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## Inside Queen's Huge Summer Tour With Adam Lambert

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Adam Lambert performs in Las Vegas.

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By **ANDY GREENE**

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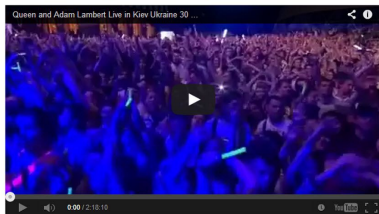
Like a lot of fans under a certain age, Adam Lambert first learned about Queen when he saw the "Bohemian Rhapsody" scene in *Wayne's World* in 1992. "I said to my dad, 'Who's that?,'" Lambert says. "He was like, 'You know those songs 'We Will Rock You' and 'We Are the Champions'? That's the same band.' I had no idea."

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It took another few years for Lambert to really delve into their catalog. "When I was older I got more into the history of rock," he says. "I fell in love with the 1970s and I discovered more about Queen. The genius about the band is that they're so versatile. There are songs in their catalog that are like beautiful lullabies, and then on the same album they can flip to a hardcore, more aggressive sound."

By the time he auditioned for *American Idol* in 2009, the 26-year-old was such a huge fan that he performed "Bohemian Rhapsody" for the judges. "What's happened since then is just surreal to me," he says. "It's so crazy that this came out of *American Idol*. I don't think I would have seen it coming back then."

Lambert played with Queen's Brian May and Roger Taylor at the end of his season, and the chemistry was so apparent that there were immediately rumors suggesting he was going to become their new frontman. "There was stuff I really wanted to do on my own first," he says. "But there was definitely interest from me and the band. When we finally got together at the MTV Video Music Awards about a year or two after *Idol* it felt like the right time to start talking, since I'd established my solo career."



Queen + Adam Lambert played a few European gigs in 2012, and on June 19th they kick off a 24-date North American tour at Chicago's United Center. "On the technical side, it's definitely more of a production than two years ago," Lambert says. "We've got a lot more cities to visit and so I think we all decided to build up the visuals and the stage accordingly."

They've also changed around the set list a bit. "We really put a lot of thought into the set, and it really flows," Lambert says. "We're pretty much doing all of the big, iconic hits. We've geared the show both toward diehard fans and the more casual fans. I think that's important. I actually just returned back from London where we did our first production rehearsals. Everything went really well."

One of the rare song they've resurrected for the tour is "Love Kills," a 1984 Freddie Mercury solo track made with Giorgio Moroder for a restored version of the 1927 silent film *Metropolis*. "It was a disco record that Freddie did as a side project," says Lambert. "One of the things that Queen is doing this year is they've dusted off some older recordings, and they're remastering and reworking them for an album of newer versions of things. With 'Love Kills,' they took out all the disco production and turned it into more of a traditional Queen arrangement. It's an amazing song, very dramatic and powerful with a beautiful melody. We've been having a lot of fun playing it live."



Filling Freddie Mercury's shoes is an enormous task, but Lambert feels up to the challenge. "It's not an easy feat," he says. "I think a lot of the apprehension has faded because we've done this a number of times in the past couple of years. That's not to suggest I'm getting cocky at all, because I will never compare to Freddie Mercury. He's one in a million. At this point, I know how to strike a balance between honoring the way these songs were originally meant to be sung and my own instincts, my own choices."

The North American tour ends on July 28th, and their only announced plans beyond that are six shows in Australia in August and early September followed by two gigs in Japan and one in South Korea. "Additional shows are kind of up to the band," Lambert says. "They keep saying with a smirk and an eyebrow-raise, 'We want to get out one last time.' I think additional shows could happen. I'm definitely down. I'm having so much fun."

Meanwhile, Lambert has been using his downtime to continue work on his next solo album. "I'm not finished with that," he says. "I've done a lot of work and there's some amazing music. We'd probably be able to put something out now, but I'm a perfectionist and I have to make sure that I love every song 100 percent and that they're perfect for me. I maybe want to find even more material. I'm not going to rush a project like this."

Between work on the album and Queen tour preparations, Lambert also found time to film a recurring role on the last season of *Glee*. "I had a great time," he says. "It was a great cast, great production. It felt like a family." Might he be back next year? "As of now, it doesn't seem likely, but if they asked and depending on what I was doing, possibly."

For years, rumors have pegged Lambert as possibly returning to *Idol* as a judge. "I'm sure that would be fun," he says. "I definitely like watching people sing, and you know me, I always have an opinion. I'm sure I'd be a good fit, but you know how rumors are. There's rumors every year who knows where they are coming from or if there's any truth to them. It might just be a PR thing."

For now, the Queen tour has taken up the vast majority of his time. "I'm actually going over in a couple of minutes for a fitting on my wardrobe," he says. "Obviously, that's almost as important as the music."

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