

Music for All Philosophy Statement: **USE OF AMPLIFICATION AND ELECTRONIC ENHANCEMENT OF BAND SONORITY**



Music for All is committed to expanding the role of music and all arts in education and heightening the public's appreciation of the value of all arts education.

We believe music and all arts are core to students' education and must be available to **all students**. We are faithful to a high standard of integrity, **a strong ethical framework**, and a deep and abiding sense of respect for all with whom we interact.

Bands of America nurtures the pursuit of music-making by creating and providing **quality educational experiences for every participant**. We believe that competition is a great motivator and provides substantial opportunities for learning life lessons.

The essence of competition is to strive for performance excellence and to be **held accountable for learning**. **If the focus is on the learning**, the competitive climate will be valuable throughout one's life. On the other hand, the negativity associated with "winning at all costs" will be a detriment to personal growth.

Music for All's mission and core values support the principles of **fair play, including professional and collegial behavior**. Bands of America competition policies and guidelines are explicit regarding the expectations for all stakeholders, including performers, educators, and evaluators.

The following are examples of the parameters we believe all competing ensembles should adhere to:

- All music from traditional wind and percussion instruments or electronic instruments **must be performed by a student live and in real time**.

- The use of **sampled, prerecorded, or sequenced sounds of woodwind and/or brass instruments is not permitted**.

Advancements in audio technology have created possibilities for participating ensembles to adapt musical performances in such a way as to minimize the involvement of every performer within the ensemble and showcase the talents of only a few. We acknowledge that, for artistic reasons, such adaptations may be appropriate and enhance the overall presentation. However, when **amplification of only specific individuals during full ensemble passages** leads to an intentional misrepresentation of the band sound as a whole, the instructional leadership has strayed from the core values and beliefs stated above. By enhancing the performance of only a few players, such misrepresentation of acoustic qualities is unacceptable and must be self-regulated by the participating bands.

In consideration of the Bands of America philosophy, the following was implemented for the 2023 BOA season and beyond:

- Amplifying individuals through a soundboard during tutti sections leads to an intentional misrepresentation of what is being performed by the total ensemble. **This misrepresentation of acoustic quality by enhancing a few individuals is unacceptable.**
- Soloists and featured ensembles may use microphones during a feature section but must be muted from amplification when not being featured.
- Where a participating band has a limited number of performers (e.g., one player to a part), the use of individual microphones is acceptable.

Bands of America has always operated with the philosophy that the priority is an educational (more than a competitive) experience. We expect our adjudicators to be mindful of philosophical perspectives while providing the **best possible educational experience for all participants** through their role as

evaluators. Similarly, we encourage all educators to take a lead role in **prioritizing the educational process** when planning and designing shows, including determining any means of amplification, as well as how any sound reinforcement or manipulation of sound will be executed. Together, we must demonstrate effective methods that showcase excellent teaching and performance and not misrepresent the ensemble character by using artificial methods/devices that create a false depiction of the band sonority.

Bands of America supports all forms of creativity; however, music judges and even visual judges need to hear an accurate representation of an ensemble's sound and quality. While BOA approves the use of electronics, directors should ensure that any combination of acoustic and electronic sounds is what they want the audience, including judges, to experience.

Bands of America Adjudicators will:

- be advised to **recognize and reward the acoustic qualities of the wind ensemble** over electronically produced sonority for prolonged periods of time
- **consider any extraneous sounds when providing commentary and making ranking and rating decisions**. This includes humming from electronic equipment, audio feedback, and acoustic sounds obscured by over-amplification or poor fidelity.

The Bands of America Judge Administration Team recommends these guidelines and philosophy with support of the BOA Advisory Committee.

Learn more about participating in Bands of America Championships at marching.musicforall.org

