Freddie Mercury Goes To Hollywood

January 10, 2011 By Shawn Decker

Of all the musicians with HIV in the history of music, our crowned jewel in the positoid community is, without a doubt, Freddie Mercury of Queen. Don't get me wrong, there have been many other greats- Andy Bell of Erasure, Holly Johnson of Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Shawn Decker of Synthetic Division...

But Freddie beats them all. One of the greatest frontmen and singers of all-time, he put negatoids like Steven Tyler and Robert Plant to shame, tucking them in like toddlers at bed-time who were anxious to learn more from "Ready Freddie" when the next day began. Unfortunately, Freddie was taken from us very early in his journey, but his quirky music has sustained- perhaps even gotten better with age- and has influenced a lot of the mainstream acts of today.

I was first touched by his music when I went to see Revenge of the Nerds with my parents and brother. "We Are the Champions" wrapped up that all-time classic film. Later in junior high school, my brother started to listen to them more seriously. Then when I got to high school, a few years into my own silent way of dealing with my diagnosis, it was reported on MTV News that Freddie died... from AIDS.

And he was very secret about his status, to which I could relate at the time.

Now his story is about to get the Hollywood treatment, thus opening up the Queen saga to a whole new fanbase for the first time since Wayne and Garth and friends sang Bohemian Rhapsody in a drug-induced car ride in 1992, a year after Freddie passed. And who's going to play him?

Sacha Baron Cohen of Borat and Bruno fame.

Some may balk. But I actually think Sacha is capable of playing a serious role. The greatest comedians, much like the greatest musicians, channel their pain into their craft, and I don't think it's such a stretch that a performer as deft as Cohen could do justice to Freddie's life story. The one thing that I didn't quite enjoy reading was that the movie will end with the band's glorious set at Live Aid in 1985, which is a full six years before he passed to spirit.

I know I'm interested in aspects of his story that the general public may not be, but I want to know what those six years were like. I want to know how he dealt with the pressures of an HIV diagnosis and a huge business, which is what Queen were at the time when his health was in decline. The rise to rock stardom story has been told *many* times on film- but Freddie's story is a unique opportunity to tell more than just that two dimensional ride.

Freddie Mercury is the most famous musician to die from AIDS. To overlook that aspect of his life story is a massive mistake, and demands more than just a scroll of text over the sounds of Bohemian Rhapsody in the final seconds of the movie just before the credits roll.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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My CD, Synthetic Division, A Symptom of Life, is on iTunes!

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