



Queen Unseen: My Life with the Greatest Rock Band of the 20th Century

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An intimate and affectionate insider's story of his years spent alongside Queen, with exclusive personal photos

For more than a decade, Peter Hince worked alongside one of the greatest bands in the history of rock, touring the world and heading up their road crew as they performed at some of the best and biggest music venues in the world. Here he recalls the highlights of those years with the band. He was with Freddie Mercury when he composed "Crazy Little Thing Called Love;" he was responsible for making sure that Freddie's stage performances went without a hitch; and he was often there to witness Freddie's famed tantrums. He was also party to the sex, drugs, and rock and roll which are invariably part of life on the road with a rock band. Many books have been written about Queen and Freddie Mercury, but this is the first real insider's story. Packed with the author's own exclusive photos, including never-before-seen shots of Freddie, his female lover Mary, and other band members, this warm and witty book will entertain and inform as a must-read for any music fan.

Queen Unseen: My Life with the Greatest Rock Band of the 20th Century Details

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From Reader Review Queen Unseen: My Life with the Greatest Rock Band of the 20th Century for online ebook

Kris says

I enjoyed this book - it held my attention and actually had me laughing out loud in places. I generally prefer memoirs that are more chronological in nature; oddly enough, the non-linear style of the book didn't bother me as much as I expected and I got used to the narrative bouncing from one story into another.

While there are some anecdotes about band members, this book isn't about Queen - it's a collection of personal stories related to Hince's experiences as a roadie in the '70s and '80s. The fact that he often gives a bit of historical perspective gave some depth to his frustratingly brief narrative and helped keep my interest. Topics are wide ranging, from the difficulties of hauling and shipping equipment to dealing with foreign politics and customs to accommodating personality quirks in an effort to keep the shows running smoothly. Hince doesn't shy away from sex and drugs; he tells enough to get his point across but does so without naming names or resorting to tabloid-style drama.

There are many places where I wish Hince would have expanded on the story - especially when describing his career transition from roadie to photographer. The small sections of photographs consist mainly of candid images that hint at his long interest in photography but often lack a direct connection to his narrative.

If you want to know more about the behind-the-scenes efforts required to keep a successful band on the road (and the mis/adventures of a mostly-dedicated crew), you may enjoy this book, too. If you're looking for substantial stories or insider information about the band members, you'll be disappointed.

Steelwhisper says

Brilliant. Fabulous. Humane.

This was a wonderfully written, warm and deeply interesting look at the author's time with Queen. I can see where people expecting to learn salacious, sarky tidbits and scandals would be disappointed with this book. Completely unlike what they expected, Peter Hince gives us here a genuinely respectful view of tour life - as one of the band, with the band. Yes, there are a couple of interesting bits included, but more so from the perspective of someone like me, who also used to tour with a band, than for someone reading the yellow press. I recognised a lot of what he described, and in a way it proves the veracity and overall benevolence making it from the pages.

I laughed quite a few times, out loud enough so I was stared at pointedly, and I nodded at a lot of things. The relationships between the crew and the band, Hince's respect of them and his loyalty to both Mercury and Deacon, especially his admiration for Deacon, came through time and again. And yes, this is indeed well-written and very readable. Lovely photos Hince shot himself at the end. One which foreshadows Deacon's reaction to Fred's death.

This will be re-read.

Deia Skitalica says

A really enjoyable read, Hince is humorous and there's a decent flow to the book. I wouldn't call this a story about the band per se, but about their roadie (which the addendum "my life with the greatest rock band.." substantiates), and that's just fine!

It was good to read about the 'Queen machine' from that perspective.. this is your all-access Queen backstage pass!

More than once, however, I got the sense that Hince is resentful, and, at the same time, it was sad to read that, apparently, the crew did not receive as much appreciation as hoped for, or compensation, for that matter.

True, Ratty was Freddie's roadie, and that's a great b&w cover image of Freddie there, but, since the book is called Queen Unseen, would have loved to see a photo of the entire band, or even a behind-the-scenes with the crew.

Finally, what a life all of them lived! Fascinating!

Jason Leroux says

Interesting read about one of my favorite bands... The flow of the "prose" is quite frankly awful, but there's enough tidbits about life on the road with Queen to keep you interested.

The best parts are the descriptions of the interactions of the band and the crew while on-stage at legendary concerts (Wembley and Live-Aid are recalled by "Ratty" Hince), and the photos that Hince took of the band.

Although the juvenile antics and debauchery are somewhat appreciated by my inner-20-yr-old, I really was left wondering about the antics of the famous members of the band - I could have done without the vague descriptions of conquests of the roadies.

Jeff J. says

Memoir from the former tour manager for the band Queen. While the title implies some sort of expose and it is actually about the life of a roadie. No big revelations here.

Carrie Templeton says

Definitely a different perspective on the Queen craze. The story written by this Queen roadie was more about

life as a roadie than it was the life of Queen as seen out of the public eye.

James Hartley says

Written by a Queen roadie nicknamed Ratty, this is a close-up, with-the-band view of Queen in their early-to-mid eighties pomp. Unapologetically of its time, this boorish, hilarious, sexist, revealing, bitty autobiography gets you up close and personal with the members of Queen's group and crew.

My version of the book did not include any photos - but they were praised in the blurb and quotes on the opening pages. I guess the photos are in the hardback edition.

laurenpie says

Rather free with the judgmental stereotyping

Well! This perhaps won't have bothered many of you, but... I must run with a more polite crowd, because it isn't often that I hear this amount of bald-faced judgmental stereotyping, let alone unabashed objectification of women. Wow! I found the writing downright crass.

Not to mention repetitive, non-linear, and chock-full of British idioms that I couldn't interpret. This book could have been greatly improved with a good editor.

Now, to be fair to Mr. Hence, I **do** agree he was respectful to the band members, and that he nicely avoided an overdone tabloid-tell-all scenario.

The bait and switch **was** disappointing, Look at that cover photo, look at the title, I think I deserve a little more of Freddie inside!

Abitin says

Well, this was a waste of time actually. No interesting facts about the band, only boring childish stories from someone who clearly thinks he is much funnier than he is. Definitely not a book for intelligent Queen fans! If you're looking for insight, wit, charm and good writing.....then save your money!

Lance Lumley says

This book tells the story of Peter Hince, who started to work with the rock band Queen from the 1970s-1986. The book is a different rock autobiography because it tells the day in and out of the road crew for a band. Yes, there are a few wild stories in the book, but most of it is told on his duties and his friendship he encountered with the band. There are several great stories that was knowledgeable to me; like lead singer Freddy Mercury loved playing the game Scrabble and almost every day working the daily paper crossword puzzles, how the band was fans of TV Shows like Benny Hill and Faulty Towers, and the time Freddy asked

Hince to grab Murcury's guitar while he was taking a bath and ended up strumming the chords that became "Crazy Little Thing Called Love."

Hince talks about meeting Bruce Springsteen and his experience working the Live Aid concert was. He takes the reader through some of the filming of the bands videos and recording albums. If you are looking for a book that shows you what the road crew does in the business, this is a good book. This is not a tell-all slander book about the band or gossipy. I got this at the local library to read, and read it within a few days. This was a good Rock Music book.

marta says

Je?li kiedykolwiek zastanawiali?cie si? jaki tak naprawd? by? ten Freddie Mercury, jak to jest by? blisko wielkiego rockowego zespo?u lub ile prawdy jest w plotkach na temat rock'n'rollowego ?ycia to Peter Hince daje Wam szans? pozna? te i wiele innych informacji z pierwszej r?ki. Jako cz?onek ekipy technicznej zespo?u, sp?dzi? u boku Queen wiele lat, by? ?wiadkiem rozwoju ?wiatowej kariery, ale towarzyszy? Freddieemu, Brianowi, Rogerowi i Johnowi równie? w gorszych chwilach. Tych jednak by?o nie wiele, bo niezale?nie od wszystkiego The show must go on.

Peter Hince do??czy? do grupy na pocz?tku lat siedemdziesi?tych ubieg?ego wieku. Szybko z?y? si? z ca?? ekip?, a podr?owanie z zespo?em, a tak?e przywileje pracy u boku Queen sta?y si? nieod??cznymi elementami jego ?ycia. Po latach opisa? swoje do?wiadczenia gwarantuj?c czytelnikowi nieograniczony wst?p za kulisy jednej z najwi?kszych grup rockowych wszech czasów. Opiera si? tylko i wy??cznie na osobistych do?wiadczeniach, unika taniej sensacji rodem z brukowej prasy, jednak nie stroni od pikantnych szczegó?ów. Jego subiektywizm nie przes?ania mu prawdziwego obrazu cz?onków ekipy. Bez pardonu opowiada o humorach Freda, czy narkotykowych ekscesach zespo?u. Nie stara si? ukry?, ?e seks, alkohol i kokaina to chleb powszedni dla rock'n'rollowca, ale równocze?nie nie próbuje usprawiedliwia? zachowania swoich kolegów. Co wi?cej, Hince otwarcie przyznaje, ?e sam by? cz??ci? tego ?wiata, a obietnica wej?ciówek na koncert Queen, otwiera?a przed technicznym wiele drzwi. Ale te osobiste do?wiadczenia maj? równie? drug? stron? medalu. Peter, jako jeden z nielicznych, mia? okazj? pozna? Freda, Briana, Rogera i Johna w ró?nych sytuacjach. Pokazuje co?, czego tabloidy zwykle unikaj? – ludzk? twarz tej s?awnej od wielu lat czwórki. Poza ?wietnymi muzykami i zatwardzia?ymi rock'n'rollowcami cz?onkowie Queen to tak?e niezast?pieni przyjaciele, na których mo?na polega?. Peter Hince skupi? si? na swojej relacji z liderem zespo?u i w przejmuj?cy sposób ukaza? niezwyk?? wi?? jaka ??czy?a go z Freddieiem, mimo tego, ?e cz?sto si? ze sob? nie zgadzali.

"Queen. Nieznana historia" to bardzo nietypowa biografia. Nie znajdziemy tu patetycznego stylu i nudnych informacji, zdobywanych przez osoby trzecie. To raczej zapis jednego z cz?onków ekipy, który wszystko to, o czym inni tylko s?yszeli, prze?y? naprawd?. Wiele interesuj?cych faktów, które dot?d zarezerwowane by?y tylko dla nielicznych, znajduje si? w tej publikacji. Ciekawe anegdoty, wydarzenia ze sceny, zza kulis, z tournee, to tylko nieliczne przyk?ady stanowi?ce o niepowtarzalno?ci tej ksi??ki. A wszystko to okraszone zdj?ciami, w wi?kszo?ci pochodz?cymi z prywatnych zbiorów Hince'a, których pr?no szuka? gdzie indziej.

Niezapomniana muzyczna podró? u boku jednego z najwi?kszych zespo?ów wszech czasów. Ta ksi??ka to nie tylko kronika kluczowych wydarze? z kariery zespo?u, zarezerwowana wy??cznie dla fanów Queen. To pozycja obow?zkowa dla ka?dego mi?o?nika nie tylko rocka, ale muzyki w ogóle. Bo ten zespó?, jak ma?o który, wpisa? si? w histori? rynku fonograficznego i nic nie wskazuje na to, aby mia? odej?? w zapomnieniu. [„Queen. Nieznana historia” to esencja tego, co sk?ada si? na ?ywot rock 'n rollowca]*.

* - cytat pochodzi z opisy wydawnictwa na ok?adce

Matthew says

I found this a fairly enjoyable read, but lacking. Peter Hince's writing style is a bit jumbled, he begins stories and often seems to leave them slightly unresolved as he begins a new tale. The stories all come thick and fast, often only a few paragraphs in length.

This means there is quite a lot of entertainment to be found in the book, but unfortunately it never quite told me the things I was hoping for. Many of the stories do not involve the band, and those that do are quick and fleeting, not really giving an insight into the personalities of my favourite musicians.

It also painted a picture of life with Queen that, in some cases, I did not really want to hear. There is a lot of drug taking, sex and drinking going on - as you would realistically expect from any rock band - but it's all presented so casually.

Overall, thought, it's quite an entertaining read. Only a few of the stories are genuinely funny, and most of them involve the band members. If the book had been presented in a more organised manner, it probably would have helped.

Ravi says

Like many other reviews on the internet state, this isn't the book for you if you're looking for sensationalised scandal and tabloid tales. At the same time, this also isn't the book for you if you're looking for details of Freddie Mercury's later years and his ailing health.

Queen's roadie, Peter Hince, in this book, describes the intense work and mentality behind Queen's incredible stage-show, fronted by the ever-flamboyant Freddie, brainy Brian, raucous Roger, and the demure Mr Deacon. Not only does Peter 'Ratty' Hince exhibit the immense work-ethic shown by every member of the Queen crew, but he describes venues, cities, and goings-on with incredible detail, worthy of a Bill Bryson book.

Through Queen Unseen, the reader gets an access-all-areas pass, and sees Freddie Mercury's jovial pre-show chatter and hi-jinx, as he arm-wrestles crew members and yells [somewhat ironically] about the ailing state of his voice. Of course, along with rock'n'roll comes sex and drugs, and many women from many different locations are recalled vividly by Hince, as well as the many substances that crew and band members encountered as their tours wandered around the world.

Of course, one could critique the fact that some tales end rather abruptly, and that not everything follows in chronological order. But it seems to me that this is the perfect metaphor for tour life: you show up in a far-flung venue, play a show, get up to some mischief, and then roll on to the next town, leaving the events and items of the previous night to blur and fester in the back of your mind, whilst trying to remember the bits that were never crystal clear to start with.

Since retiring as a roadie, Peter Hince has developed a penchant for photography. Judging by this offering,

he could also make a fantastic travel or non-fiction author, recalling events with expert detail, and not shying away from the use of biting sarcasm.

Ritchie says

Entertaining stories of what life was like as Freddie Mercury's main roadie from someone who was actually there. No scandalous tabloid shite here, just fond (and some not-so-fond) remembrances. Recommended.

Charlene says

So many red flags in this book. The first thing I noticed was that in the acknowledgment section, the author thanks an incredible number of people, some of which are famous musicians, but none of which are members of Queen. The second thing was that the author pretty much set a tone from the very beginning. Freddie is a hot headed, far-to-often-drinking, attention whore and drama Queen, while the author is level headed and has the job of trying to make things go smoothly to avoid Tantrum-throwing Freddie's wrath. As I read on, it became clear the real star of Queen was not Freddie, Brian (who was hands down my favorite musician of all time since the age of 9 years old), John, or Roger. The star is... you guessed it, this author.

I have no problem with people writing about their experiences with famous people. Indeed, this is why I read the book. I saw that it was written by a legit source close to the band. What I don't enjoy is when people write about their experiences with famous people to explicitly gain notoriety because of their proximity to the famous person. I would have better enjoyed a tone that was reflective (both self reflective and deeply reflective of the experiences with members of the band), intuitive, and informative. I am happy to hear about Freddie's tantrums. In fact, the idea of flamboyantly dressed Freddie throwing some tantrums about his music sounds fascinating to learn about. It was the way this author went about it that seemed less than fair. Freddie isn't even alive to speak for himself. Luckily though, people like Brian May and others, who really knew Freddie are alive to give a more balanced and thoughtful account. I have seen Brian talk about Freddie. His goal has never been to expose him in some way. While I think Brian tries to protect and honor Freddie's memory, and could probably be more forthcoming with the tantrum -throwing side of Freddie (I hear that side of Freddie is not in the movie but have yet to see it for myself), I think trying to out Freddie, the way this author does, isn't really giving the reader a lens into the lives of any of the band members in any meaningful way.

It would be one thing if the author decided to do a tell all, in which he told all equally. However, he magnified negative traits of Freddie and minimized, explained away, or completely normalized his own negative traits, traits that become glaring obvious page after page. The words on those pages make it painfully clear that he is a misogynist. The 70s and 80s were a different time. It would be almost understandable if he made statements then about women, and realized now how inappropriate they really are. He seems fully capable of calling out Freddie's bad behavior but when he talks about himself, he just reveals himself to be a self-absorbed, arrogant, shallow person. In order to get any nugget of interesting info about the band, you have to sit through his incessant goings on.

At one point, after reading 3/4 of the book, I felt certain the members of Queen could not possibly tolerate this guy and was compelled to investigate online. Brian May called him a, "disgruntled ex-roadie who had a warped view of the band." Indeed!

As if the book itself were not bad enough, if you listen to it in audio version, as I did, you will find that they chose a narrator who made the unfortunate choice to use extremely negative stereotyping for his voices of black people. I am on the prowl for a much more definitive book on Queen.
