

LISTENING & ANALYSIS TOOLS FOR EXTREME PERFORMANCES

TOOL 1: Basic Listening Sheet — “First Encounter”

Use this for your initial listening to ANY recording featuring vocal or instrumental extremity

Recording Information

- **Artist/Performer:** _____
 - **Track Title:** _____
 - **Year/Context:** _____
 - **Duration:** _____
 - **Your listening setup** (headphones/speakers, volume level): _____
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PART A: Immediate Impressions (First Listen)

Don’t analyze yet — just capture your gut reactions:

1. What grabbed your attention first?

- ☐ Roughness/distortion in the sound
- ☐ Physical effort you could hear
- ☐ Unusual timbres or textures
- ☐ Moments where something “broke” or failed
- ☐ Other: _____

7. Emotional/physical response:

How did your body react? (Tension, discomfort, excitement, moved?)

1. One sentence description:

If you had to describe this sound to someone who hasn’t heard it:

PART B: Identifying Extremes (Second Listen)

Listen again. Mark the timestamp whenever you hear:

Type of Extreme	Timestamps	Brief Description
SATURATION (pushed to maximum volume/intensity)		
DEPLETION (running out of breath/energy)		
INTERFERENCE (something interrupting the sound)		
FAILURE (voice cracks, can't track changes)		

PART C: The Body Made Audible (Third Listen)

What physical processes can you HEAR?

Check all that apply and note specific moments:

- ☐ **Breath sounds** (inhales, gasps, running out of air)
 - When: _____ What happens: _____
- ☐ **Vocal strain** (roughness, cracking, pushing beyond range)
 - When: _____ What happens: _____
- ☐ **Physical impact** (hitting, percussion on body/instrument)
 - When: _____ What happens: _____
- ☐ **Muscular fatigue** (sound degrading over time)
 - When: _____ What happens: _____
- ☐ **Instability** (pitch wavering, can't hold steady)
 - When: _____ What happens: _____

PART D: Reflection

1. **Is the extremity intentional or accidental?**
2. Intentional (performer chose this sound)
3. Accidental (limitations of the recording/performance)
4. Both/unclear

Evidence: _____

1. **What does the extremity communicate?**
(emotion, intensity, authenticity, struggle, power, vulnerability?)

1. **Could this be performed "cleanly"?**
2. Yes, the performer has the skill but chooses roughness
3. No, this is at the edge of physical capability
4. Unclear

How do you know? _____