

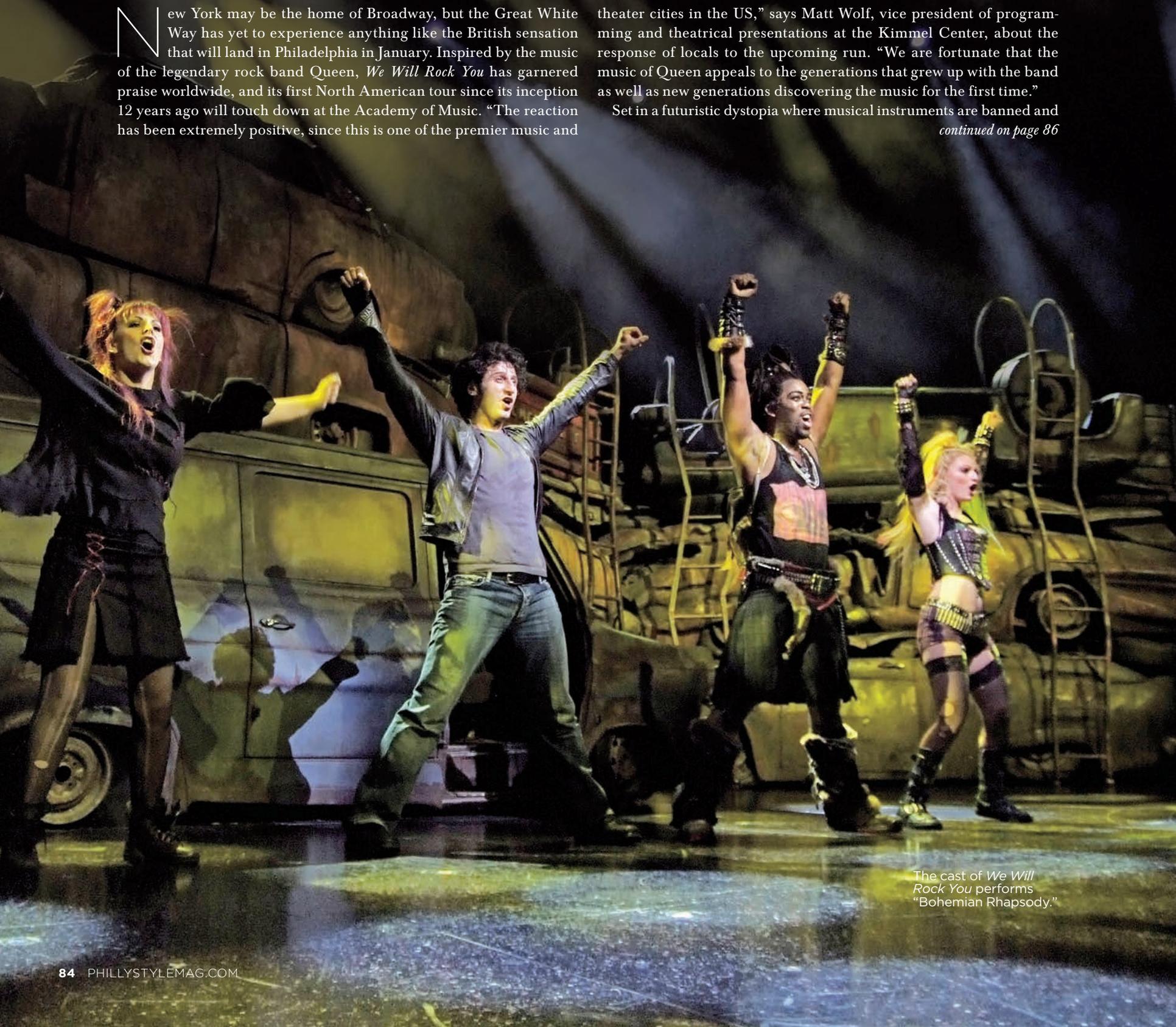
The Royal Treatment

THE ICONIC BRITISH ROCK BAND QUEEN LIVES ON AT THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC IN THE HIT MUSICAL *WE WILL ROCK YOU*. BY ALEXANDRA LESHNER

New York may be the home of Broadway, but the Great White Way has yet to experience anything like the British sensation that will land in Philadelphia in January. Inspired by the music of the legendary rock band Queen, *We Will Rock You* has garnered praise worldwide, and its first North American tour since its inception 12 years ago will touch down at the Academy of Music. “The reaction has been extremely positive, since this is one of the premier music and

theater cities in the US,” says Matt Wolf, vice president of programming and theatrical presentations at the Kimmel Center, about the response of locals to the upcoming run. “We are fortunate that the music of Queen appeals to the generations that grew up with the band as well as new generations discovering the music for the first time.”

Set in a futuristic dystopia where musical instruments are banned and
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The cast of *We Will Rock You* performs “Bohemian Rhapsody.”




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music is manufactured by corporate computers, *We Will Rock You* follows a group of rebellious bohemians and their heroic leader, Galileo, as they fight to restore individuality and bring rock 'n' roll back to the people. Written and directed by award-winning British comedian Ben Elton, the musical features many of Queen's greatest hits—"Bohemian Rhapsody" is performed live in its entirety, something even the band never attempted—as well as its over-the-top style. "Queen's music was always extremely theatrical in nature and crosses over so many genres," says Wolf. "Their harmonies are

"Queen's music was always extremely theatrical in nature."

—MATT WOLF

so complex, as complex as the members of Queen who created the sound. No one has the voice of Freddie Mercury, and no one's guitar sounds like Brian May's."

May and drummer Roger Taylor have been instrumental in the creation of the show, lending their experience and expertise as musical supervisors. "Brian, Roger, and myself have been a band of brothers

for 11 or 12 years on this show," Elton has said. "It's not often as cooperative and collaborative as *We Will Rock You* has been, because we did it together right from day one."

With Elton's comedic genius, Queen's classic songs, and the firsthand accounts of founding members May and Taylor, it's no surprise that *We Will Rock You* has critics applauding both the story line and the score. Says Wolf, "Audiences are in for an evening of great music, a fun story about love and discovery, and 24 awesome Queen hits done by one of the most talented groups of performers and musicians you'll see this season." *We Will Rock You* runs from January 14 to 19 at the Academy of Music, 240 S. Broad St., 215-893-1999; kimmelcenter.org **PS**

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