

Exhibition Freddie Mercury

Press Release

Barlach Art Museum Wedel: 6 October 2024 to 9 March 2025

In September, his estate was auctioned off at Sotheby's in London for 46.5 million euros. At the same time, a mosaic that shimmers in rainbow colours in the sunlight is being dedicated to the rock star in Munich and Deutsche Post is launching a special stamp. But it wouldn't even have been a milestone birthday for him: Freddie Mercury would have turned 78 on 5 September. Sadly, the legend died on 24 November 1991 as a result of his HIV infection. But his work continues to inspire to this day.

The **FREDDIE MERCURY** exhibition shows why this is the case with more than 300 objects, photos, texts, documents and videos. It makes the life, grandeur and ambivalence of this dazzling personality visible and tangible. His courage, his love of humanity, his deep emotionality, his originality, his curiosity and his openness towards other arts made him an absolutely exceptional phenomenon.

Freddie Mercury was born Farrokh Bulsara on 5 September 1946 in Zanzibar. His family comes from India and belongs to the Parsi religious group. Together with Brian May, Roger Taylor and John Deacon, Mercury founded one of the most innovative rock bands of all time in 1970: Queen made music history with their productivity, their unmistakable sound, their rousing live performances and their numerous concept albums.



Freddie Mercury also had probably the most extraordinary and fascinating voice in rock music as well as an extremely expressive stage presence. Although he appeared rather shy in his private life, as a public personality he was highly extravagant and hedonistic. His theatrical and cross-gender stage looks were directed against the performances of other male bands, with whom he did not want to be confused. While he never publicly addressed his sexual orientation, the band's name and image were influenced by Mercury's queer-

Freddie Mercury was an exceptional artistic phenomenon, both in terms of his performance on stage and his creativity as an artist. But his great artistic diversity was not only characterised by rock music. He was also well versed in theatre history, loved opera and ballet and worked as a painter and draughtsman. In 1988, he sang 'Barcelona' with opera singer Montserrat Caballé, an anthem that became the theme tune for the 1992 Summer Olympics in the Catalan metropolis.

Queen's 20-minute performance during the Live Aid concert at London's Wembley Stadium on 13 July 1985 is one of the most spectacular rock concerts of all time. But as early as January 1985, Mercury showed at the Rock in Rio Festival in front of 300,000 people that he was at the artistic peak of his life as a musician and performer.

'We Will Rock You' is not only one of the band's biggest hits, but also the title of one of the most successful musicals of recent decades, which has been seen by more than 15 million people in 17 countries. The blockbuster film 'Bohemian Rhapsody' released in 2018 with Rami Malek in the role of Freddie Mercury has once again demonstrated the band's unbroken appeal. The song 'Bohemian Rhapsody' itself is the most streamed rock classic of our time with over 2.3 billion views.

Barlach Kunstmuseum Wedel

6.10.2024 until 9.3.2025

Wednesday to Sunday 11:00 to 18:00

Press previews are possible from Tuesday, 1 October.

We cordially invite you and ask you to register: by telephone: 0170 52 500 13

Or by e-mail: heike.stockhaus@ernst-barlach.de

Download press material and images at: <https://www.ernst-barlach.de/presse>

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