



ELIZABETH: A PORTRAIT IN PARTS

THE QUEEN IS arguably the most famous person on the planet. She's the subject of some 50,000 news articles a month, not to mention the endless Google questions from all over the world ("Why is the queen so important?", "Does she eat swans?", "Watch *The Crown*?"). Yet despite the public's persistent fascination and curiosity, Elizabeth II remains an enigmatic figure and even the smallest nuggets of information are a precious luxury to be cherished and savoured. This new documentary, then, is a bona fide royal feast.

Directed by the late, great Roger Michell (*Notting Hill*, *My Cousin Rachel*), *A Portrait in Parts* is a plenteous, visually rich and committed chronicle of the 70-year reign of the longest-reigning British monarch. True to its title, the documentary collates hundreds of hours' worth of footage into very particular, niche categories: Elizabeth in the saddle; receiving flowers; in portrait, and so on. It's a colourful, buzzing mosaic that reveals a more whimsical, human side of the Queen (she's no stranger to self-deprecating humour and partial to a game of tag

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with young sailors), lets us in on the mind-boggling rules around etiquette and ceremonies but perhaps, most importantly, reminds us of the gravity and grace with which she has carried out her duties through some of the country's most tumultuous times.

The footage is interwoven with sporadic interview snippets with everyone from Paul McCartney who admits the Beatles had a crush on the "babe" that was Elizabeth, to the Queen's stand-ins who have the odd job of pretend-meeting the world's dignitaries in rehearsal for big ceremonies (and rather enjoy it). And when the time comes for the real deal, the Queen's dignified, unwavering charisma—whether she's meeting Winston Churchill or Marilyn Monroe—is a sight to behold.

A Portrait is not without its flaws; some narrative blanks are filled with ill-fitting Hollywood movie scenes, and the numerous controversies and problematic events are glossed over with a chaotic, three-minute montage. It's a flimsy attempt at nuance that clearly doesn't belong on the "Best Of" compilation that this film is. It's an unashamedly adulating ode to the country's number one matriarch and a rousing reminder of her resolute commitment to the role she calls "her fate".

Elizabeth: A Portrait in Parts is out in cinemas across the UK on May 27 and streaming on Prime Video on June 1

By Eva Mackevic

