.

Were you waiting for a sequel to "I'm In Love With My Car" from A Night At The Opera / A Day At The Races? Well, it's your lucky lifetime. **Ride The Wild Wind** is another car song, but this time with a touch of "I'm nearing death, so fuck it, I'm going to live dangerously." And car effects, of course. This is a particularly New Wave sounding Roger Taylor song. There is occasional laughter near the end of the song, and along with the repeated lines and the intense drum ending, it's a perfect lead-in to

I'm Going Slightly Mad. A song about ... well ... deteriorating mental states in the face of death. It's a catchy song that has a Spread Your Wings feel before ascending into the prog rock epic of

One Vision. This is a symphonic prog rock track with the anthemic lyrics of Spread Your Wings, but also a bit of playfulness (the last line is not, in fact *one vision* but *fried chicken*. See? Slightly Mad!

The outro of "One Vision" probably gave The Christian Whackjobs Of America a conniption fit with its slowed out tape relay sounding vaguely satanic (even though it's actually just saying *God works in mysterious ways*). But it's a great lead-in to

Queen's Highlander theme song, **Princes Of The Universe**. A song about immortality might seem a strange fit for this album about slowly dying, but there's always that hope, right? That we're somehow going to be the one who makes it out alive.

We slow things down for the summer ballady **These Are The Days Of Our Lives**, where Mercury remembers that the positive things in his life outweighed the negatives, while May's guitars wail in the background, and Taylor's drums have an 80s Phil Collins sound.

Taylor wrote **Heaven For Everyone** for a side project (but Mercury did the lead vocals for one version), and it was rerecorded with May's guitars and Deacon's bass for the first posthumous Queen album. It works really well with "One Vision" as it's a pro-tolerance song with a touch of death. It also has echoed Mercury vocals as the song winds down. But it lacks fried chicken.

The effects transition us into another song with echoed vocals, **I Was Born To Love You**. This is also a posthumously reworked Queen song. It was originally a Freddy Mercury solo track with a disco beat, but it's all Queened up here. The lyrics are about as trite as possible but Mercury sings them like he means every word.

The gospel portions of **Let Me Live** are both wonderful and very unQueen. It's a prayer to be left alone by death for a little while *and make a brand new start*. It also has the rare feature of having Mercury, May, and Rogers all on lead vocals for different portions of the song. It definitely has a lot of "Take Another Little Piece Of My Heart" vibes (and lyrics!). The Meatloafy piano outro blends into the drum / bass beat of

Made In Heaven. The title song from the first Queen album released after Mercury's death, has an interesting guitar/bass break from the melody. Like "I Was Born To Love You", it was originally a solo track by Mercury, which the band rerecorded. This is good because the keyboards and synths solo version lacks the wonderfully hellish grind of the Queen version.

"One Vision" gets a callback as we launch into **A Kind Of Magic**, the title song from Queen's Highlander soundtrack. This is a Roger Taylor song based on a line from the movie, and it's ostensibly about being an immortal, but it also works, for this project, as a look at mortality.

The synths announce a rare cover song in the discography, as Queen delivers a version of The Platters's **The Great Pretender**, the classic theme song for people pretending to be happy when they're depressed and / or miserable. Of course, Mercury absolutely destroys this song. In precisely the opposite way that Axl Rose destroyed Queen's "Sail On Sweet Sister".

The thing about "The Great Pretender", though, is that they're rarely believed. So a series of echoes rolls over the end of this song, and sweeps into **You Don't Fool Me**. This song was created by Queen's producer, David Richards, who had some left over vocal track from the band's Innuendo album, and pieced them together into this song. May, Deacon, and Taylor then produced new music around it. So this is kind of the band and the producer's response to "The Great Pretender" but with Mercury on reconfigured vocals.

So The Great Pretender didn't fool you? C'est la vie. **The Show Must Go On**. So much of Queen's late 80s / 1991 tracks can be seen as songs about Mercury's death (even though most of them weren't). On this discography, this plays as Mercury's entreaty that Queen continue after his death. Or, it can be viewed as him acknowledging his awareness that everyone sees through his Great Pretender ruse, but he's going to keep it up because it's all that's keeping him going.

The penultimate track, and the final one to feature Mercury's vocals is **Who Wants To Live Forever?** A low hum ballad where Mercury's vocals are pushed further back in the mix than usual. And while this was actually recorded when he was still healthy, I choose to present it in this discography as a way to disguise how his voice is slightly faltering as he gets closer to death.

The final song is **Track 13** from Made In Heaven, an almost completely instrumental track that sounds like the songs from the rest of the album trying to keep going. It's a buzzing, bright, symphonic dirge that's over twenty minutes long with very, very occasional clips of Mercury speaking. It does sound very haunting when his voice appears.

And that's it. We go out on an instrumental dirge.

If I Were Going To Make A Queen's Actual Greatest Hits Album:

We open with the **Intro / We Will Rock You** from Spread Your Wings and keep the guitars raging with

I'm In Love With My Car. I know it's not on most people's Greatest Hits for Queen, but it takes such a different direction lyrically from their material, while still keeping their vocal and guitar sounds that I just love it.

But on this album it fades out into **Under Pressure** because this is their Greatest Hits, and this is definitely one of their top five Ever songs.

Another One Bites The Dust naturally flows out of "Under Pressure" in such a way that I had to fight not to have that be the order on Radio Ga Ga.

Queen needs a strong guitar foundation, though, so we tease the back in with **Get Down, Make Love**.

Instead of fading in "Jealousy", we switch it out with **Too Much Love Will Kill You**.

We keep the order from the reimagined Was It All Worth It, and follow the song up with **Innuendo**.

I Want It All and **I Want To Break Free** from Radio Ga Ga stick together, too.

Then **It's A Hard Life** resurfaces but gets to be followed up with **Don't Try Suicide** which is just a fun fade through.

We up the opera with **Somebody To Love**.

Then we gong the prog rock back in with **Tie Your Mother Down**.

Big Bad Leroy Brown spills out of the previous track's drum ending.

And gives way to **Radio Ga Ga**.

Bicycle Race and **Fat Bottomed Girls** lead us toward the final portion of the album.

Princes Of The Universe thunders out of them, and echoes into **I'm Going Slightly Mad**.

We Are The Champions rolls right out of the madness and into the Rocky Horror Picture Showiness of **Don't Stop Me Now**.

The Show Must Go On synths in and keeps going with its Was It All Worth It counterpart, **Who Wants To Live Forever**, which segues into **The Great Pretender**.

We end, as you may have guessed from the one super big Queen hit that's been missing with **Bohemian Rhapsody**, as we should.

