We Will Rock You

By Queen and Ben Elton

Thursday 5th December at 7.30 pm

Good evening and welcome to the Theatre Royal Plymouth for this worldwide smash hit musical and global phenomenon, We Will Rock You by Queen and Ben Elton, as produced by Queen Theatrical Productions, Phil McIntyre Entertainments and Tribeca Theatrical Productions. Directed by Cornelius Ballus. The music and lyrics, including twenty-four of their greatest hits, are by Queen.

I am Veryan your audio describer for the first half with my colleague, Penny describing Act two. The show runs for approximately two hours and forty-five minutes including a twenty-minute interval.

We Will Rock You contains very loud music, which will make it difficult for us to be heard, so I will give you a full synopsis for Act one now and thread further descriptions in during the quieter moments.

**Synopsis**

The story is set 300 years from now in a futurist and globally corporate world. Planet Earth has been renamed the Planet Mall and is controlled by the Globalsoft Corporation. Cue the song Innuedo. Globalsoft control what people can watch and listen to. The youth are called Ga Ga Kids and they are compelled to watch the same movies, listen to computer-generated music, wear the same clothes and hold the same thoughts and opinions. Musical instruments are forbidden, and rock music is unknown.

Galileo, a young student who is something of a rebel, dreams and hears strange words in his head, most of which are lyrics of songs long since lost, and which he does not understand or realise the significance of. He refuses to conform and wants his freedom. Meanwhile he is under surveillance by Khashoggi, the commander of Globalsoft’s thought police. Khashoggi arrests Galileo, and whilst doing so his teacher reveals that there is a second non-conformist, young woman, so Khashoggi arrests her too.

The head of Globalsoft Corporation is the Killer Queen. She has heard of a prophecy that instruments have been hidden somewhere on the iPlanet in the “place of living rock”, and that a “bright star” will show the way to them. She orders Khashoggi to get to the bottom of the matter and crush a group of rebels known as the Bohemians, who believe in this prophecy.

Galileo and the girl wake up in a hospital where they soon realise that they share common interests and fearing for their safety, escape.

The Killer Queen’s forces cannot find the supposed hidden instruments, so she assumes that the prophecy is not true and that she has won

Meanwhile on the run-down streets of the ghetto, Bohemian rebels Brit and Oz have been gathering materials in an attempt to make musical instruments. Brit is a believer in the Dreamer who will fulfil the prophecy, and insists to the cynical Oz that it’s the key to bringing real rock music back into the world.

Galileo and his companion arrive on the same streets, so Brit and Oz hide. Galileo reveals he has a belief that he has a destiny and he rather pompously gives the girl a new name, “Scaramouche”. Brit and Oz overhear the conversation and come out of hiding to accuse Galileo and Scaramouche of being spies, this is because Galileo keeps spouting words of the “sacred text”. In reality, these are lyrics from well-known pop songs. Galileo insists that he only hears the words in his head. Brit tests Galileo, singing the first few lines of “Bohemian Rhapsody”. Galileo responds correctly with the subsequent lines, and Brit supposes that Galileo is the Dreamer of the prophecy.

Brit and Oz take Galileo and Scaramouche to the Bohemian hideout, Heartbreak Hotel, which is located underground in the ruins of Tottenham Court Road tube station.

The Bohemians introduce themselves, explaining that they are named after musical legends, including, Tina Turner, Madonna, David Bowie, Johnny Rotten, White Snake, Janis Joplin and Boy George.

They lament the legends that died young including John Lennon, Elvis and of course Freddie Mercury.

The first act of We Will Rock You finishes with the rebels rocking to “Crazy Little Thing Called Love”, before Khashoggi and the police storm the Heartbreak Hotel. Galileo and Scaramouche escape, but in the ensuing battle Brit is killed.

**Sets, Scenes and Characters**

First a note on the nature of the futuristic sets. On stage are five ten-foot tall, blocks covered in steel mesh topped by with metal railings. Behind these is an expanse of ground to roof metal screening - these metal structures are used as screens for video projections of the locations in which the story takes place. The trucks slide together or apart to create different spaces with a further two sliding panels situated towards the front of the stage. There is no curtain and the stage is on view as the audience take their seats.

The opening set represents a night sky - the entire stage reflects a dark star-filled universe, the darkness lightened by smudges of indigo, cobalt and studded all over by pinpricks of shimmering stars. Occasionally shooting stars and comets cross the sky. A pair of sliding panels towards the front of the stage also depict the night sky. It is here that the show opens with a prologue, both spoken, and with the words written in text in the middle of the front panels. Four narrow strips of blue neon light come up on the sides, whilst, from overhead diffused spotlights penetrate the auditorium with starbursts of misty light. A huge image of Freddie Mercury performing comes up in the centre and it is his voice that will be heard singing, 'Innuendo.'

As the night sky fades it is replaced by scene one - **The Hinterland.** This is depicted by a collection of towering radio mast-like constructions behind haphazard sections of security fencing, the cloudless pink sky bright in the in the background. Sounds of sirens and a helicopter are heard as a rock n' roll rebel figure appears on the run. This is **Buddy,** an easy riding, hippy kind of dude dressed in pale jeans with a matching shirt. He is clutching a video tape.

Next we briefly meet **Commander Khashoggi**, The Killer Queen’s sinister second-in-command or dogs' body and head of Globalsoft’s police. He is also leader of the Ga Ga Cops and appears as a ruthlessly smooth operator. He wears a snug fitting calve length black leather coat with silver edging over black trousers and shirt with a grey waistcoat. His hair stands up in a tall silver quiff on top whilst the back and sides are black and close-cropped - he always wears dark glasses.

The actions swiftly moves to a **Virtual High School -** Here the background is of a long corridor of grey-steel-edged walls with a wide doorway at the back with a sign above it saying, Ga Ga University. Towards the front, on either side are curving flights of grey steps with glowing computer screens on either side. Ranks of clone-like **Ga Ga kids** will appear. They have fixed smiles, move in unison and are all dressed in similar kooky silver/ grey trousers with jackets and silver boots. Whilst appearing happy, they also appear sexless and with their silver hair, have a slightly creepy feel to them.

At the university we also meet the rather draconian looking **Teacher**. She is a large woman dressed in a straight black and grey panelled dress, black boots and with a mortarboard perched on her black hair.

Then **Galileo** arrives.At firsthe appears to be is a sullen, disaffected teen, a rebel without a cause. He's young and good looking with short dark hair and dressed in skinny dark jeans with a black leather jacket lined in scarlet. His jeans have red stripes down the sides with echoes of the same stripes banding his sleeves. He wears blue suede shoes with red toecaps, and despite his sullen air, comes over as a sensitive if somewhat confused youth.

After the removal of Galileo by some silver helmeted cops, Scaramouche arrives.

**Scaramouche** is a young woman with a mass of untidy purple hair who initially dresses in black trousers with boots and an asymmetrical long black jacket edged in silver. After meeting the Bohemians, however, she changes to a grungy, low cut, cleavage revealing black dress with cut-out sleeves, a choker on a black ribbon around her neck, laddered stockings and red boots.

Four Ga Ga **Teen Queens** then arrive - they allwear similar short, full skirted dresses made of a stiff metallic material - each in a different bright colour - blue, orange, red and gold and each carrying a matching shiny bag. They wear gold tights and moon boots.

The action then moves to the **Killer Queen's Courtroom** and the head office **of** Globalsoft,a vast multinational that makes and sellseverything. This futuristic building is made of **s**teel struts interspersed with helixes of green light.

Here we meet **The Killer Queen -** a fearsome dominatrix dictator. She is a formidable woman of large proportions dressed a silver tunic with wide sleeves lined in emerald. Her silver and black hair is piled high on the head before falling down her back in silver strands. Her forehead is studded with flashing jewels, whilst a necklace emphasises her ample breasts. She wears red, silver and black boots.

Here we will also meet **The Super Yuppies.** This group are all dressed in silver-edged black coats over skinny trousers - their hair is black.

After leaving the Killer Queen's Pad, the story moves to **The Hospital.** Here we are inside a long clinical corridor with rooms on two levels either side, the windows shielded by white curtains. In the foreground are two hospital table-like beds. Four white-coated doctors wearing green head torches, like eyes, will arrive.

Different scenes then flash up - a night skyline of tower blocks, the windows lit from within, metal struts of a glazed building with a flight of steps in the centre, and two large ipads will appear either side overhead, before the scene shifts to the outside of **Killer Queens Pad.** This looks like an observatory of steel and glass set in of a desert landscape. This then changes and we are inside with two spinning globes of golden light at the back along with many lengths of pipe intersecting the walls. Towards the front are two spinning columns or vortexes of bright light.

We then move to the **Wasteland** - the run down streets of the ghetto, where we meet two crazy rock rebels, **OZ and Brit**

The wasteland is a landscape of grey walls in front of a mass of tumbled rocks, shattered concrete beams and piles of rotting rubbish

Brit, a young black man is one of the Bohemians, a group of rebels who strive to rediscover the lost music and rebel against Globalsoft. - He's a hippy with black dreadlocks streaked with silver who's dressed in silver metallic grunge - his trousers are patched and torn, his jacket open with metal shoulder pads.

**Oz** is a thin young Bohemian with long green-streaked grey hair wearing red shorts, black bustier, black suspenders and torn black stockings with boots.

As they leave the wasteland they fall through a long green underground tunnel, to **Heartbreak Hotel,** the Bohemians hideout in the ruins of Tottenham Court Road tube station. **-** The gold interior is on two levels with an open entrance on the left and the open end of a tunnel higher up. Pipes, like those of a ventilation system intersperse the walls of the upper level, whilst the ground floor is littered with broken and faded Rock memorabilia: Amongst this detritus lies an old Harley motor bike, and a cracked TV. The place soon fills up with more **Bohemians,** including, **Cindy Lauper, White Snake, Tina Turner and Madonna -** all crazy rock rebels, who, like Brit and Oz are dressed in every confusion of grungy ancient rock styles and iconic costumes.

The show contains strobe lighting, smoke effects, pyrotechnics and search lights.

**Cast** in order of appearance, **and Credits**

There is a large cast in this production so I will only list the principle characters.

Buddy - Michael McKell

Khashoggi - Adam Strong

Galileo - Ian McIntosh

Scaramouche - Elena Skye

Killer Queen - Jenny O'Leary

Brit - David Michael Johnson

Oz - Amy Di Bartlomeo

The live band is under the direction of their pianist, Bob Broad

Music Associate - Zachary Flis

Guitars - James Barber and Simon Croft

Bass Guitar - Neil Murray

Drums - Dave Cottrell