



QUEEN

The Official International Queen Fan Club | Summer 2025



Hi All!

I hope you are all well and happy wherever you are in the World—all is well here in my Suffolk office, loving the warmer weather and enjoying my garden!! Might do a piece on all the lovely plants and shrubs you can get with Queen connected names—feel free to email me yours! Also, anyone out there good at compiling crossword puzzles? Or is it time for a Prize Quiz?!! Let me know what you would like in your magazine!

It's quite quiet in Queenworld at present, both Brian and Roger are taking a lot of well deserved family time! Well, whilst fitting in award ceremonies and Brian's surprise appearance with the wonderful Benson Boone! But interesting things could be afoot reading Brian's letter on the next page, fingers crossed!!

That's it from me, short and sweet! Lots of love and hugs from Suffolk, and take care my friends!

ada
x



Bri with Benson Boone (Photo © Brian May)

STOP PRESS

Jean-Michel Jarre has announced the release of 'Live In Bratislava', the definitive audio-visual record of his historic open-air concert-event 'Bridge From The Future', performed on May 12th, 2024, in Slovakia. It is available to pre-order now, including a limited Ultimate Collector's Box Set.

The concert also marked a historic first-time collaboration between Jarre and Brian, who joined him on stage for a powerful new arrangement of Dvořák's 'New World Symphony' as well as newly adapted works 'Bratislava Time' and 'Rendez-vous Bratislava'.



FRONT COVER

Brian and Roger receiving the Polar Music Prize (see later in this issue).

Photo copyright Annika Berglund/ Polar Music Prize.



LONG SERVING MEMBERS

- ANDREW MUNRO—North Yorkshire (37 years)
- CAROL DRISCOLL—Croydon (26 years)
- DAGMARA SZYMANSKA—Poland. (16 years)
- DEBBIE WALKER—Nottingham (20+)
- FREDDIE VAN TER BEEK—Holland (33 years)
- HUGO BONGERS—Holland (37 years)
- JACQUI BRICKWOOD—Cumbria (45 years)
- JOHN MCKENNA—Manchester (31 years)
- KARI VAN TER BEEK—Holland (30 years)
- KEITH COKER—Merseyside (40 years)
- MAXINE JORDAN—Yorkshire (40 years)
- NICO SMITS—Holland. (50 years)
- ROS JEWELL—Northampton (40 years)
- STIG HENNINGSEN—Denmark (41 years)
- STUART FRANKLIN—Yorkshire (40 years)

It's almost half way through 2025, and I feel like I hardly got started !! We've all been busy with new projects, but taking a break from the touring, which for me has felt like it was what was needed for all kinds of reasons – not least – health ! Having said that, I've enjoyed my occasional excursions ... notably to Coachella to play with Benson Boone, which really was a blast of fresh air ! Currently I'm working on an exciting one-off project with The Struts, which again is exactly the kind of step outside that feels energising right now. Watch this space !!

As far as Queen activity, we are now fully immersed in the second album ... appropriately named QUEEN II – in the studio, rescuing and repolishing and remixing. Like the job we did with Queen I, this gives a lot of opportunities to make things sound like we always dreamed they could. In the case of the Queen II recordings, they're not as much in need of improvement as "Queen", where the drum sounds in particular were crying out for refurbishment. But in this case we are able to bring some of this material out of the fuzziness caused by losing generations in the analogue process in the old days, and, with the great complexity in a lot of the tracks in Queen II, the new transparency is going to be quite shocking !

Last week, Roger and myself journeyed to Stockholm to receive a great honour – the Polar Award – which is regarded by many as a kind of Nobel Prize for music. It really did feel like a great moment, and the unusual thing was to go to such an event, and not be asked to play ! Instead many fine musicians paid tribute to us by playing our songs. So this is something to treasure. As I said in my 'thank you' speech, who could have guessed, in those early touring days, circa 1974, when we first met the good folks of Sweden, that such an amazing thing could happen over 50 years later ?

For myself, I've been prioritising family things, and this is something which has made me feel happy ... I've missed a lot of my family growing up while we toured on and off for 50 years. So this has been precious time for me. I've also found time to catch up on my exploits in Astrophysics ... I had a great trip to Colorado to take part in a flyby of a hitherto unexplored asteroid called DonaldJohanson. I fit in with my old pals in NASA and ESA because I provide stereoscopic entertainment ... and I enjoy the stimulating company of 'real astronomers' ! My full-body stereo view (the first ever, and possibly the last in our lifetimes) of this asteroid, affectionately known as "DJ", is still under wraps, but I promise those of you who still look at my Instagram posts – you will see it as soon as it's allowed out !!

Roger and I are speaking about all sorts of ideas for the future ... and we're very much up for breaking new ground, in new ways, which is keeping us young !!! Ha ha !!

So Queen is still a living entity, even though so much water has flowed under the bridge since those early days of us young lads in the 1970s. We thank you all out there for the support you have given us in our adventures ... and the support you still give us, to pursue the unique path that somehow we still feel inspired to tread !!

Lots of love to you all

Bri XX

BRIAN FEATURES ON NEW BUMBLEFOOT ALBUM

Brian features on the new album by ex-Guns N' Roses guitarist Bumblefoot. The 14-track instrumental album called "Bumblefoot...Returns!" is out now and ranges from metal to orchestral to blues and also sees Steve Vai contribute. Brian plays on the track called 'Once In Forever'. *"I could have done a poor imitation of Brian May, but I just figured it would be better to get the real thing."* said Bumblefoot (Classic Rock Magazine).



'CRAZY LITTLE THING...' ONE BILLION STREAMS ON SPOTIFY

'Crazy Little Thing Called Love' has hit **ONE BILLION** streams on Spotify!

Thank you for listening.



"Woo, I kinda like it!"

ROY THOMAS BAKER RIP

Sad to hear of the passing of the inimitable RTB on 12 April 2025. Producer of the longest, most outrageous single in history—Bohemian Rhapsody. Roy described the recording process in Stuart Grundy and John Tobler's 1983 book *The Record Producers*. *"The basic backing track was done over a two-day period. The opera section was done over a seven-day period of at least 10 to 12 hours a day continual singing, and also continual laughing, because it was so funny to do that we were all in hysterics while it was being recorded. Then there were all the guitar overdubs and getting on for two days to mix it. I'd say that track, on its own, took ... three weeks, because it's three songs merged together to make up this one track."*

Roy produced five albums with Queen, Queen II, *Night At The Opera*, *Sheer Heart Attack* and *Jazz*. Brian said on his Soapbox: *"Very sad to hear of the passing of Roy Thomas Baker. Roy played a huge part in the production of so much Queen music in the early days. Roy was a part of our production team from the very beginning up to and including the album 'A Night At The Opera'. We then parted company for 'A Day at the Races', but reunited for the 'Jazz' album. Roy's production contribution along with Mike Stone's engineering for 'Bohemian Rhapsody' will never be forgotten. I regret slipping out of touch latterly with Roy. I suppose life moves at such a pace these days that we imagine there will be plenty of time to rekindle a friendship, and then suddenly one day it's too late."*

"Thank you, Roy for all the great work you did for us, and all the fun we had."



BRIAN ANNOUNCES NEW BOOK: 'GALAXIES 3-D: ISLANDS IN INFINITY'

On 8th February, Brian attended Astrofest in Kensington, and announced the release of a ground-breaking new book, published by the London Stereoscopic Society. It is the first ever to explore wonders of our galaxy in 3-D. It is written by leading astronomer Professor Derek Ward-Thompson and edited by Brian. The 3-D pictures are the creation of J-P Metsävainio, who is acclaimed in both arts and science communities worldwide for his cutting edge astrophotography image processing. Astrofests audience of astronomy enthusiasts were wowed by rare, breathtaking images of galaxies near the farthest edges of the known Universe—viewed as they were over 13 billion years ago, because the light from them has been travelling towards us ever since an epoch just after the moment of the 'Big Bang'.



Brian said: *"I'm excited about this latest addition to the London Stereoscopic Company's Astro collection. For the very first time, readers will be able to enjoy stereoscopic renderings of galaxies previously only seen as flat 'mono' images. And this, coupled with a text from one of the world's experts on Galactic Evolution, will give a uniquely new insight into the Universe as it is now perceived. Moreover, it's an account understandable and enjoyable by anyone interested in the biggest subject in the Universe—not just astro experts. It will be a gripping read !!"*



As it celebrates over 130 years of music history, Gibson, the iconic global instrument brand, is proud to announce it has partnered with Sir Brian May, one of the most influential musicians in history and co-founder of one of the most impactful bands of all time, Queen. Introducing the Brian May SJ-200 12-String acoustic guitar from Gibson Custom. Made in close collaboration and with significant design input from Sir Brian May, only 100 of these SJ-200 12-String models will be available worldwide in this extraordinary limited run via Gibson.com, the Gibson Garage Nashville and London, and authorized Gibson dealers.

Brian enthused, *"The idea for this guitar came when I needed a 12-String on tour, and the one I was accustomed to wasn't performing right on stage. The guys at Gibson very kindly said, 'We'll make you something special that you can use on the tours.' One of the things I asked for was for the octaves to be placed around the other way from where it is normally done, because I like to pick upwards and hear the top notes when I'm playing. I like to hear the high octave coming through as then I can play tunes on it. If you look at this guitar, the beauty of it, and the beauty of the sound, and look at the science in this guitar, look how much technology and craftsmanship has gone into this guitar. Gibson was able to put the universe on it in a figurative way and the planet Mercury is here, and that is a little nod to a friend of mine that is always with me."*

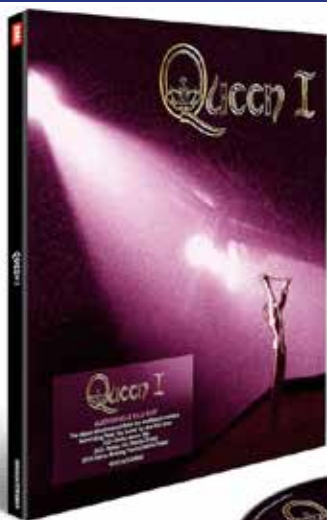
Gibson hosted a launch event at the Gibson Garage in London, where Brian wowed guests with a surprise performance on the new 12-string acoustic, with numbers including Queen's 'Love Of My Life' and a beautiful cover of 'So Sad (to Watch Good Love Go Bad)' by The Everly Brothers. Picking up the electric, Sir Brian rocked the Garage with 'Love Token', from his 1992 'Back to the Light' album, duetting with singer songwriter Arielle (imarielle.com) on So Sad and Love Token.

He said of the new guitar *"It's a dream come true, as soon as I held the guitar, I thought this is what I need. It has such presence and such a beautiful breadth of sound. Gibson has done the most beautiful job, it has the lovely solar system on it, including Mercury, but the most important thing is it sounds massive."*

"It's very traditional old school technology, not made with AI or mechanised in any way. I take fantastic pride in it and I'm very honoured to have worked with Gibson. From the days when I used to gaze enviously at the guitar catalogues, sitting there with my dad, I wish he was here to see this amazing fusion of the collaboration we've made."

See www.gibson.com/en-GB/p/Acoustic-Guitar/Brian-May-SJ-200-12-String/Vintage-Sunburst.

'QUEEN I' DOLBY ATMOS AUDIOPHILE BLU-RAY RELEASE



Queen's debut album "Queen I" got a special limited edition Dolby Atmos Audiophile Blu-ray release on June 13th.

"There are now a few nice adventurous Easter eggs in there, which those who know the album intimately will hopefully enjoy." said Brian.

"This is not just a remaster, this is a brand new 2024 rebuild of the entire Queen debut album", quoted Brian when announcing the release of the band's revisit of their eponymous debut album late last year, retitled Queen I for this stunning new update. May further elaborated: *"Every instrument has been revisited to produce the 'live' ambient sound we would have liked to use originally."*

Now Queen take the release to the next stage, announcing a brand new, limited edition immersive Dolby Atmos release of the album.

With Brian and Roger acting as executive producers, and overseen by Queen's long-standing audio-production team of Justin Shirley-Smith, Joshua J Macrae and Kris Fredriksson, this enhanced spatial surround sound format release breathes stunning new life into the band's epic and unique multi-layered sound.

Says Justin Shirley-Smith: *"It always feels like Queen's music was designed for immersive formats. It's dramatic and powerful and*

has a lot of dynamics. The original album was recorded more than 50 years ago, but it was so ambitious musically, rhythmically and lyrically. It's beyond belief really, and it's such a joy for us to work on."

To mix Queen I in Dolby Atmos, the team made stems from the 2024 stereo mix, allowing them to process and pan each musical part individually, bringing new depth and dimensions to an album already bursting with invention.

Justin explains: *"It's always fun working in Atmos because we are confident that the mix is already good from the stereo and this expanded sound field gives us an opportunity to feature the backing track without masking some of the intricate multi-layered elements that Queen are famous for."*

"We finished the mix with Lewis Jones at Abbey Road where they have a great mix studio equipped with all the speakers required. Lewis has worked on a great many significant immersive projects and is a crucial part of the Atmos mix team."

Originally released in 1973 and featuring the iconic line-up of Freddie Brian, Roger and John, Queen's self-titled debut album marked the start of the band's stellar journey, showcasing a band whose staggering musical talents and breadth of ambition remain unmatched.

"There are so many different styles on the album," says Justin of Queen I. *"For instance, the song My Fairy King is a precursor to what came later with Bohemian Rhapsody. It's so adventurous, and this new mix brings out things that you won't have heard before. Like everything on the album, it sounds fantastic."*

Says Brian: *"I'm particularly excited about this new Dolby Atmos version of what we now call QUEEN 1. When the boys were converting the stereo rebuild into a surround experience, I was unable to be there, due to a health hiccup. So I was very happy to have the opportunity to go back in with them recently and add my own contribution to this multichannel mix. There are now a few nice adventurous Easter eggs in there, which those who know the album intimately will hopefully enjoy. So the Blu-ray version is an update from the version that has currently been available to stream. Nobody has ever heard our first album quite like this !!!"*

"At last," concludes Roger, *"we get our first album to sound as we imagined it should sound...phew!"*

'I WANT IT ALL' LEADS 'NOW YEARBOOK 1989'

'I Want It All' features as track one on the forthcoming 'Now Yearbook 1989' compilation. The collection will be released on standard 4CD, a deluxe hardcover book 4CD set and on 3LP coloured pink vinyl.

'Now Yearbook 1989' was released on 25th April.

Full tracklisting available at nowmusic.com.



MPT FUNDING UPDATE



Over the last year, the MPT has funded and supported 53 new projects in Africa, India, Asia, North America and the UK, with the donation figure being **£585,836**.

The total number of HIV / AIDS related projects the MPT has funded since 1992 stands at **1,956**, plus 881 charities have also benefited from direct donations since the charity set up in Freddie's name was established.

The MPT needs your help more than ever. Many overseas charities dependent on government support have either had their funding shelved or completely removed. Never has it been more critical to keep up the importance of HIV/AIDS Education and Prevention.

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who has ever supported us, you really are the greatest fans in the World.

www.mercuryphoenixtrust.org

DE LANE LEA DEMOS RELEASED FOR RECORD STORE DAY



This is the pristine 2024 Mix of the De Lane Lea Demos originally featured in CD format, as part of the band's heavy weight "Queen I" box set release last year. Now available on 12" vinyl for the very first time it is

testament to the fascinating pre-history of the band's first album, originally titled "Queen".

These are the demos the band recorded preceding the recording of that album. In summer 1969, Brian and Roger's pre-Queen group, Smile, had already recorded at De Lane Lea Studios in London's Kingsway. Two years later, the company opened a new complex in Wembley, and needed a band to help them test their new equipment and the sound quality of the different rooms.

Brian and Roger volunteered Queen, and the band spent time at the studio between November 1971 and January 1972—"a massive thrill," Brian recalls. They were repaid with a five-song demo, overseen by De Lane Lea's chief engineer Louie Austin, and containing "Keep Yourself Alive", "The Night Comes Down", "Jesus", "Liar", and "Great King Rat".

"The demos we made at De Lane Lea Studios were closer to what we dreamed of than our later sessions," explains Brian. "Nice open drum sounds and ambience on the guitar. That was much more the way we wanted it to go."

"We were young and had total blind faith in what we were doing," says Roger. "Although these demos were intended to be hawked around to procure a recording contract, the band," says Brian, "always felt the performances had more spontaneity and sparkle, as well as the benefit of more natural sounds compared with the final album versions."

As, the only surviving copies of the mixes of the demos are on scratched acetates, here for the first time, these self-produced recordings have been restored and remixed from the original multitracks.

www.recordstoreday.co.uk

www.recordstoreday.com

BRIAN MAY COACHELLA APPEARANCE WITH BENSON BOONE



Photo © LA Times

Brian made a special guest appearance with the charismatic Benson Boone (www.bensonboone.com) at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California on April 14th.

"I'm still reeling from last night at Coachella. Thanks to all of you folks who made it feel so special—you know who you are !!!! And this particular way of concluding Bohemian Rhapsody will be hard to beat in the years to come !!! Thanks. And for Benson and his entire team, I have no words. I'm awestruck.

"Photo by Allen J. Schaben, I understand. Aeronautics by Benson Boone, esq. Bri" (Brian May Instagram)

Prior to the show Brian commented, *"Nearly Show-Time !!! That old feeling—that cocktail of emotions—fear—excitement—disbelief—belief—horror—gratitude—friendship—the will to create something special. And now, having Planned the Dive, just Dive the plan !!! ... Here we go !!!"*

And after the show, *"Do we look happy ? !!! Gonna treasure this moment on the plane with @bensonboone—a truly golden 22 year old prodigy. I'm proud and happy to say we are now officially pals."*

BBC ANNOUNCE LIVE AID 40TH ANNIVERSARY PLANS




BBC Two and BBC iPlayer will broadcast Live Aid at 40, which reveals the behind-the-scenes story of the 1985 concert that brought the idea of charity to a new generation.

Archive of the performances and back stage of the record and the concert feature Paula Yates, Boy George, Status Quo and George Michael whilst interviews with Nile Rodgers, Lenny Henry, Phil Collins, Lionel Richie, Patti LaBelle, **Roger Taylor** and **Brian May** are set against the memories of the Ethiopian politicians at the heart of the relief effort, Dawit Giorgis and Berhane Deressa.

Also coming to BBC Two in July is Live Aid the Concert. Approximately two billion people watched the broadcast in more than 100 countries. Now, for the first time since 1985, BBC Two gives viewers a chance to relive over 6.5 hours of extended highlights of the London and Philadelphia concerts, in addition to backstage footage, including interviews with Bono, Brian May, David Bowie, Elvis Costello, Howard Jones, Roger Daltrey, Spandau Ballet, Sting, The Style Council and a transatlantic interview with Phil Collins on Concorde.

Jonathan Rothery, Head of BBC Popular Music TV says: *"This summer we're delighted to be giving viewers a chance to relive one of the biggest concerts in history for the first time on TV since it was originally broadcast on the BBC. By providing over 6.5 hours of footage that was captured on the day Live Aid took place, we want viewers to feel transported back to 1985, and to enjoy all those classic songs that we all still know and love to this day, as they were performed on that stage."*

A large photograph showing three members of the band Queen on a stage. The central figure, Brian May, is wearing his signature long, curly white hair and a dark tuxedo with a white shirt and a dark bow tie. He is looking down at a small, white, mountain-shaped cake being presented to him. To his left, another man in a tuxedo is partially visible, and to his right, a third man in a tuxedo is also present. The background is dark with warm, glowing lights. A black text box with white text is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

Queen Awarded The Polar Music Prize 2025

QUEEN, HERBIE HANCOCK AND BARBARA HANNIGAN were awarded the Polar Music Award 2025 at a star-studded ceremony at the Grand Hotel in Stockholm on 27th May. The awards were presented by King Carl XVI Gustaf.

Roger and Brian took to the stage to collect the award, and make their speeches.

Roger said: *"Thank you. What a night. What a lineup. What a talent. Your Majesties, your highnesses, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.*

"When we started our band in 1970, in and around the colleges of London University, we had ambitions but never dreamed of the journey that was to follow. We were fortunate in the fact that our four wildly different personalities came together to achieve a wonderful chemistry. What was an incredible trip around the world and the cities of the world through so many triumphs and twists of fortune in so many countries came to a tragic



halt with the loss of our dear friend Freddie Mercury. This was a hammer blow, especially to John Deacon, our bass player, who couldn't go on. So depleted (uh) Brian and myself determined to keep our music alive and with the help of wonderful singers like Paul Rogers and of course the great Adam Lambert, um yeah (pause for audience acknowledgement) we continued to tour the world to this present day. The Polar Music Prize is exceptional in the fact that unlike other awards, it recognises the entirety of an artist's career, unlike any others I think. What an honour to be included in this glittering cavalcade of previous laureates. True Olympian company indeed. We are so proud to be the recipients of this incredibly prestigious award, also to share the stage with these wonderful other two laureates, Herbie Hancock and (and) Barbara Hannigan. We are honoured and proud. We thank you."

Brian continued, *"Your majesties, your highnesses, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, thank you all so much for honouring Queen in this way.*

"Sweden has already been very kind to us over the years, and this really is the icing on the cake. What



a wonderful privilege, and I didn't realise what it was going to feel like to accept this award in the company of Barbara Hannigan and Herbie Hancock. It's beyond, such an honour.

"For Queen Swedish audiences actually have been one of the most loyally supportive in the world, ever since we first played in Gothenburg in 1974, and we all got our clogs (Audience laughter). Some of us still have them. (Applause and more laughter). In this special moment, I contemplate how that younger Brian May in 1974 would have felt if he knew that we would be living this kind of dream, 50 years in the future. It would have been almost unimaginable to me. While we as an emerging young rock band were away on these early Queen tours, my dad, Harold May, back home, used to create beautiful

maps of our journeys around the globe. Of course, my dad actually disapproved very strongly of what I was doing. He was heartbroken that I'd thrown my life away, my scientific career, in order to play rock music. His dream was for me to get what he called a proper job. It's too late now. (Audience laughter). But of course, my dad, forgive me talking about him, my dad was the one who sat with me night after night when I was 17 in his little workshop in our house, creating with our bare hands the homemade guitar, the Red Special that was to be my companion all the way around the world many times in the future, including here, of course. And from being a very disapproving parent, eventually when I finally flew him out to see us in Madison Square Garden, he took my hand and said, "Okay, I get it now" (Audience laughter). Which is lovely.

"So my dad is long gone now, but I kind of feel he's here with us tonight in Stockholm. So, I've never done this before, but tonight I would like to share my quarter of this magnificent prize with my dad, Harold May. Thank you, Dad. (audience applause). And, and on behalf of Freddie and John, my dear friend Roger and myself, thank you Sweden 'Tusen tack snälla'" *{(meaning, a thousand thank you's or thank you very much (in a sincere, gentle and kind way))}.

The speeches were followed by Adam Lambert being introduced to the stage, where he performed





'Who Wants to Live Forever'. The night continued with various artists performing Queen songs, and included Miriam Bryant performing 'The Show Must Go

On' (to which Brian emotionally approached Miriam afterwards to congratulate and praise her on an exceptional performance which was very touching).

Erik Grönwall followed with 'Stone Cold Crazy' (on whose performance Roger commented he was glad he didn't have to perform that fast-paced song

nowadays but Brian said it had made him want to grab a guitar and play right now).

Then it was the turn of GHOST, Fredrik Åkesson & Eric Ericson Kammarkör—who gave an electric performance of 'Bohemian Rhapsody'. Then Adam again took to the stage to finish the musical performances with 'Another One Bites the Dust'.

www.polarmusicprize.org

Many thanks to Iain Cartmel for the transcript of the speeches.

Photos courtesy of Annika Berglund/
Polar Music Prize.





*Is this the real
Is this just fantasy?*

leger
HOLIDAYS

38th INTERNATIONAL

Queen Fan Club Convention

3rd to 6th OCTOBER 2025 | 4 DAYS from only **£199^{pp}**

The annual International Queen Fan Club Convention is back for the 38th time!
This residential, non-stop party sees Queen fans congregate from all corners
of the globe for a jam-packed weekend.

Meet up with old friends or, if you've never been before, why not come along
and meet like-minded fans? You don't want to miss the party that never ends!

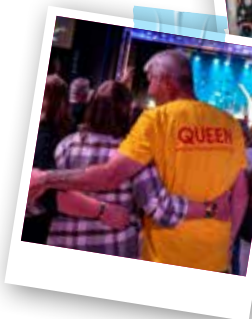
Including...

**3 nights accommodation in your chosen caravan
at Golden Sands Holiday Park**

Commemorative pin badge, wristband and programme for the event

**Entrance to all live events and activities
listed in the programme**

...plus more!



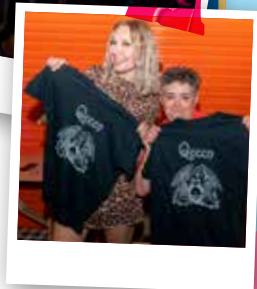
*I'm in love
with my car*



What to expect at this rockin' event...

LIVE MUSIC

Kinda Queen, Don't Stop Queen Now,
Belladonic Haze and more



SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS

including Queen Archivist Greg Brooks; Queen's
keyboardist and musical director Spike Edney; and Freddie's
bodyguard, chauffeur and friend Terry Giddings

RARE AND UNSEEN FOOTAGE OF THE BAND

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A QUEEN-RELATED MARKET PLACE

to help search for wanted items to top
up your collection

QUEEN DISCOS EACH NIGHT

A CHARITY AUCTION

with unique items up for grabs!

...plus more!

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*Oh, you're my
best friend*



All holidays are subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply. The full terms and conditions applicable to your holiday can be found on our website. Calls may be recorded for training purposes and your protection. All dates and prices are correct as of 21.05.25.

*Galileo, Galileo,
Galileo, Galileo*

On the Spot...

Des Jabir (centre) in February 2025
with fan club members Alan and
Dave Fordham (photo: Barry Cook)



A regular at the mixing board at Queen related performances for over 30 years, Des Jabir is well established as one of Roger Taylor and Brian May's trusted sound engineers. In an exclusive Official International Queen Fan Club interview with Dave Fordham, Des provided unique insight into front of house sound responsibilities and touring production and promoter roles.

What's the background to your working relationship with Queen?

In the early nineties I worked for a public address (PA) systems company in London that had a relationship with Roger and the Queen camp and I was asked to collect some speakers from Roger's house in Surrey. So I drove down, met some nice people, drove home and thought no more about it.

But when more jobs came up, they'd ask '*Is that bloke Des around? He's alright—send him down!*'. It built up from there to the point that Martin Groves, Roger's right hand man at the time, would say '*Des, you're the first name on the list!*'

What was your first experience as Roger's front of house (FOH) sound engineer and what were your responsibilities?

It started with the Gosport Festival in July 1994 with the formation of Roger's new solo band that would go on the Happiness tour of the UK, Japan, Germany, Italy, France and Malta.

It was nice for me as I only had one job on that tour—to mix the sound that the audience heard. For the UK dates we carried our own PA and for the gigs abroad I had to deal with whatever desk was put in front of me.



Des Jabir was FOH sound engineer on the Happiness tour
(photo: Jeff Gatt / summer 1996 fan club magazine)

How closely did you interact with Roger?

We used to chat about the feel of what he was doing and a lot of other things. I already liked a lot of Queen's material but I discovered that Roger's voice had this really unique sound to it. There's a lot of effects on his vocals on the Happiness album and he'd ask me about putting reverb and delay on everything... ..but I used to shy away from that because I thought he had a really great voice.



Roger's Sleishman bass drum on the Electric Fire tour had 'the most astonishing sound' Des had ever heard (photo: Sarah Simpson)

Was the final decision about the sound mix down to Roger?

Roger is obviously mindful of what his fans think, so even before social media you couldn't have the audience going away complaining they couldn't hear his voice or didn't like the sound. But we had the perfect relationship because Roger had complete faith in what I was doing and was a great employer.

Hearing the words is the key factor when mixing a song, so I would've made sure Roger's voice could be heard even if to the detriment of everything else. But of course, it was a great band and the audience would've wanted to hear the music too, so there's an argument for both cases.

What else can you tell us about the Happiness UK and European legs?

I thought Roger did really well and I thoroughly enjoyed the shows. In the UK, he'd enjoy getting on the van and travelling around with the band, whereas the crew would pack up after gigs and travel on our tour bus. But in Europe we were all on the same flights and much more of a touring group.

I remember when we toured Italy, Roger wanted his car out there but didn't want to drive it down. So the Production Manager, Paul 'Streaky' Hawkes, and I came up with this plan whereby he would drive the car out and I'd travel in advance to the Italian PA company to check they had all the gear... ..so I got a weekend in Milan and Streaky had an excuse to drive Roger's Mercedes across Europe!

Considering Queen's special relationship with Japan, how were the Happiness gigs in Kawasaki, Nagoya and Tokyo?

The reception was really lovely and there were huge Queen fans following us around. I remember a fan asked after a show if I could pass on a present to Roger. At the next show she asked if I could pass another present to Roger... ..and then she gave me a present in appreciation for passing the gifts to Roger! The Japanese have lovely faith!

And you continued to work with Roger after the Happiness tour?

For anything FOH I was their guy, working on private parties at Roger's house and all sorts of things. There was always something going on!



John Deacon, Spike Edney, Roger Taylor and Brian May during the Bejart Ballet rehearsals (photo: Jacky Smith)

Jumping to 1997, how were you involved with Queen's performance of The Show Must Go On with Elton John at the Bejart Ballet première in Paris?

We rehearsed at Roger's house for a whole week for that one song. We set-up and got everything working before Roger arrived with John Deacon, Brian May and Spike Edney.

That would've been my first meeting with Brian and I found him an astonishing man.



Des Jaber (right) with Brian May and Ritchie Neville during Queen + Five's Party in the Park rehearsals (photo: Jacky Smith)

They played the song before we went to the pub and then played it through another couple of times. I asked 'When is Elton arriving?' 'He's coming tomorrow'. And that went on all week until the end of rehearsals and still no Elton! So we drove the truck to Paris where Elton would apparently join us on set-up day... ..and I asked 'When is Elton arriving?' 'Oh, he's not coming. He'll be here for soundcheck tomorrow before the ballet!' Which thankfully he was! But when they started to rehearse, Elton announced 'I don't do *The Show Must Go On* in that key with my band!'

But it turned out fine and it was really interesting mixing the sound in the theatre as there was no space out in the audience. The sound came from the orchestra in the pit, so I was in a room under the stage with just my desk and two massive speakers. I couldn't see the stage or band and just had to hope and pray that whatever was going out was vaguely reminiscent of what I was doing!

It was a 'pinch me' moment at the hotel afterwards with John on one side, Roger on the other and Elton opposite... ..and Brian mainly buying the drinks, bless him!

Was it evident to you that John wasn't comfortable during what turned out to be his last public performance with Queen?

I'd never met him before so obviously had nothing to compare against. Even though he'd done Queen's huge gigs and appeared to be comfortable, maybe he'd just got used to not doing it... ..and suddenly he was back in that high-pressure situation.

How was it to join up again with Roger for his Electric Fire solo tour, starting with the record breaking Cyberbarn concert that drew the then-largest ever audience for an internet gig?

To us it was effectively a very enjoyable little gig in Roger's back garden—the idea of 600,000 people streaming at home was completely alien at the time. We couldn't grasp what was going on because we didn't really know what the internet was. And we went into the Guinness Book of Records!

What are your other stand-out memories of being FOH sound engineer and Production Manager on the Electric Fire tour?

I remember having to deal with the loudest guitar ever when Brian guested at Wolverhampton! Mixing in the Red Special is something else—wow, it's loud!

What do you recall about Roger moving to behind the drumkit during his solo tours?

On the Happiness tour, he'd go back and play a massive percussion set-up beside the drummer, Josh Macrae. Keith Prior played the Electric Fire tour but Roger had a drumkit too, including a Sleishman bass drum with the most astonishing kick drum sound I've ever heard.

Roger taught me a lesson about gating tom-toms that has stayed with me ever since. A lot of rock engineers will gate tom-toms so when they're hit it's a big sound but then stops because the gate cuts the microphone off. But Roger's style of playing is about the resonance of his tom-toms to the point where he'll play a tom fill and then mute himself with his hands by touching the skins to stop them ringing at the point he wants them to stop ringing. He told me he didn't want gates on the drums because you won't hear that.

So I've always tried since to have the loosest possible gating on tom-toms so as to get the sound



Front of house at Q+PR's 2005 show in Dortmund where Des Jabir was Production Manager (photo: Thilo Rahn)

the drummer wants. He also taught me a lot about microphone technique and mixing drums generally.

What involvement did you have with the numerous one-off live Queen events in the early 2000s?

The whole Queen thing started to regenerate and whenever they took the band out to perform a gig or at a party then I'd always be involved with how the live sound was heard in the audience or on TV.

It was usually Spike's band with Roger and Brian plus various other players pulled in. We did the performances with Five at the Millennium Dome and the Party in the Park at Hyde Park, and I mixed the sound at the special gig for Queen's Day in Amsterdam.

Did you work on the We Will Rock You (WWRY) musical in London?

Only loosely with rehearsal systems, but I got involved with promo events when WWRY was breaking out to other territories. In Moscow, Roger and Brian performed with the cast in a huge theatre at the Kremlin and it was brilliant.

We then loaded out and went up to the top floor of the Kremlin to a massive ballroom for a party with the cast and band performing. Everyone was

astonished when Jim Beach, a fairly reserved man, got up to sing backing vocals—it was great!

In Cologne we did a primetime Saturday night TV show with Brian and Roger alongside the German WWRY cast, followed by another party afterwards.

And we'd already taken the original WWRY cast to the Party at the Palace for Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee. Brian and Roger told me it was the first time they'd ever played Bohemian Rhapsody in its entirety live, so another 'pinch me' moment.

And of course, Brian opened that event with God Save the Queen from the top of Buckingham Palace, experiencing what he called 'life-changing levels of fear'.

I absolutely get it because the eyes of the world were literally upon him and he couldn't play a bum note. I would've been aware that Brian was nervous because historically he was at those sorts of one-off big appearances. You're never on your own timetable and it's not like a normal concert where you can settle into your groove—you're always up against it.



Brian rehearsing on top of Buckingham Palace (photo: Frank Vincent of the Press Association / summer 2002 fan club magazine)



Q+AL show at o2 London in 2015 where Des Jabir was Promoter Rep (photo: Thilo Rahn)

There was incredible pressure but Brian absolutely pulled it off and it was a real moment. To be part of it was fantastic.

After we'd done the opening, there were famous people everywhere and I was with Brian and Tony Iommi when we looked across the garden and saw Ozzy Osbourne stop to talk to Brian Wilson from the Beachboys. Brian said *'God, what a fascinating meeting of minds—I wonder what they're talking about?'* Tony replied *'I bet Ozzy's just asking him where the toilet is!'*

And there were challenges with the fire at Buckingham Palace during rehearsals and then technical problems?

After we'd run through everything at rehearsals and I'd asked for more guitar etc, I was in the pub and got a call asking if we'd escaped the fire! Brian and I didn't know if the whole thing was in jeopardy or if we'd plugged in something that we shouldn't have!

Then on the day they were having trouble getting the link working to feed sound back to Brian from the stage where Roger and the orchestra would be playing. It went right down to the wire and there were just seconds to go when they got the feedback up to Brian so he'd know when to start.

In general, did you learn anything about guitar sound from Brian in the same way you did with drums from Roger?

It's awful to admit as a sound engineer but I've personally never been a big guitar fan per se. But because Brian has such a revolutionary style of playing, he really opened my eyes and taught me to appreciate guitars more. His sound is so unique and I definitely hear his influence a lot. I'm hugely respectful of Brian and his talent... ..and he is such a lovely man too.

Is it true you had a hand in the conception of Queen + Paul Rodgers (Q+PR) after the UK Hall of Fame in 2004 when Paul guested with Brian and Roger?

I feel I had some contribution to Q+PR happening. I was with Brian in the dressing room after their one-off Hall of Fame performance and we were both saying what a great mix it was and how well it worked. We had a long conversation about my experience of touring with Paul; I knew both artists, had worked with them separately and knew they were excellent in their own genres.

It wasn't necessarily a 'natural' fit but I felt then, and still do, that it was all about finding someone who wasn't going to try and be Freddie. And that night was the catalyst.



Des Jabir had a hand in Q+PR coming together
(photo: Thilo Rahn)

Do you remember the fan club gig at Brixton Academy that kickstarted the Q+PR tour?

Yes, Brian was very keen to have the mini stage thrust but we kept telling him it was sold out and they couldn't cut capacity!

During rehearsals at Brixton we had a hellish time with buzzing coming off Brian's amps. It was a big deal and we got in all sorts of boffins with field generators to resolve the problem!

And by now you were Q+PR's Production Manager and not FOH?

I've been taught several hard lessons in my career and this was one of them. It had been suggested to us as a crew that a Q+PR tour would happen... ..but then I was called to say I wouldn't be doing FOH as they were getting Trip Khalaf back. I understood even though I wasn't happy, but the guys wanted me involved so I accepted the Production Manager role with responsibility for day to day running of the show... ..even though I'd never done production at that level.

I didn't really enjoy the new role to be honest, plus my daughter had just been born, so it was decided I wouldn't carry on beyond the first leg. I've got regrets about it but it was still nice to be involved as Brian, Roger, Paul, the band and crew were a great bunch to be around. I remember looking at the show and being quite proud; it was a different interpretation but then it had to be and everyone thought so.

But you continued to do FOH separately with Brian and Roger?

Many times. For example, I did the sound at the 'Freddie For A Day' party at the Savoy and lots of

Brian's appearances with Kerry Ellis. The last thing I did with Brian was a performance with Kerry on Michael Ball's live radio show. We rehearsed at Brian's house and then had to squeeze all the kit into the BBC studio, with me crouching in complete silence! Also numerous things with Roger including a brilliant time at Wintershall with a supergroup of Eric Clapton, Mike Rutherford and many others. Rehearsals were at Roger's place so he used his people, that was the deal.

Have you worked with Queen + Adam Lambert?

Yes, I'd been working with Phil McIntyre who promoted their UK shows in 2015. Knowing I had a history with the Queen boys, he asked me to go out with them as Promoter Rep, interfacing between the artist and the venues. It was lovely going back as I still knew Brian and Roger's guitar and drum techs and a few others, and I was welcomed with open arms.



Des was welcomed back to the crew in 2015
(photo: Thilo Rahn)

Every time I run into Roger or Brian there's always hugs and they are great to me. Very gracious. I sent Brian a congratulatory email when he was knighted and he very kindly sent a lovely reply, taking the time to ask how I was and what I'm up to. I've always had lovely interactions with him.

Everybody always wants to do Queen's shows as they're very loyal to their people. I can't imagine anyone having a bad word to say about Rog or Brian and I've got the greatest respect for them both.

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Many thanks to Des for his time and to Sarah Simpson, Jacky Smith and Thilo Rahn for images (Thilo is the author of ROCKMOS, a 342-page photobook featuring 800 pictures and stories about Q+PR: info@thilorahn.de).



What Is The Significance of BOLTON?

by Chris Ford

Queen, Brian and Roger over the years have performed many times in the Greater Manchester/Lancashire region of the UK, although my town of Bolton always seems to be in the shadow of its neighbouring big brother, Manchester. However, Bolton does have a claim to fame in Queen history as being the very first place that Freddie Mercury performed his first two public concerts.

On the morning, of the 23rd of August 1969, Freddie and his band "Ibex" crammed themselves, and their equipment into a van that fellow musician friend and van driver for the weekend, Richard Thompson (1984—Wreckage), had borrowed from his Heathrow Airport workplace, on the condition he got the van back to Heathrow in time for the start of work on Monday. "Ibex" were a Northern English band that Freddie had only recently joined. Upon arriving in Bolton, Freddie found the Northern people to be more rough and ready than he had been used to in London. He apparently pulled the shutter back down on the van and hid until the people had passed by.

gigs were Freddie on vocals, Mike Bersin on guitar, Mick Smith on drums and John Tupps Taylor on bass. The band got mixed reviews for both of their gigs.

To mark the 55th Anniversary to the date of these two concerts, my partner Carole Humphreys and I met up with Jim Jenkins and Neil Fairclough for two lovely catch ups.



Chris and Carol with
Jim outside the
"Octagon Theatre"

Ken Testi, had booked "Ibex" to play two gigs in the town, the first night being at the "Octagon Theatre" for the regular "Bluesology Sessions" and the following day for an open air gig at "Bolton Music Festival" at the amphitheatre in the aptly named "Queen's Park". After the "Octagon" gig, with the next day's concert

also being in the same town, one would assume that the band would have spent the night in Bolton, but unfortunately money was tight, so they packed up all the equipment and drove to St Helens, near Liverpool, and stayed the night at Ken Testi's mother's "Market Hotel" for free board and lodgings. They returned to Bolton the following day. The "Ibex" line up for the two Bolton



Chris and Jim inside the "Octagon Theatre"



Ibex—Queen's Park—Bolton—24th August 1969

On the anniversary of the "Octagon Theatre" gig we met with Queen + Adam Lambert bassist and all round nice guy Neil Fairclough, and had a lovely time chatting about various things and of course a little bit about Queen. What a lot of people may not know is that Neil is actually a BOLTONIAN, born and bred! Brian, Roger and Adam always introduce him as being from Manchester, but I suppose that is because most people don't know where Bolton is and it's just easier to say Manchester.

Neil, being a Queen fan himself, first got to perform with a member of Queen on the 14th August 2010, during rehearsals when Brian May and Kerry Ellis were booked to play at the BBC Radio theatre, and Neil was the Bassist in Elio Pace's "Weekend Wogan" house band. Neil said at the time it was a bit of a surreal moment to be actually playing alongside Brian May. The following day Neil performed again with Brian and Kerry, but this time on the broadcasted show. Brian and Kerry would later go on to "steal" Neil and the girls from the "Weekend Wogan" house band for their upcoming 2011 "Anthems Tour". Neil would first play with "Queen" (Brian and Roger) on Freddie's Birthday on the 5th September 2011 at "The Savoy Hotel" London for the "Freddie For A Day" event and two months later in Belfast for his first Queen + Adam Lambert performance at the EMA Awards. Neil was also the Bassist on Roger's 2021 "Outsider" UK Tour.

Outside of touring, Neil has also lent his musical talents on several official Queen-related projects including the incidental bass parts, standing in for Deaky in the biopic movie "Bohemian Rhapsody" and on Freddie's "Mr Bad Guy - Special Edition" album, Brian and Kerry's "Golden Days" album, the Queen + Adam Lambert charity single "You Are The Champions" and the live albums "Outsider Live" "Live In Japan" and "Live Around The World". The latter earned the band a number one spot on the UK albums chart, for which all members of the band received a #1 award from the Official charts.

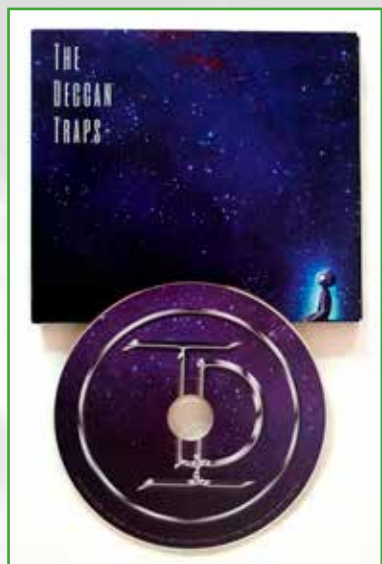
Neil comes from a family of musicians, his Great Aunt Hylda Baker (duetting with Arthur Mullard) had an album "Band On The Trot" and a hit single "You're The One That I Want" back in 1978. Neil's sister Lois and brother-in-law John (who recently had the pleasure of working with Tito Jackson) are members



Ibex and entourage—Bolton Octagon—23rd August 1969



of Neil's own band "The Deccan Traps" who have a self-titled debut album, which was released in November, featuring an epic closing track "Dream Of A Thousand Nights" which Brian lends his voice and guitar work to. The track also features Neil's son Denny providing the angelic opening vocals. "The Deccan Traps" are Ricardo Afonso ("Galileo" from the Musical "We Will Rock You") on vocals, Neil on bass/ backing vocals, Andy Treacey (Faithless) on drums, Lois Dagnall on Vocals, John Dagnall on guitar/ drums/ piano/ backing vocals, Johnny Heyes on guitar and Neil Edwards on keys.



Details on how to order the album can be found on all "The Deccan Traps" socials.

www.thedeccantraps.com

www.facebook.com/TheDeccanTraps

www.instagram.com/thedeccantrapsofficial/

twitter.com/TheDeccanTraps

Day two of the 55th anniversary of these concerts, we had the pleasure of welcoming Jim Jenkins to our town. First stop on Jim's visit was to the "Octagon" where the inside of the theatre remains more or less how it was back when the theatre first opened in 1967. It was quite emotional to be in the place where Freddie performed for the very first time in the UK. On talking with the young staff, it was surprising that, even though they knew who Freddie was, they did not know the significance of their place of employment in Queen history. It was wonderful to hear Jim fill in the blanks for them as they listened to his every word.



We then moved on to "Queen's Park" and the amphitheatre where Freddie performed his second gig in our town. Purely coincidentally, when we arrived at the amphitheatre it was exactly 55 years ago to the minute when we stood on the stage that Freddie would have started his performance—15 minutes past noon.

The stage these days is open sided, whereas back in 1969 it was more of an enclosed bandstand type stage, but the view looking out is what Freddie would have seen. I asked Jim how he thought Freddie would have felt. Jim said "Nervous". Visiting these two venues with Jim was wonderful, and to end the day, we went out for a lovely Italian lunch, with red wine and beer, much laughter and many Queen stories. Thanks Jim!!!



Jamming with Neil in his studio in August 2024 and showing his Q+AL "Live Around The World" Official Charts #1 award and The Deccan Traps CD



Jim and Chris reminiscing on the "Queen's Park" Amphitheatre Stage in August 2024

One half of vocal duo Rockchicks and FABBAGIRLS, singer/songwriter Susie Webb has provided backing vocals to a myriad of iconic artists, including Queen (Brian May, Roger Taylor and Spike Edney), The Who, Phil Collins, Lionel Ritchie and many more. In an exclusive interview for the Official International Queen Fan Club, Susie and Dave Fordham began by discussing how she linked up with The Brian May Band in 1998.



Susie Webb in her famous Queen T-shirt
(photo: Xavier Vila / courtesy of Susie Webb)

What events led to you joining up with Brian for his Another World solo tour?

It all started when I went to look at a flat to rent... ...and it turned out to be Spike Edney's! I didn't rent it, but Spike did end up becoming one of my best friends! Zoe Nicholas and I started singing with him in the SAS Band's early days and Brian performed with us before approaching us to join his solo band.

It didn't feel like joining a new band because we had already worked a lot together and we knew Neil Murray [bass] and Jamie Moses [guitar] from the SAS Band. Eric Singer [drums] was great fun too.

With a fairly even split between Queen tracks and Brian's solo material, what do you remember about learning the setlist?

Some of the music was new to us and we sorted out all our harmonies before rehearsals began. I remember one time I thought I knew a harmony better than Brian (who suggested it was a different harmony... ...and I was convinced he was wrong). But when we put all the harmonies together, he was absolutely right! It might be what I do for a living but his ear is amazing—he loves harmonies and is so good at them.



Susie with Brian circa 1998 (photo courtesy of Susie Webb)

How did your harmonies and backing vocals complement Brian's lead vocals?

Backing vocals are like another instrument in a band and are so important in giving the frontman confidence so they're never out there on their own. A platform of harmonies and people behind you to hit those notes and come in with you on every occasion makes life much easier, especially on a long, gruelling tour where voices can get tired.

Like Roger, Brian had the confidence to change roles and go out there at the front, which is a big



L-R: Neil Murray, Jamie Moses, Susie Webb, Brian May, Roger Taylor, Zoe Nicholas and Spike Edney during Pavarotti & Friends rehearsals (photo copyright © Neil Murray)

thing. Brian's got a great voice with a superb tone; it's really strong with lots of light and shade. Roger was better known for doing the high notes but Brian was pretty good at them too.

We would do all the harmonies with Jamie and Spike. We rehearsed over and over again until they were spot on and engrained in our brains - we were pretty tough on ourselves because harmonies are a big part of Queen music....and I am a perfectionist when it comes to my job!

The dancing and moves can then come afterwards. Zoe and I have a sixth sense after all these years—perfect harmonies and every movement we do is pretty much spot on. It's cool for the audience to have something to look at; a bit of theatre and perfect choreography which set us apart from others—a part of our act that has turned into something extraordinary.

What were the dynamics of the Brian May Band?

We had an extremely 'happy ship' with no egos involved—and as the band was happy, the crew was happy too. There were never any attitudes or fallings out, which is unusual; we just had laughs and fun.

We all travelled together, stayed at the same hotels and Brian always insisted the record company took the whole band out for dinner after gigs. He was very generous, easy going and so kind. We were really well looked after.

How would you describe Brian's guitar performances on stage?

He's loud, I'll give him that, ha ha! When you start rehearsing with Brian, you certainly know it—I don't know how he's still got good hearing!

But seriously, he's incredible and has created his own unique sound that's not just playing guitar—it's like a voice and is so melodic. He's the best!

What are your standout memories from the Japanese, European and Australian legs of the tour?

Japan was a magical place. The fans were absolutely fanatical and hundreds would run alongside our trains screaming and crying. But then at the shows they'd sit quietly and clap neatly when the last note was played, which was so different to everywhere else in the world where they'd go wild.

We had to learn some Japanese to sing Teo Torriatte, as well as various other languages now and again—quite hard, but fun as I love a challenge! It always worked because even if we made mistakes, they loved us for trying.

I remember at The Circus in Sweden, Brian told us to get out our Abba costumes (which came on tour with us just in case) and he came on stage playing Dancing Queen... ..the whole place erupted and went absolutely mad!

BOSSA

In Australia, Brian and I did a wonderful thing and went stargazing together up a mountain. We laid at the side of the road and Brian was so informative about the stars that it gave me an exclusive, incredible insight into astronomy, one of his other passions. We waited until I finally saw a shooting star, which was quite amazing.

At a lovely hotel on the Gold Coast at the end of the tour, Jamie used to climb on a huge stone in the middle of the swimming pool and serenade us all. We all sang along and it was fun. Happy days!



Susie with Roger and Rufus Taylor
(photo courtesy of Susie Webb)

What do you remember about the promotional acoustic gigs ahead of the tour, including the recorded VH1 session?

I loved those crossover acoustic versions. It was a really nice day at VH1 and Brian's voice sounded great. A lot of work and rehearsal went into it because sitting there and performing with every note being recorded and filmed was actually scarier than being live in front of thousands.

If you've got a great song, I believe you can perform it in many different ways—and a great song is what it will always be! For example, I've sung and produced albums of my own in bossa nova style, putting a retro, cool and chillaxed spin on hits from artists I've worked with. One of my albums, *BossaRocks* (The Bossa & Chilled Songbook of Rock), includes Hammer to Fall and These Are The Days of Our Lives. Roger suggested a couple of songs and he really liked how I did These Are The Days. Hammer to Fall worked well too, even though it was hard to put together and make it sound right (I'm not sure if Brian has heard it yet—I'll ask when I see him next!).



Susie performing with Zoe Nicholas and Roger Taylor
(photo copyright © Thilo Rahn)

After the Another World tour, how was it to join Brian and Roger at Hyde Park for the Queen + Five performance?

By that time I'd already known Roger for many years through the SAS Band and we were rehearsing for the Party in the Park at his house. I was in his kitchen making a cup of tea when one of Five walked in. I asked him what he did in the band and he said he was a singer. I asked a second one of them and he said he was a singer, so I replied *'Oh, there's two singers?'* This went on and I ended up asking all of them... and they were all singers! Of course, they were one of the early boy bands who didn't play anything and just sang... ..but I didn't know much about them and asked *'If you're all singers, how many are in your band?'* Roger put his head in his hands and said *'For ****'s sake Susie, they're called Five!'* He thought I was being thick but it was bloody funny! And it turned out Five were really lovely guys and very talented.

And you and Zoe went on to become regulars at the big one-off Queen performances, including the Party at the Palace for the Queen's Golden Jubilee?

That was a great experience and such a big one for us with Brian playing on Buckingham Palace roof. We shared a dressing room and he was pretty nervous beforehand—there was so much pressure on one man's shoulders. But he played it absolutely brilliantly and we were so proud of him up there.

ROCKS



Susie with the SAS Band and members of the Queen fan club (photo copyright © Roger Goodgroves)

We knew it would be an iconic moment, but didn't realise just how iconic.

For the set we did on stage with them later, I'd made a 'QUEEN' t-shirt with Swarovski diamonds that got a lot of attention... especially from Princes William and Harry backstage. We had a right old laugh with them and when they were staring at my t-shirt, I asked if they were 'looking at my t*ts'... and Prince William asked me to repeat what I'd said. Then he replied 'Yes! I am looking at your t*ts and I just wanted to hear you say it again!' It might sound tacky in writing but it was absolutely hysterical because he came back at me with something really funny!

"It's a lovely relationship—they've been working together for so long and know each other inside out."

The newspapers reported it the next day (I have no idea how) and typically misquoted the story and I

got an awkward phone call from Jim Beach—but it was very funny, we laughed... ..and that was the end of it.

What do you recall about the Queen concert in Amsterdam in 2002, kept secret until just beforehand?

That was a big deal and a great gig with Patti Russo and Trijntje Oosterhuis singing. Maybe it was kept secret to keep the numbers down but there was a massive audience in Museum Square and we were all over the TV. It was for Queen's Day.

How was it to be part of Queen's 2003 set with Pavarotti & Friends in Modena?

A magical moment in my life. We had gorgeous new white satin costumes made and had great fun sharing a dressing room with the Queen boys. During rehearsals we were sneaking around backstage and came across Pavarotti's enormous portaloo—Zoe and I both started singing Waterloo but with a 'p'!

BOSSA



Susie has performed many times alongside Roger with the SAS Band (photo courtesy of Susie Webb)

Pavarotti was very sweet, friendly and gentle, and it was utterly gorgeous standing on that beautiful stage performing the duet of Too Much Love Will Kill You. I shared a microphone with Lionel Richie at the end when we sang an Italian song—sadly neither of us knew the words very well so we kept pushing the microphone into each other's hands, ha ha! He was great fun!

We then went to Pavarotti's gorgeous restaurant and ate black squid ink pasta.

Going back to the SAS Band, what can you tell us about how those eclectic gigs come together?

Spike is so good at putting it all together and organising everyone. He says it how it is when he's working and is very good at making decisions and moving on. But he's great fun and mostly relaxed as he knows we'll pull it out of the bag!

Spike's got a very good ear and can hear every instrument on stage, as I can too actually. He's a brilliant musical director and keyboard player, as well as a great storyteller and lovely friend. We spend a lot of time together.

There is a lot of chemistry with the SAS Band and silly giggles and stupidity are part of the whole thing. We've been lucky to perform with Roger numerous times and Brian on several occasions too—it depends on their diaries but they always try because we are one big family.

The SAS Band has been amazing because introductions from Spike have opened doors for doing backing vocals for so many different artists.

Do any of the SAS Band performances with Roger and Brian particularly stand out?

We've done SO many things with them!

I remember the Collars & Coats Gala Ball that was a really cool, A-list event. When we finished our backing vocals soundcheck, Roger and Brian were standing at the other end of this huge room at Battersea Power Station and shouted '*You girls are fantastic, we love you!*'—they really liked our harmonies!



Brian and Susie (photo courtesy of Susie Webb)

Performing at the We Will Rock You première stands out, as well as the Prince's Trust Rock Gala at the Royal Albert Hall. Midge Ure did Seven Seas of Rhye with his pure, high voice and Tom Chaplin (Keane) was fantastic on It's A Hard Life. Both were really great versions.

Also, Zoe and I did backing vocals and harmonies with Brian in the studio for the global Pepsi TV commercial campaign, as well as the parts for Pink, Beyoncé and Britney Spears before they eventually recorded their own parts.

How did your involvement in Roger's Outsider album come about?

Roger called to ask if I'd sing backing vocals with him in the studio on Gangsters Are Running This World—he told me what sort of sound he wanted and it was quite straightforward. I recorded at his studio.

Roger invited me to the Outsider gig at Shepherd's Bush and they were fantastic. I love Roger's gritty

ROCKS

high voice—the perfect rock voice really. The place went bloody bonkers when Brian appeared alongside Roger!

Have you had a chance to see Queen + Adam Lambert?

Yes, a few times and most recently in Tampere, Finland. I think Adam is absolutely fantastic and I can't imagine anyone being better. I get that everyone is protective of Freddie as he was so incredible, but when people say there should be no Queen without Freddie, it's usually because they haven't been to the show with Adam. I'm glad they found him because Queen's music is still being performed so well and it's given them all another lease of life.



Susie performed backing vocals on Gangsters Are Running This World

Having spent so much time with them over three decades, how would you describe the chemistry between Brian and Roger?

It's a lovely relationship—they've been working together for so long and know each other inside out. I'm sure they have their moments because they have a huge business together, but I've only ever seen it as a really friendly bond with mutual respect and great camaraderie. They are educated, kind people who love life and always seem to be laughing together; I love it when they giggle, there's nothing like it. The silly laughs are the same with Zoe, Spike, Jamie and all of us—we're all very close.

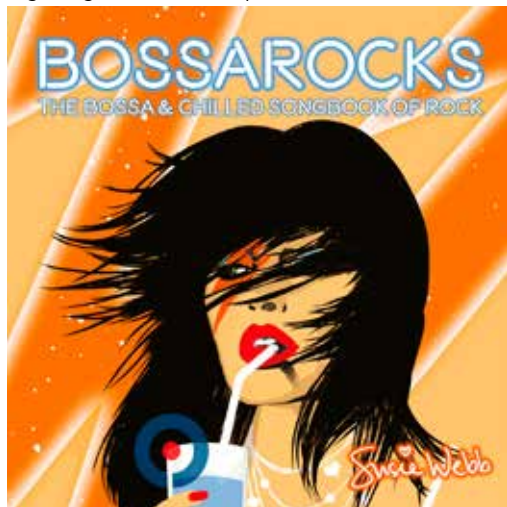


Spike and Susie (photo courtesy of Susie Webb)

I'd describe Roger as funny, kind, a fabulous rock singer and one of the best drummers in the world. And Brian is a lovely friend with a great sense of humour, and an incredible musician that makes his guitar sing. It's been an absolute pleasure to work with Queen, Brian, Roger, Spike and the rest of the gang; I always enjoy their company and love singing with them.

Finally, what can you tell us about your other projects?

Well, other than singing, I perform numerous voice-overs on TV commercials and film projects. I also wrote Hammersmith Bridge song (www.youtube.com/watch?v=N63HpyUEGSI) and I'm working on an extremely exciting project as we speak. I'm chatting to many of the artists I have been fortunate enough to work with. Alongside leading photographer Jason Joyce (www.jasonjoyce.com), I'm interviewing them about their love of harmonies, backing vocals and about our times together. It's a big thing, so watch this space!



BossaRocks by Susie Webb features These Are the Days of our Lives and Hammer to Fall

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Many thanks to Susie for her time. Visit www.susiewebb.co.uk for more details on Susie's activities and follow @foxytonguevoices (voice-overs) on Instagram. BossaRocks is available on iTunes and Spotify.

NEW YORK NEW YORK

by Jim Jenkins



New York is one of the most exciting, vibrant cities in the world. It is a twenty-four hour city and whilst there recently I decided to seek out Queen locations and also locations used in the Highlander movie. The city is huge but it doesn't take too long to find your way around. Manhattan is split into three areas: North, Mid and South. Queen sights are in all three! I marked on a map of the city where all the locations I wanted to visit where situated to ensure time wasn't wasted.

The North is where Central Park is. To the west on Broadway between 74th and 75th Streets is Beacon Theatre. Queen first graced the stage in 1975 where they rehearsed for their first headlining tour of the USA on 2nd and 3rd February. Queen returned the following year to play four shows there. During the second show Freddie threw a pack of cards into the audience and they were all the 'Queen of Hearts'. After the show, Freddie was nearly strangled by three girls outside the venue, they took a fancy to his scarf and half choked him whilst trying to take it off him! Freddie received bruises to his neck. Brian played a solo show at the same theatre in 1993. The band stayed on 5th Avenue on the West side of the park at Sherry Netherland Hotel between 59th and 60th Streets.



Beacon Theatre



Sovereign Building where Freddie's apartment was

talk so highly of Freddie, saying he was one of the nicest residents, polite, quiet and always interested in what others were doing. Freddie moved in in July 1982 and was delighted. He spent his first Christmas there December 1982. His apartment overlooked Queensboro Bridge (and down to Brooklyn Bridge where Freddie saw that Bridges 100th birthday celebration on 24th May 1983). Walk over the bridge, because on the other side is Long Island's 22nd Street and there is the 'Silvercup' studios. This is recognisable from the movie and the 'SIL' of the sign is featured in the Princes Of The Universe video. The bridge is where "kurgan" is driving "Brenda" at speed!



Bow Bridge is in Central Park. In Highlander, the Immortals MacLeod and Kastagir meet on the bridge. It looks exactly as it did in the movie! Whilst in the park on the East side you could visit Dakota Building on 72nd Street where John Lennon lived and died, and opposite in the park itself is Strawberry Fields and his memorial.

On 59th Street opposite the park is the Marriott Essex House Hotel where the band stayed whilst rehearsing at the Beacon. East along 58th Street takes you to Freddie's apartment at Sovereign Buildings. Talking to the Concierge was enlightening as he spoke of the retired Senior Concierge who used to



Back over the bridge and walk West on 55th Street where the St. Regis Hotel is located. This is featured in the movie where the two Police Officers are at the Hot Dog Stall. On 53rd Street is the 'Saturday Night Live' studio where Queen made their last USA TV appearance. Further west on 53rd Street is the venue that is now called David Geffen Hall, this was the Avery Fisher Hall where Queen





NBC Studios where Queen recorded Saturday Night Live

performed in 1975. Further along the street are Power Station Studios where Freddie and David Bowie remixed Under Pressure. Down to 51st Street on Broadway is the infamous Uris Theatre, now called the Gershwin Theater. This was where Queen played for the first time in New York and it must be noted Queen were the very first rock band to ever play on Broadway on 7th May 1974. They eventually played six gigs and on the 10th



Freddie performing on Saturday Night Live, the last time he performed in the USA



they played two shows. During the last nights show on 11th May Queen joined headlining band Mott The Hoople on stage to perform All The Young Dudes. After the show Brian collapsed! There was a planned first gig on 6th May but it was cancelled. On that day Queen attended a recording studio to work on

overdubs of the Rainbow Concert. A gig planned at the Uris on the 12th was also cancelled.

52nd Street is the Berkshire Place Hotel where Freddie took up residency in 1981 after Queen's Japanese gigs. He celebrated his 35th birthday at the hotel and it cost him £200,000! He flew all his friends to New York on Concorde! Freddie thought he was spending too much money on hotels so decided to buy his own apartment and sought the help of Sylvia Stickells, wife of Gerry. Between 50th and 51st Streets on Madison Avenue is another hotel, the Helmsley Park. Freddie took up residency here at the end of 1981. Between 50th and 49th



Waldorf Astoria Hotel

Streets is the magnificent Waldorf Astoria Hotel. Queen stayed there in 1980 when they had time off during The Game tour, Freddie returned there when the other members flew back to the UK.



Hard Rock Cafe displays Freddie's kimono jacket and a photo of Freddie taken on the band's News Of The World Tour

In mid-Manhattan there are a couple of things to see. The Imperial Theater on W 45th Street is where Freddie went to see Dreamgirls on 22nd September 1982. Also on 45th Street is the Al Hirschfeld Theater, but back in 1981 it was known as the Martin Beck Theater and Freddie went to see Elizabeth Taylor in 'Little Foxes'. He walked out of the show half way through. It mustn't have been any good!! One street below 44th Street is the Palladium. 'The Game' end of tour party was held there and the band went to see Hall & Oates in concert on 2nd December 1977.

Also on 44th Street is the Majestic Theatre ('Doctor Who' fans will like this too as it's the theatre in 'Daleks In Manhattan!!'). Freddie went to see Liza Minnelli in 'The Act' on 30th November 1977. On Broadway by Times Square between 43rd and 44th Streets is the 'Hard Rock Cafe'. Adorning the walls is a photo of Freddie wearing the black and white harlequin leotard and also his Japanese kimono jacket.



The big sight to see is Madison Square Garden. Playing here for Queen was like a dream come true. They first played there on 5th February 1977. The band achieved one of their ambitions playing the legendary venue. They returned for two more gigs in December that year. Two further shows were played in there November 1978 and three in September 1980. Finally two shows in July 1982 on their final USA tour ever.

Queen+Adam Lambert first played there in 2014 and two shows in 2019. The last time to-date QAL played at Madison Square Garden was two nights in 2023. QAL also played at Barclays Center in 2017. Queen planned a tour in August 1975 but due to Management problems with Trident the tour was cancelled, they were due to play at Felt Forum, a theatre inside Madison Square Garden. Even though in Highlander it states the wrestling match was inside

the Garden it wasn't filmed there, that was filmed in the Meadowlands Arena (now closed).

Nor was the underground car park scene, that was filmed in London! Queen+Paul Rodgers played Nassau Coliseum on Long Island in 2006.

Brian was so excited at performing at this gigantic stadium he brought over his parents to New York on Concorde in 1977. Brian's dad realised why Brian had chosen this career path and finally accepted his choice of career!



Brian with his parents at Madison Square Garden

The big sight to see for Queen fans who love the Highlander movie can be found on 7th Avenue between 19th and 20th Streets. Peter McManus Bar is where One Year Of Love is played when "Brenda" and "Russell" are in there and Mr Nash orders a 'Glenmorangie on the rocks'! You can sit in the exact chair Christoph Lambert sat in and order that drink. It's a must and you will have a real buzz!



Peter McManus Bar where One Year Of Love is played in Highlander



Fan club member Deborah Whitworth-Hilton
at Peter McManus Bar

Travelling South to 8th Street takes you to Electric Lady Studios. This is where on 9th February 1976 Freddie, Brian and Roger went along to provide backing vocals for Ian Hunter's *You Nearly Did Me In*. They were reunited with Roy Thomas Baker in there!

South Manhattan there are a couple of Highlander locations. In the movie 'Russell Nash's Antique Shop' is situated in Hudson Street but alas it's not! The building used in the movie is located at No.71 Greene Street and is easily recognisable because of the pillars. Walk down the street to Canal Street. This is the street where Kurgan jumps in the car and drives off with the old lady.

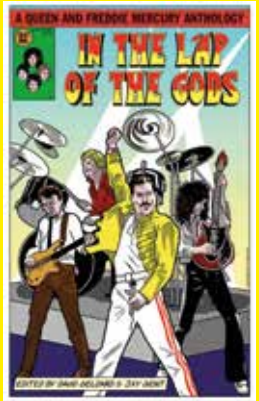


Fan club magazine designer
Tennant outside "Russell Nash's
antique shop on 'Hudson Street'"

Freddie loved New York. He wrote a song about it which was going to be featured on Mr Bad Guy album but he never finished it. He also sang a bit of the famous New York New York which was featured in Highlander. Oh how I wish he had recorded the whole song! When he left for Munich in 1984 he never returned.

IN THE LAP OF THE GODS

A celebration of the unique legacy of Freddie Mercury and Queen, in the words of friends and colleagues of the band—as well the fans themselves, of course.



In *The Lap Of The Gods* is rich mosaic of memories, tributes, and essays that captures Queen's enduring influence, framed by the warm recollections of singer Peter Straker—close friend and collaborator

of Freddie Mercury—and a deeply personal essay by editor David Geldard. The book gathers an eclectic mix of stories from those who knew the band professionally, encountered them as devoted fans, or simply connected to Queen through their music.

Those interviewed include Peter "Phoebe" Freestone, Mercury's long-time assistant, Doug Bogie, who briefly preceded John Deacon as bassist, Eddie Howell recalls Queen's rare collaboration on his 1976 single *Man From Manhattan*. Other contributors include Clayton Moss of Roger Taylor's *The Cross*, Jeff Scott Soto—who performed with Queen at their Hollywood Walk of Fame event—and filmmaker Ray Burdis, who helped bring the Freddie Mercury Tribute Concert to TV.

The book also features a unique track-by-track commentary by Tim Staffell on the *Smile* album and draws on the expertise of Jim Jenkins who contributes two pieces: one recounting five unforgettable gigs and another reflecting on his personal journey with Queen, complete with character sketches of each member and their lasting legacy.

Says Tim Staffell: *"In The Lap Of The Gods,' curated by David Geldard & Jay Gent is such an eclectic mix of dreams, reminiscences, and observations, all given the most focused context by David and Jay, that I urge you to check it out; it's excellent stuff; and I've even contributed a synopsis of the Smile tracks myself, if you're not familiar with them... A Thoroughly recommended portrait of the band..."*

All profits from this book go toward supporting the work of The Mercury Phoenix Trust. The book is available to order from Amazon UK: amzn.to/3XkP2bZ (If you're not in the UK, it will be available from most Amazon marketplaces).

Curated by David Geldard and Jay Gent

FRIENDS WILL BE FRIENDS

by Jacqui Brickwood

I'm sure we have all felt the hand of friendship from a Queen friend but this, to me, is unique.

My family and I were going to a random Queen Fan Club party at the shed in Dudley, West Midlands. We were booked into a budget hotel on the main street and planned to make our way to the venue. As we were leaving for the venue we saw a guy in a yellow superman T-shirt and tight yellow jeans looking rather lost and a lot like Freddie Mercury. Being a chatty / friendly type I approached him to ask if he was here for the party. I was greeted with the most amazing smile and an Australian accent.

That's when I met Gareth Hill.



We took him under our wing and spent the whole day with him.

The next day we dropped him at the train station with hugs and promises to do it all again!

2008 convention Gareth flew in from Melbourne, Australia so excited to attend, it was great to see him again. He stayed at our house and travelled to Brean Sands with us and shared our chalet. He had a ball even entering the Q factor and singing on stage.

Fast forward to 2025 Gareth is now a very successful front man for Australia Queen Forever (Queen tribute band) and when Steven and I were recently in Melbourne we managed to meet up with him for the most amazing Japanese meal that I'm sure Freddie would have approved of. It was like time was nothing when we hugged and we promised we would not leave it another 16 years.

Proves to me Queen Music is LOVE.



SEVEN TIMES SEVEN

A novel by Luc Vos

Seven Times Seven is the first published part of the Anne Verelst Thriller series. Anne Verelst is a police inspector in Antwerp and works with her team to solve crimes.

About Seven times Seven:

It started with an email. As if Anne's life wasn't messed up enough already, some creep sends her pictures of empty coffins. Seven of them.

Then it started. A woman appeared. Then a man. The coffins were being filled one by one. Every seven hours, the pattern repeated like clockwork. And the clock was ticking.

Antwerp police pull out all the stops in a nerve-wracking race against time. Who was behind the kidnappings and why? What could these people possibly have done to deserve their fate? And what did it all have to do with Inspector Anne Verelst?

'Seven seas of Rhye' plays a very important role. The song is what gave the main character the balance in life to pick himself up again and build a plan to get close to his daughter again. Not in the best possible way, since he commits serious crimes while doing so. But not only that song, the entire Queen II album features and is important in the plot.

Originally published as 'ZEVEN' in Dutch, the book won the Thrillzone Award 2022 for best debut. (Thrillzone is a major Dutch thriller readers community). After this, the book went on to become very popular and won third place in the 'Vrij Nederland Thrillerguide audience favourite' (Vrij Nederland is one of the biggest Dutch Newspapers), reached the shortlist of best Women's thriller (top 10) and Longlist (top 15) of the Max Bronzen Vleermuis (bronze bat, for best debut).

Available through Amazon as paperback and ebook:

www.amazon.com/Seven-times-Anne-Verelst/dp/9493193144

www.anneverelst-thrillers.com



Nel Roggeveen RIP

Sadly my dear mum passed away on April 29th, at the age of 92. As many of you have met her, at Dutch meetings, conventions, concerts, Freddie's Dinners, We Will Rock You musicals etc. I thought it was appropriate to let you all know. She was the Dutch Queen-mum, loved by many, and my sisters and myself miss her lots, but feel privileged that she was our mum for so many years.

Hannie





Jack Dengler's 'News of the World' (his favourite album) birthday cake



Nico Smits dressed as "HelloQueen" at the 2024 convention



Josch Hinder, Queen Revival Band singer, with Richard and Susan Young during a photo shoot



Susan Ryan and Betsy Donegan on Record Store Day in Florida



Dagmara Szymanska and fans at the Polish Convention



Jacqueline Brickwood's Penrith get together for Freddie's memorial



Paintings by Christine Bovill



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