

Freddie Mercury Forever

<p>Freddie Mercury died on 24 November 1991, 30 years ago. He was one of the most wildly extravagant rock stars ever – theatrical, glamorous, meteoric and tragic. With the group <i>Queen</i>, his music has crossed generations, with songs extolling achievement (We are the Champions), space heroes (Flash), or the desire by bored suburban housewives to Break Free.</p> <p>Mercury was born Farrokh Bulsara in 1946 in Zanzibar to Parsi-Indian parents. In 1964, Mercury’s family moved to London fleeing the Zanzibar Revolution. The 2018 biopic <i>Bohemian Rhapsody</i>, shows his modest life in his new country, and how he worked as a baggage handler at Heathrow airport before succeeding in music. There he was treated as a “Paki”.</p> <p>In 1970, he met guitarist Brian May and drummer Roger Taylor to create the band <i>Smile</i>. Bassist John Deacon joined them in 1971, and the band changed its name to <i>Queen</i>, which according to Mercury sounded “regal”, “splendid”, “universal” and “immediate” and with “gay connotations”.</p> <p>Freddie Mercury died of Aids, making music until the end of his life. But in 2016, for his 70th birthday, Brian May, who holds a PhD in astrophysics, announced that the International Astronomical Minor Planet Centre had decided to name Asteroid 17473 after Freddie Mercury. Mercury will forever be a star.</p> <p>The following video clip is a short extract of <i>Bohemian Rhapsody</i>, which <i>Queen</i> sang at the Live Aid concert in 1985 to raise money for people starving in Ethiopia. For Mercury, it was perhaps a way of being true to the Zoroastrian maxim of the Parsis and ancient Persians: Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds.¹</p>	<p>Has crossed = a traversé To extol = exalter Housewife = femme au foyer</p> <p>Parsis or Parsees, Indians who believe in Zoroastrianism Flee = fuire Baggage handler = bagagiste Paki = raccourci de “Pakistani” un terme très raciste pour dénoter quelqu’un de couleur, « des Indes »</p> <p>Drummer = batteur</p> <p>PhD = une thèse</p> <p>Forever = pour toujours</p> <p>To raise money = amasser de l’argent, soulever des fonds To starve = mourir de faim Deed = ici action (sinon « deeds » = titre de propriété)</p>
<p>Queen - Bohemian Rhapsody (Live Aid 1985) – Extract (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbvyNnw8Qjg)</p> <p>Mama, just killed a man Put a gun against his head, pulled my trigger, now he's dead² Mama, life had just begun But now I've gone and thrown it all away Mama, ooh, didn't mean to make you cry If I'm not back again this time tomorrow Carry on, carry on as if nothing really matters</p> <p>Too late, my time has come Sends shivers down my spine, body's aching all the time Goodbye, everybody, I've got to go Gotta leave you all behind and face the truth Mama, ooh (any way the wind blows) I don't wanna die I sometimes wish I'd never been born at all</p>	<p>Pull the trigger = appuyer sur la gâchette</p> <p>[I] didn't mean to make you cry = [je] ne voulais pas te faire pleurer Nothing really matters = rien n’a vraiment d’importance</p> <p>Shivers = frissons Spine = colonne vertébrale Gotta = I have got to = je dois</p>

¹ This scene takes place in the biopic just before the Live Aid concert. Freddie Mercury, played by Rami Malek, visits his parents with his partner. He says the concert is for charity, and that he tries to follow the maxim, his father had taught him.

² A very different singer – Johnny Cash – became famous with his song *Folsom Prison Blues*, about a prisoner who killed a man “just to watch him die”.