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Bohemian Rhapsody: A Film Review

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***Bohemian Rhapsody* - Film Review**

Ailey Butler

Bohemian Rhapsody is a biopic about the legendary rock band, Queen. Its main subjects are Queen's rise to fame, Freddie Mercury's showmanship and inner struggles, as well as his downfall from AIDS. There is also a big focus on how the band did not always get along, and for a while they were separated by their egos. I think that a big message that the filmmaker tries to convey through this work, is that you have to be there for people and not let your pride get in the way of the real relationships that build you as a person.

The subjects and story line are pretty conducive to being told through film. Queen's rise to fame and the story of how the band originated are some of the main subjects that happen to be easy to recreate because it is such an intriguing story. There is also a large audience who would be very interested in seeing those 'behind the scenes' details, so the story translates well to film and it was particularly well done. The spotlight on Freddie Mercury's life is also very conducive to being in a movie. He is outrageous, a complete showman until the end. Capturing his antics, Queen's performances, and the recording scenes where he explains his vision for the songs are all very grand and ended up making a very enjoyable movie.

The main characters in this movie include the band, made up of Freddie Mercury, Brian May, Roger Taylor and John Deacon, as well as Mary Austin (Freddie's best friend for life and love interest of sorts), Paul Prenter (Freddie's manager), and Jim Hutton (Mercury's secret partner). The most memorable characters for me are the band of course, since I am a huge classic rock fan. Rami Malek did a lovely job playing Freddie, it was almost as if he brought Freddie

Mercury back to life, and it was incredible. All of the actors playing band members really captured their personalities and it seemed so real. The casting was definitely close to perfect.

For me, Mary is another memorable character, even though she is not quite a main character. Her connection to Freddie and the fact that she was once his fiancée is fascinating by itself, but seeing their relationship slowly fade away as the movie progressed, it was all so heartbreaking. She comes to tell him she is married to another man and pregnant with his child, and you can feel the pain through the screen. There is one scene where Mary comes to visit Freddie in his mansion. Everything is soaked with rain, she tells him that he's changed, that Paul does not have his best interest in mind, and everything comes to a climax. I always remember that scene when I think of this movie, and I find Mary's character to be very memorable because she shows the passage of time and how relationships sometimes fall apart.

I think the producers had an ethical conflict choosing not to portray the worst of the partying or drugs in this movie, and they kind of glossed right over it. Alcohol and some drugs make an appearance in Freddie's house and briefly in party scenes, but it could have been more prevalent. I think they chose not to show that in the movie too much because it was not family friendly, but I think the outcome was that it was not as accurate to real life and it did not portray the excessive 70s-80's rock star life as much as it could have, and that would be one of my only critiques about this film.

The other big ethical conflict that I think is important to note is that Freddie seems to be straight-washed at first, his sexual orientation isn't shown as much as it could have been. Freddie Mercury's character was the heart of this movie, and according to real life sources, he had encounters with plenty of men and dated quite a few, yet it was hardly shown in the movie until closer to the end. I think if he had been a straight rock star, and interested in women, that the

sexual encounters and relationships would not have been shown only briefly, but it would have been half of the movie. Perhaps they did not want to show it because LGBT relationships are still taboo in some places and they wanted the movie to reach a wide audience and not offend certain people. That is one of my biggest ethical conflicts with this movie because I think it could have been handled better and been more close to actual events. The outcome is a more family friendly movie, but I think they lost some of the history. The movie does make the choice to include Freddie's battle with AIDS, so they need to show more of how he would possibly get it, instead of skipping over it.

I think the filmmaker is biased toward showing Freddie's personal life more than any of the other band members, which is a fair creative decision to make, because his life was so extravagant and so many of us want to know more about him. I would have liked maybe a little more insight into the rest of the band's personal lives and their struggles as well, because they also had their own issues adjusting to fame and it would have been nice to have more insight into that.

The main message of "don't push relationships aside just because you become successful, or because of ego" is shown when Freddie tries to pursue a solo career and fights with his band mates, resulting in a nasty split for a period of time. In the end, he had to go back and apologize to them. That is something that I think is very important in this business still. The music business is truly based on connections and it is small. It is paramount that you keep your network strong and not push people away once you become successful, because that money and those jobs can disappear someday. If you find yourself back at the bottom you'll need to swallow your pride to rekindle those relationships, or start all over. If you just stay humble and keep your network intact in the first place, you would not have to start all over if big opportunities start falling through.

Watching this film through the lens of a Music Industry major, I noticed plenty of things that my friends or family did not notice. During the showing of the Live Aid concert, I was looking at the demographics of the people in the audience, the sound equipment, and all the things that went into making a show that large. I do not think other people would have noticed. The sheer amount of people in that venue was incredible, and I'm sure it raised lots of money for the cause. Watching the recreation of Live Aid was truly one of the most awe-inspiring moments of the whole film.

Bohemian Rhapsody is definitely a film that I would recommend to others, it is engaging, it is emotional at some points, and it tells a fascinating story about a famous rock band. I thoroughly enjoyed it and have recommended it to people on multiple occasions. Besides the small issues that I have with it, it is still a good biopic, featured excellent casting, and offered an insight into Queen's extraordinary climb to fame.