

WHAT MAKES A GREAT FRONTPERSON IN MUSIC?

Estimated Time: 45-60 minutes

Subjects: General Music, SEL

Age Range: Elementary School, Middle School

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★ *TEACHROCK* ★

What makes a great front person in music?

In this lesson you will:

- Explore the idea of a musical “front person”
- Analyze performances by Freddie Mercury, Lauryn Hill, Rosalía, Bruno Mars, and H.E.R. to consider what makes each artist a good front person
- Reflect on what you would be comfortable doing before an audience, and what you would be uncomfortable doing
- Discover strategies to create a compelling stage performance for an audience
- Create your own front person based on artists featured in this lesson

What is a Musical Front Person?

A front person, also called a "front man" or "front woman," is typically the lead vocalist of a band or group. At a concert, the front person is usually at the front of the stage and generally attracts the most attention.

In addition to singing and playing an instrument, the front person has the added responsibility of engaging with and responding to the audience.



Consider or ask a partner:

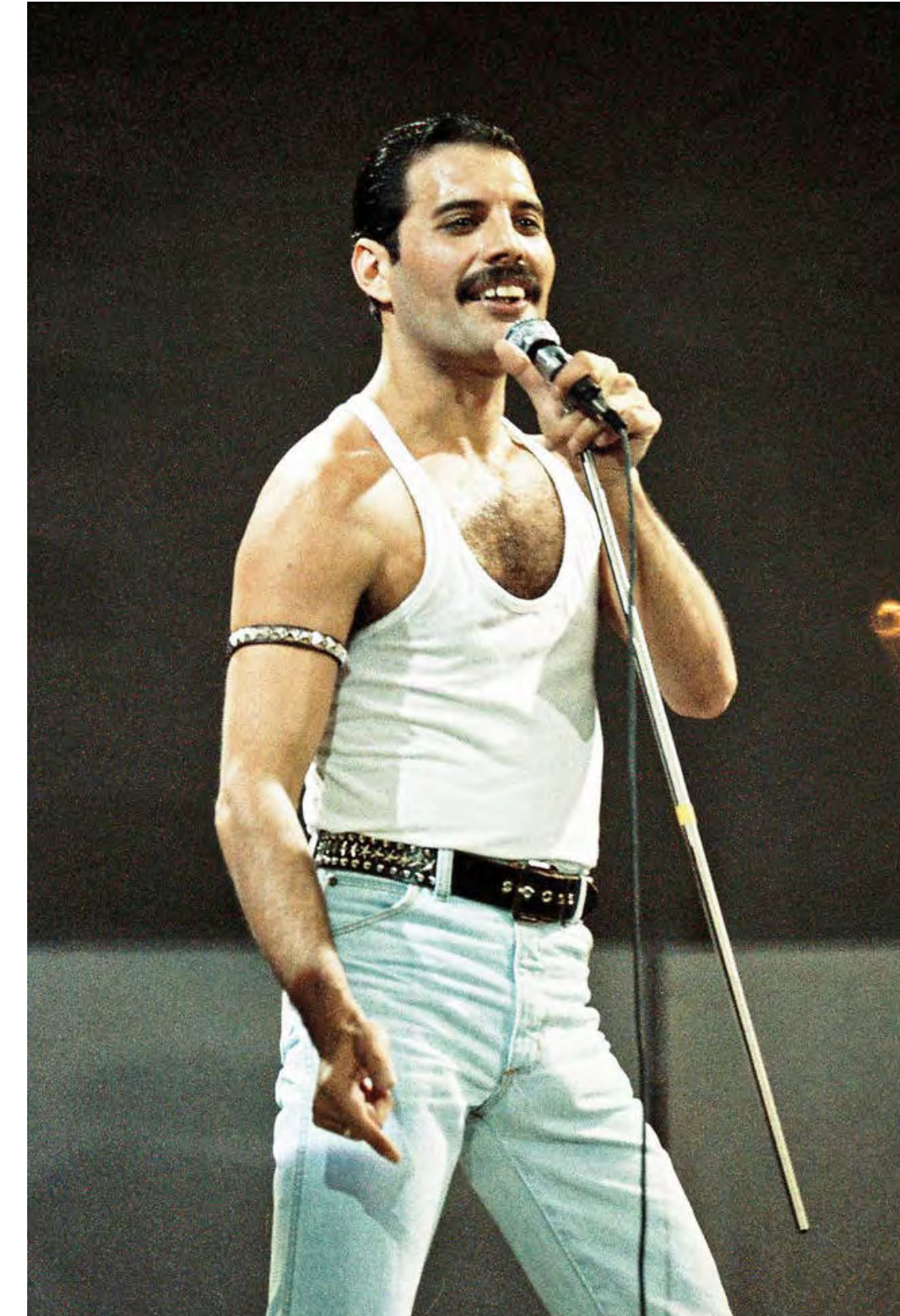
- Do you think you could be a front person?
- Have you ever had to perform in front of people? What were some of the feelings you had about it?
- Do you think front people ever get “stage fright”? How might they grow more comfortable with performing in front of people?
- Is being a good front person something you are born with, or something that takes practice? Or could it be a combination of both?

Like learning an instrument, becoming a good front person takes practice, and there are techniques you can use to engage an audience.

Examine this handout. Then watch the following clips and use the handout to reflect on how these front people engage the audience.

Singer Freddie Mercury (born Farrokh Bulsara in Zanzibar) was the front person for the band Queen, which included guitarist Brian May, bassist John Deacon, and drummer Roger Taylor. Together, the group created some of the most iconic songs in popular music history, including “Another One Bites the Dust,” “We Will Rock You,” “We Are the Champions,” and “Bohemian Rhapsody.”

Watch **this clip** of Mercury performing at Wembley Stadium in London in 1986, and fill out the appropriate sections of the handout.



A deeply influential figure in Hip Hop and R&B, Lauryn Hill's Billboard-topping releases combined Rap, Soul, and Reggae music. Hill first broke through as a member of the group the Fugees, before releasing her 1998 solo debut, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, which remains a foundational album for the Hip Hop genre.

Watch **this clip** of Hill performing with the Fugees at the Apollo Theater in New York City and fill out the appropriate sections of the handout.



Born Rosalia Vila Tobella in Barcelona, Spain, Rosalía's music mixes Flamenco, Pop, and Urbano (Música Urbana) music. She became internationally known after releasing her 2018 studio album *El Mal Querer*, which also served as her college thesis project. Soon after, Rosalía began collaborating with artists such as J. Balvin, Bad Bunny, and Ozuna.

Watch [this clip](#) of Rosalía performing at Billboard's Women in Music event, and fill out the appropriate sections of the handout.



Bruno Mars (born Peter Gene Hernandez) is a multifaceted performer and producer often known for his joyful performances and retro sensibilities. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, Mars began his career as a producer. From there, he has grown to become one of the best-selling artists of all time.

Watch **this clip (1:28-2:28)** of Bruno Mars performing at the Super Bowl, and fill out the appropriate sections of the handout.



H.E.R. (born Gabriella Sarmiento Wilson) is a songwriter, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist. Considered a child prodigy, H.E.R. signed her first record contract at age 14. In 2016, she released her first album, H.E.R. Vol.1. Since then, she has become a platinum and multi-Grammy winning artist.

Watch [this clip](#) of H.E.R. performing at the BET Awards, and fill out the appropriate sections of the handout.



After watching each video and filling out the handout, consider or ask a partner:

- What were some of the ways the front person in the videos engaged the audience while on stage?
- The front person of a band can perform in front of crowds at many events. How do you think they engage their audience? Why is a dynamic front person important to lead a performance?
- Are there any performance characteristics that these front people have in common? How do they differ?
- Do you feel you have similar qualities to some of the front people you watched? If so, what qualities?

After reflecting on all the performers you watched, fill out **this handout** to determine which ways you would be comfortable engaging with an audience on stage.

Then consider or ask a partner:

- What comes to mind if you are asked to picture a logo?
- (Full lesson available [here](#)).

SUMMARY

- Freddie Mercury, Lauryn Hill, Rosalía, Bruno Mars, and H.E.R. are dynamic front people who have developed their own ways to engage with an audience
- There isn't a single way to be an engaging front person - there are many ways to engage with your audience
- Performing or imagining performing on stage is a way to gain confidence in your personal life

BE CREATIVE

Create a leader of your own band. Think about things like:

- How does your front person interact with audiences?
- How does your front person interact with members of the band? Do they use improvisation with voices? Instruments?
- Do fashion/costumes play a role in their performance?

Once considering these questions, draw a picture of your front person and list 3 attributes that make them a good leader.

BE CURIOUS

Explore the featured front people further by reading these TeachRock Trace it Back biographies:

- **Rosalía**
- **H.E.R.**

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