

A photograph of a band performing on stage. The scene is lit with vibrant blue light, creating a moody atmosphere. In the foreground on the left, a person with curly hair, wearing a striped shirt and a dark jacket, is singing into a microphone. In the background, a guitarist in a black leather jacket plays a red electric guitar, and another person on the right is partially visible, also in a leather jacket. The overall composition is dynamic and captures the energy of a live performance.

# Mastering Your Stage Performance

A guide for recording artists

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# Mastering Your Stage Performance

*We will get to the practical parts of mastering our presentation in a minute, but first let me say this. For a Christian artist, we are not performing to a crowd hoping to gain the approval of the audience. We're not here to give them goosebumps enough for them to go and buy our music and spread the word about who we are so we can live a great life. A lot of times we start off with good intentions saying that we will never lose focus of the ministry, but often we get so caught up into the "Performance" and "Production" that we forget those humble beginnings.*

*We are not supposed to be "performing" our music for people. If ministry is truly the focus of our career, understand that we must Presenting the Gospel to people everywhere that we go using our gift of creating music. If we have that mentality, we will never lose focus on our purpose.*

*Our purpose is to guide people to the heart of God through our testimony, by using our gift of creating music to convey that message everywhere we go. If we don't do what we were created to do, in the manner that pleases the creator, then we will be held accountable for what we personally decided to do with the gift that He gave us. With that being said, let's proceed...*



## **Practical Aspects of The Presentation**

What was the first concert experience that moved you? What made it special? What elements caught your attention? Why did you feel that way?

You felt that way because of the energy that they were projecting on to you

## **Goal of the Presentation**

Connect your story with the audience. The music is just the medium.

As an artist, the goal is to be so “In the Moment and Self-expressed” that you present God with complete abandon. If you are holding on to anything there will be a barrier between you and the people you are meant to connect to.

## **How Do You Removing Performance Barriers?**

- ~ Stand for something greater than yourself (Purpose, your “Why”)
- ~ Have Confidence in your message (You were created to deliver it. “Be confident in the gift God gave to you, because he was confident when he gave it to you”)
- ~ Always Be Enthusiastic (Make sure you have Genuine Joy and passion in presenting the message)
  - ~ Focus on who you are speaking to (Talk to Your Audience)
  - ~ Always maintain eye contact (Eyes are the window to their soul)

## **Evaluate Yourself Regularly**

There is a band known as “U2”. These guys are always topping the charts. Why? People say that the performances are almost like religious experiences. Crazy, huh? Let me tell you what sets them apart... they evaluate regularly! They constantly evaluate themselves. In their early years, they were the laughing stock of the industry because they kept videotaping their performances. It’s a wonder how, even until today, they are constantly topping the charts. Even now, they are still evaluating and reevaluating their stage shows.



# How To Evaluate Yourself

On a smart phone or professional camera, record your next presentation. Afterwards, ask these 9 questions as you sit and evaluate your presentation:

## **Were You Centered?**

What were you doing to come from a grounded and centered place?

~ How can you connect with others if you are not connected with yourself? Center yourself. Go to a quiet place to think, pray, and focus on “Why you are there”.

## **How Did You Set the Stage?**

What did you do to create anticipation before you even approached the stage?

~ It can be an instrumental, an acapella, or something creative. Use it to create the atmosphere before you really get into what you are there to do. Nothing drawn out, but simple and effective.

## **Did You Present Without Hesitation?**

How “In the Moment” and Freely Expressed were you?

~ What is your natural movement like? Are you giving your all at every moment? People should be locked in to what you are doing and saying throughout the presentation.

## **How Was Your Eye Contact?**

How was your eye contact with all the individuals in the room?

~ You are not connecting to a group; you are connecting to individuals in the group. Make sure to try and make personal connections with everyone individually. If you can't see anything, connect with different areas in the room. Your focus should be to do your best to give personal attention to every individual.

### **Was Your Energy Focused Externally?**

How are you projecting and receiving energy?

~ It varies depending on the song. You should be externally focused 85% of the time. Some intimate songs require internal focus, but you should be giving all of your energy to the audience. You do that and they will give you theirs in return.

### **How Was Your Vocal Quality?**

Are you doing a complete vocal warm up and taking care of your instrument?

~ Just like artists who play instruments, vocalists must think of their voice like instruments. Yes, practice makes perfect, but perfect practice makes permanent. Practice endurance. If you're trying to go to the next level, you're going to have to present stronger for a longer period.

### **Were Your Song Transitions Fluid?**

What were you saying? What was going on in between the songs that had the experience be fluid and cohesive?

~ Energy should not fall. Figure out, beforehand, how to frame your songs for people to receive it. At the end of the day, you are creating an experience. Transitions should not take forever. If they do, you will lose your crowd every time. It should not take you forever to get from song A to song B. Everything you do from the moment you walk on stage until you leave should be a fluid experience.

### **How Was Your Personal Style?**

Did your look make a statement? Was it appropriate enough for that venue?

~ People look at your style and judge if they want to hear you from the moment you walk into a room or on stage. What is your outfit saying? Is it attracting or repelling the audience? Does it match what you are giving to the people from the stage?

### **How Was Your Quality of Overall Connection?**

Did you achieve what you set out to achieve when you got out of your vehicle? Were you completely satisfied with the way that you presented your message?

~ Look at the presentation as if you were in the audience, not focusing on the mistakes, but just the quality of your presentation. Was your message received as if you were trying to connect with you?





# Mastering Your Stage Performance

## The Message

Realize that the message in your music is the message in your music. So many artists get fatigued at the message so much that they try to “change it up” or “make it fresh” to the audience. What they don’t consider is that there are new people in every crowd that was not there any other times you presented. In every crowd, someone is experiencing you and your ministry for the very first time. God may have brought them to that event to hear what He did in your life, so that He could do the same for them, but you decided to change your message after the eighth time you performed that song, and even though your performance went well, the life God needed you to change with your message was not changed because YOU were tired of the message.

**Practical Example:** An artist friend of mine once told me, after coming from his tour, that he performed his set at an event and was invited to another event that weekend. He showed up at the event and saw that his audience was a complete contrast to the event that he had just days prior. He decided to “change up” his set to give the audience what he thought they wanted. After the event was over, the individual that invited him to the event pulled him to the side and asked him, “Why did you change your set?” Perplexed, my artist friend said, “This was an older crowd, so I decided to change it up a bit and slow everything down.” The guy told him, “That’s not what I invited you here for. I invited you here to liven up the event. I wanted the same energy and passion you had at the other event to be brought here.” My friend learned a very valuable lesson that day.

You work long and hard on perfecting your presentation, so don’t change who you are to try and fit what you think other people want. Maybe, you are exactly what they need already. Keep in mind that the individual, organization, or church that invites you to an event, already knows who you are and what you bring to the table. Don’t ever move away from being who you are, and delivering the message the way you do it.

## Dealing With The DJ

My personal saying in my early career as a recording artist was, “My Kingdom for A Good Soundman!” Going on the road with the different groups that I was blessed to be a part of, I have personally dealt with very unprofessional soundmen. I’ve experienced everything from inexperience, to inattentiveness, to just not wanting to be at an event in the first place. What I have learned in my many experiences, is to never completely rely on a soundman to make or break your presentation. You must anticipate disaster!

I have grown to take a very “hands on” approach to dealing with soundmen. When I arrive to an event, in which I am invited to present, the first person I look for is the soundman. Yes, talk to the host, or whoever your point person is. Be very cordial and ask very politely, “Where is your soundman? We need to have a talk before we get on stage.” My approach was to bring my own equipment (Laptop or Mp3 player, Quarter Inch to RCA Cable, Remote for the Laptop, etc.) I would calmly explain to him that he must look at me the entire time I was on stage. I would be using my body language to give him certain signals to start the music, turn the mic or music up or down, etc.

As a recording artist, you should never verbally assault a soundman from the stage. He has the power to completely destroy your presentation. The best approach is to let him know that you have come prepared for any contingency, and that you both are vital to the execution of the presentation. Once you have them in your corner, they will do everything in their power to help you create the best experience possible.

Also, I would always leave a copy of the latest album with them. They will play your music aloud any chance they get, because you have developed a great relationship with them.





# Mastering Your Stage Performance

## Overwhelming Confidence

Be proud of yourself! As an artist, it takes a lot of guts to stand in front of strangers and bare your soul! Even if your songs have been sung a million times, no one can do what you do like you do it. Take pride in your uniqueness when you stand up on stage. Your fans/supporters want a revelation, a direct connection with you. Don't be afraid of this spotlight, the audience is on your side; they want you to be successful.

Very few people pay to sit in a concert just to see someone fail. Your audience expects you to take their time seriously and do something unique or surprising to hold their attention. If there's one thing you never want to be, is boring.

Recording artists have the capability to move the audience. You know what you like in someone that's on stage in front of you, so play or sing for your audience the way you'd like someone to play or sing for you. Present your song with intensity, with absolute presence. Forget about the mistakes and focus on the overall message.

Sing as if it's the last time you'll ever sing. Play as if they're hearing it for the very first time.

## Always Have Fun

You will not be perfect the first time out. In fact, you will probably never be "perfect", but you will get better.

Whatever you do, make it fun! If people just wanted to hear your songs they'd listen to a CD. They are coming to see you, interact with you, and to show their love of your music. You owe it to your fans/supporters to do the same. Have fun and enjoy yourself. If you love what you do and show it on stage, then the audience will receive that energy and have fun with you as well.



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# MASTERING YOUR STAGE PERFORMANCE

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