

ABC Boo Boo Band guidance: 3rd Year Students

Fixing BOO BOOS... IT'S WHAT WE DO EVERYDAY.

Enjoy the process. It will sound “interesting” and possibly overwhelming. Make it better, bit by bit.

Boo Boo Q&A:

- Scott, Brian, Alley, Bob, & Bill have all been boo boo band graders.
- You may ask them your boo boo questions.

Tips to Prepare:

- Listen to the piece, a lot. Not just the big picture, but the small details too.
- Study the score for potential common middle school student boo boos.
- Play through each part. The songs are not long. Percussion parts too!

Time Management:

- Manage your 12-minute clock. Don't get stuck wasting minutes on one error.
- Several more obvious boo boos could be only a few measures ahead...
- It's OK to say, “I hear the error, but I can't find the solution. Let's moving on.”
 - Come back to it if you have time at the end.
- Avoid playing through the entire piece top to bottom without stopping.
 - You won't remember every mistake you heard, and it wastes time.
- Make sure you DO get to the end of the piece before time runs out!
- There will be a digital clock indicating time remaining in your rehearsal.

Rehearsal Strategies:

- Conduct the band and use your ears first!
- Don't bury your head in the score hunting for all the possible boo boos that you've studied and circled. Just listen!
- Conduct with a baton.
 - Conducting with a pencil is discouraged.
- Look around the ensemble when conducting.
 - Look and listen for correct percussion implements.
 - Look for correct fingerings for the key you're in.
- Run a section, hear the mistake(s), and then give the correction.
- Isolate and rehearse sections by melody, countermelody, harmony, & percussion groupings rather than, “May I hear just the 1st flutes? 2nds? Now, just the oboes, 1st clarinets, etc.” That takes too much time.

The Boo Boos:

- Don't expect musicians to make boo boos overtly obvious in trying to "help" conductors. That only creates more boo boos that are not the actual error.
 - Ex. A trumpet friend has, "play low "D" on trumpet is sharp" for a boo boo. To "help" the trumpeter plays loud and horribly sharp. The conductor then hears a wrong note, poor tone, horrible balance, can't hear the rest of the band boo boos, and attempts to fix those errors instead, thus never hearing nor fixing the actual common pitch tendency of that trumpet note.
- The boo boos will be typical errors that middle school bands, or young high school bands make.
- Let me say that again, the boo boos will be typical errors middle school or young high school students make.
- There are no "tricks."
 - Think back to the boo boos of your first two years. They are all legitimate and common errors.
- The band is not trying to trick you. ABC is not trying to trick you. You could simply be giving the incorrect info and making the issue worse.
 - Ex. "Trumpets you're flat on that low "D," lip it up" ...and it gets worse, and worse and then you break the trumpets.
 - Ex. "Clarinets, your throat tone "A" is flat, bring that pitch up.

Your Commentary:

Avoid giving vague, unhelpful, and generic corrections like:

- "Check the key, flutes."
- "Watch that note there, tuba."
- "We're not together, watch! Percussion, look!"
- "It's out of tune, listen!"
- "That doesn't sound good, trumpets."
- Always provide specific solutions that will identify the boo boos and provide a quick solution to fix a MS student.
- Productive solutions could include:
 - "Snare drum, we missed the piano dynamic marking. Lower your stick heights and play closer to the edge to play softer."
 - "Horns, you're missing the accented notes in measures 1-5. Please tongue a bit firmer and decay the dynamic of each note."
 - "Altos, you are tonguing every note and missing the slurs on bar 34. Only tongue the first note of each slurred group."
 - "Clarinets, our throat tone "A" is sharp in pitch. Remember to lower the pitch by closing fingers on your right hand."
 - "Euphoniums, we're in the key of F, please use second valve "E" natural on measure 12, 14, & 18."
 - "Timpani, for a smoother traditional roll, please use timpani mallets, not snare sticks. And use a single stroke roll and not a buzz roll."

What if Boo Boos Do Not Go Away After a Correction?

- You likely didn't give the correct remedy, or you identified the wrong instrument or musician.
- The band is NOT trying to trick you. ABC is NOT trying to trick you.
 - You could simply be giving incorrect info and making the boo boo worse.
 - Ex. "Trumpets you're flat on that low "D," lip it up" ...and it gets worse. "Trumpets, you are flat, push in, and lip up," ...and worse, and then you break the trumpets.
 - Ex. "Clarinets, your throat tone "A" is flat, bring that pitch up."
 - Ex. "Horns, you are playing the wrong rhythm. It is two quarters, a dotted eighth sixteenth, and two eighth notes. Let's try again." (It does not get better.) That could be because the issue is one horn was told to rush. Thus, it's a tempo issue, not a rhythmic issue.
 - Listen critically!
- Band members will not give a big obvious "ohhhhh" when the correction is given. The musicians will do what you tell them. If you think it's better, move on.
 - A corrected boo boo will sound significantly better to discerning ears.

Avoid the Following:

- Attempting to preemptively "fix" things before you hear the band play.
 - This includes:
 - Reminding musicians of every single accidental in the music before you play the music.
 - Reading aloud every single circled, highlighted marking, and written note that you have handwritten in the score that could potentially be a boo boo.
 - Listing every pitch tendency, of every note, in every section, that could be a boo boo.
 - Asking the percussion to hold up their sticks/mallets – they are not under arrest!

Prohibited in Boo Boo Band:

- Walking into the ensemble as boo boos are written in the parts.
- Metronomes
- Cell phones
- Tuners
 - Tip: use mallets / flute / oboe / euphonium etc., for a reference pitch.
 - This helps identify wrong notes, poor pitch, incorrect partials, etc.

Grading:

- There are around 17 ish boo boos.
 - There could be more, there could be less.
- It's not likely to get all boo boos in the time given, but some HAVE done it!
- We believe correcting 12 ish boo boos is a good score in this example.
- Correcting 8 boo boos or more would be passing in this example.
 - Again, there could be more or less boo boos. Thus, the passing grade could be more, or less.
- You can earn partial credit for hearing a boo boo and what section made it, even if you cannot provide the exact remedy.
- You can earn extra credit for identifying an honest unintentional error and providing the remedy.

Brian Peter