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# attitude

MUSIC AWARD  
**ADAM  
LAMBERT**

THE  
**AWARDS  
ISSUE** 2015

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Adam wears:  
Jacket: Officine Generale, Pants: Burberry,  
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Attitude Award Winner

MUSIC AWARD/INTERNATIONAL ALBUM

# Adam Lambert

Adam Lambert hit the spotlight in *American Idol*'s eighth season. His second album hit the Number 1 spot in the USA, making him the first openly gay man to top the Billboard chart. This year he completed his tour with Queen, adding his powerhouse vocals to those legendary Freddie Mercury hits, and released his latest acclaimed album, *The Original High*.

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When told that *Attitude* is giving him the coveted Music Award, Adam Lambert yelps with delight. "Wow!" he yells down the phone from his Los Angeles home. "That's a tall compliment there. I feel very honoured."

Adam deserves it. Not only is he an out gay pop star who champions LGBT causes, he's also a singer with an epic voice – good enough, in fact, to fill the boots of the legendary Freddie Mercury. His fantastic new album, *The Original High*, mixes pop, rock, dance and electro to dazzling effect.

It's no wonder the UK gay community has embraced 33-year-old Lambert, who has guest starred on *Glee*, got to ring in the New Year with a BBC-broadcasted Queen concert and who has a flamboyant style that's impossible to ignore.

"I still feel like we're getting to know each other, which is wonderful," the *American Idol* runner-up says of winning the heart of the UK's gay community. "It's like the beginning of a relationship, like the honeymoon phase between me and the gay scene in the UK. I've been out and about here and there and I have friends in the UK, but I think I need to dive in deeper."

Will the guy who's no stranger to guyliner do it in full glam get-up? "Actually I've been dressing down a bit," he insists. "I haven't been quite as outrageous, but I guess someone might hear me say that and go 'Are you serious?'"

In an industry where out role models are still not as prevalent as they should be, he's got an impressively across-the-board fanbase. "I'm looking at things on Twitter and Facebook and



most people don't put their sexuality as part of their handle so I'm not seeing a difference between gay fans and straight fans," he says. "I think there's a broad spectrum in there and I like that. I like the idea of my audience being a melting pot of

different kinds of people."

One thing that unites them all is a love for the new album, which is Adam's third since he did *Idol* in 2009 and his first top tenner in the UK. It shows off his astonishing vocal range, with Lambert himself

saying "it's stretched me a bit and it's kind of encouraged me to explore other colours in my voice. Everyone knows I like to sing big and bombastic and there's a lot of that on there, of course, but I loved exploring other, more nuanced

Adam wears  
Shirt: Allsaints, Pants: John Varvatos,  
Cuff: M.cohan, Watch: Montblanc

“There’s so much progress being made in terms of sexuality and people understanding the grey area between the black and the white”

Queen of Pop to fronting Queen. He met Brian May and Roger Taylor when they performed on *Idol* and they’ve since toured the world together. “And getting to perform with them on New Year’s Eve for television was incredible,” he marvels. “What a great way for me to introduce myself to factions of the UK audience who might not have known who I was.”

And what would he say to Freddie Mercury if he could meet him in some alternate universe? “Oh man, I wouldn’t know where to start. I think I would say ‘Thank you so much for letting me run with this and I hope I made you proud.’”

Lambert’s genius as he tears into the likes of *Killer Queen* and *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* is that he never, ever tries to copy Freddie. “That would have been tacky, I think. That’s not my game. I’m not an impersonator. It is about finding a balance in terms of making it mine but not straying too far from the original because that would have felt sacrilegious.”

And does he have hair envy when stood next to the follicly-unchallenged colossus that is Brian May? Lambert, who sports a fine quiff on his album cover, laughs loudly. “My hair has a lot of lift as well, so I’m good.”

He is, to make a bizarre comparison, America’s equivalent of Jane McDonald – working on a cruise ship (at age 19) before being catapulted to fame via a TV show. In between, though, the theatre-trained kid did musicals, even appearing opposite Val Kilmer in *The Ten Commandments: The Musical*. Critics loathed Kilmer but they praised Lambert and he got to flex his acting chops again as Elliot Gilbert aka Starchild on *Glee*.

dynamics.”

As a kid he grew up in San Diego grooving to Madonna, Michael and Janet, before getting into Queen, Bowie and T-Rex, not to mention Led Zeppelin and The Beatles, plus dance music and 90s vocal

house. All his influences are there on the album and Adam says everyone he meets has a different favourite track.

Mine? That has to be *Ghost Town*, the lead single which has absolutely nothing to do with the Madge song of the same

name. “When I found out about that I was like ‘Oh no, I don’t want people to think I’m trying to compete with her’,” Lambert declares. “She’s Madonna, she’s an icon and I grew up really looking up to her.”

He’s gone from loving the

He had, in fact, originally auditioned for the role of quarterback Finn Hudson but the producers went with Cory Monteith instead. The actor died of an overdose in 2013, just after it was announced Adam was joining the cast. "It was a little sombre going on set in the wake of that. There was some sadness around, but everyone stayed professional and positive."

More acting is hopefully on the cards. "It's always been a part of my spirit, I've always been a performer and it's sort of a natural thing for me." He laughs about not wanting to sound his own trumpet. "And if anyone thinks I'm any good at it then great."

Adam comes across as funny, confident and, on stage at least, as cocky as a strutting peacock. I wonder aloud what he's like when all eyes aren't on him. "I've gotten to a point in my life where there's kind of a split in my personality. Sometimes I'm very extroverted and social, going to dinners and parties and meeting new people. Then there are other times where I just want to be alone and I kind of hibernate."

Having split from boyfriend Sauli Koskinen, a Finnish TV host, a couple of years back his current status is "single and mingling". With more Queen dates looming and tour dates of his own too (not in the UK at the moment but he's working on it) it's a tough juggling act.

"I mean, I'm open to meeting new

people," he tells me. "I've been in relationships and they're beautiful but this career takes you all over the place. I'm always travelling and I'd need a very specific person who can

handle that."

As his fame skyrockets, Lambert is determined to remain his authentic self. "And it's gotten a lot easier. In the beginning that path of how to stay myself and figure out the business was a little

confusing. Now I've found my footing a little bit and I feel more confident and my material is 100% me."

Choosing LGBT causes to support has a lot to do with scheduling, he admits. "But what it really comes down to is 'Am I inspired by the work they are doing?'" And he's thrilled with the way the world in general and America in particular is slowly but surely going. "There's so much progress being made in terms of sexuality and

people understanding the grey area between the black and the white. All these labels are maybe necessary right now to help us understand all these different avenues that gender identity and sexual identity can take, but I hope as we move forward we can just identify as ourselves."

As for his own identity, Adam dismisses tabloid tittle-tattle that he might be bisexual rather than full-on gay. Yes, there have been experiences with women in the past. "But I don't consider myself all that fluid in my sexuality. I appreciate when other people are and I try to stay open-minded. I encourage anybody to explore outside what they have set for themselves." He laughs. "But I'm a homo."

• The album *The Original High* and new single *Another Lonely Night* are out now.

adamofficial.com

