



# British Legends: The Life and Legacy of Freddie Mercury

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes pictures \*Includes Freddie Mercury's own quotes about his life and Queen \*Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading \*Includes a table of contents “I won't be a rock star. I will be a legend.” – Freddie Mercury “I like people to go away from a Queen show feeling fully entertained, having had a good time. I think Queen songs are pure escapism, like going to see a good film - after that, they can go away and say that was great, and go back to their problems. I don't want to change the world with our music.” – Freddie Mercury Like many pop cultural icons (and rock icons in particular), Freddie Mercury is one of the most recognizable figures of the 20th century and yet one of the more enigmatic personalities as well. To be sure, anyone who was alive during the reign of Queen is well aware of who Mercury was and the sound of his music ( even those who despise rock music are familiar with the blasting, deliriously over-the-top rhythms of songs like “We Are the Champions”). At the same time, a noteworthy discrepancy existed between the flamboyant personality that Freddie maintained during his performances and public appearances and the rather guarded manner in which he kept his private life more or less shielded from public view. By way of example, while it is now common knowledge that Mercury was homosexual (or at least bisexual), this was a fact that he avoided disclosing to the general public, and even his band mates were kept unaware until 1975. In some cases, biographical details are still not entirely clear, although the past 15 years have done much to clear up certain aspects of his life that Mercury kept close to the vest. Regardless, this complex balance between public life and private life is a natural element of stardom in general, but Freddie Mercury’s deft balancing act between ubiquitous on the one hand and somewhat mysterious on the other continues to make him a compelling figure of 20th century popular culture. If Freddie Mercury remains of interest, this is also because of the unique ideological and social dimensions raised by the construction of his star persona. In particular, Mercury opted not to disclose sexuality and refused to divulge his affliction with AIDS, the disease that took his life at the premature age of 45, even while he maintained a star persona that was undeniably flamboyant. Figuring out his star image requires not only examining Freddie’s personality but also the way in which it was shaped and the way it shaped the conventions of gender and sexual orientation during his time. Also of note was his ethnicity; born in Zanzibar and of Persian descent, there was an exoticism attached to his public identity. Mercury is, therefore, a crucial figure in illuminating the intersections between rock music, gender and sexuality, and ethnicity in 1970s and 1980s American culture. *British Legends: The Life and Legacy of Freddie Mercury* explores the rock icon’s life, looking at his musical and cultural background, as well as the way he influenced pop culture. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Freddie Mercury like never before, in no time at all.

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