

Cleaning 101 “Tips for cleaning your marching percussion section” By David England

Problem #1 - Too Loud

- Are they playing the right dynamics? If not...well, you know what to do.
- Are they positioned poorly in the drill? (i.e. in front or to the side of the winds) If so consider a drill change, if you can't, then see below.
- Can you zone it out? (Edge, ½ way) Changed zones work wonders
- Subtract then add players. (i.e. only one or two snares then add on as needed)
- Try different implements. (puffs, felts, piccolo sticks)
- Try muffling. (by hand, with patches/foam, with tape)
- Tacet. (just don't play there anymore)

Problem #2 - Not Together

- Is everyone playing the correct part? Check everyone.
- Is everyone at the same tempo...throughout? Always use a metronome. Always.
- Are the performers listening to one another or going solo?
- Is the part being approached the same in regards to heights and touch? Center player as opposed to end players?

Problem #3 - Not Clean

- Is the quality of sound the same player to player? Check everyone.
- Are all of the players listening? Do they know what to listen to?
- Is the part balanced from player to player? Segment to segment? Check everyone.
- Is the rhythmic and tempo interpretation of the part the same from player to player? Segment to segment? Check everyone.
- Is there a good connection between the segments of the battery? (play in different drill forms)
- Is the tuning the same from instrument to instrument?

Things to try if something is not clean:

- Play the skeleton of the part
- Play one hand's part only
- Add on players (Start in the center or farthest back)
- Slow it down and then speed it up, push past the actual tempo