

## Premortem Analysis for Musicians Anticipate, Plan, and Excel in Performances

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### Understanding Premortem Analysis

Premortem analysis involves anticipating potential challenges and planning solutions in advance. This proactive approach helps musicians prepare for a variety of scenarios, enhancing performance quality and confidence.

**Resource:** <https://hbr.org/2007/09/performing-a-project-premortem>

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### Section 1: Identifying Potential Issues

#### Instructions

- Use this section to reflect/brainstorm on potential challenges you might face in your performance. Consider aspects from technical skills to stage presence to audience engagement.

#### Brainstorming Tips

- **Fundamentals:** Regular practice routines focusing on rudiments.
  - **Expression:** Recording and listening to your performance to evaluate expressiveness.
  - **Stage Presence:** Practicing in front of a mirror or filming yourself to assess and improve body language.
  - **Audience Engagement:** Simulating performance scenarios, considering audience perspective.
  - **Etiquette:** Checklist for performance day essentials (attire, music, equipment).
  - **Memory Techniques:** Mnemonic devices, segmented practice.
  - **Improvisation:** Practice sessions focusing on spontaneity and creativity.
  - **Feedback Utilization:** Keeping a journal of feedback and action points.
  - **Anxiety Management:** Meditation, breathing exercises, positive affirmations.
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### Section 2: Example Musician's Pre-Mortem

#### Step 1: Identify Potential Issues

- **List Common Problems:** Use the list of issues you have (technical, environmental, interpersonal, unpredictable, etc.) as a starting point.
- **Personalize the List:** Add any personal challenges or past experiences that are relevant.

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### Step 2: Create the Pre-Mortem Framework

- **Divide the Performance into Segments:** For example, pre-performance, beginning, middle, end, and post-performance.
- **Use Visuals:** Draw a simple timeline or series of boxes on a large sheet of paper or a digital tool, representing each segment.

### Step 3: Visualize and Plot Issues

- **Assign Issues to Segments:** Place each identified issue in the segment where it is most likely to occur.
- **Use Icons or Symbols:** Represent each issue with an icon or symbol for quick identification (e.g., a stuck key, a nervous face).

### Step 4: Develop Contingency Plans

- **Brainstorm Solutions:** For each issue, think of possible solutions or preventative measures.
- **Document the Solutions:** Next to each issue, write down or draw the solution.

### Step 5: Consider Interactions and Dependencies

- **Sequence of Events:** Determine if solving one problem might affect another part of the performance.
- **Plan B Scenarios:** Create alternative paths for different scenarios.

### Step 6: Review and Refine

- **Walk Through the Issues:** Imagine going through the entire performance, encountering each issue, and implementing the solutions.
- **Get Feedback:** Share the Pre-Mortem with mentors, peers, or teachers to get their input and refine your strategies.

### Step 7: Practice and Internalize

- **Rehearse with the Storyboard:** During practice sessions, refer to the Pre-Mortem and simulate dealing with the issues.
- **Mental Rehearsal:** Regularly visualize the performance, including handling the potential issues as per your plan.

### Step 8: Keep It Dynamic

- **Update Regularly:** As you gain more experience or encounter new issues, update your storyboard.
- **Stay Flexible:** Remember that the premortem is just a planning help in the design and preparation of your performance. It should help you be prepared to adapt in real-time.