Opinion

Benson Boone's career is wasted on empty lyrics

By GINA LORUSSO
Managing Editor

Very few music artists rise to fame as quickly as Benson Boone did. Sure, it's inspiring to see someone making an impact in their industry, but when they're actively ruining their potential with songs like "Mystical Magical," it's not hard to see where his career is headed.

That's right. The pits.

After leaving season 19 of "American Idol" to focus on his career, Boone turned to TikTok to build on his singing and songwriting. This led him to sign a record deal with Imagine Dragons lead singer Dan Reynolds' record company, Night Street Records, in 2021.

His debut single, "Ghost Town," was an instant success, capturing his powerful vocal range and unique rasp. Although I'm not a fan of his, I have to admit he did a pretty good job with this record. At just 19 years old, he was gaining global recognition and was on track to become a big name.

That quickly faltered when he began releasing songs like "Mystical Magical" and "Beautiful Things" — two of my least favorite songs in the history of all time. First of all, "Beautiful Things" has to be the loudest possible combination of vocals and instrumentals ever, making my ears bleed every time I hear it. Second of all, "Mystical Magical" is just plain stupid.

The lyrics, "Moonbeam ice cream, taking off your blue jeans/ Dancing at the movies, 'cause it feels so/ Mystical, magical/ Oh, baby, 'cause once you know, once you know/ My love is so mystical, magical" are so asinine that it has become a trend on social media to randomly burst out singing it in public places.

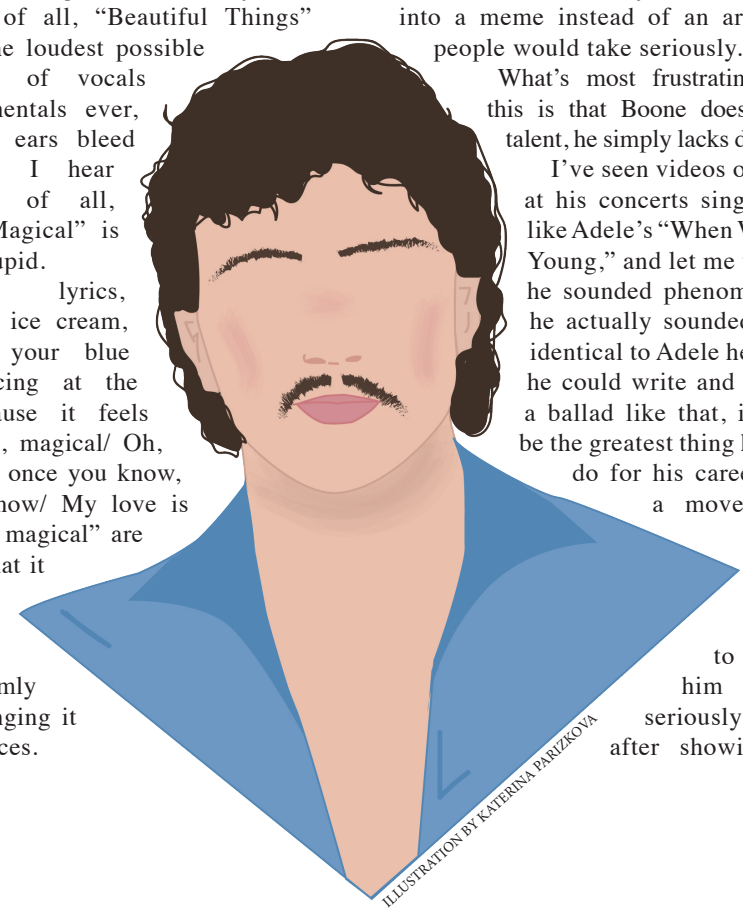


ILLUSTRATION BY KATERINA PARIZKOVA

Boone unintentionally turned himself into a meme instead of an artist that people would take seriously.

What's most frustrating about this is that Boone doesn't lack talent, he simply lacks direction.

I've seen videos of Boone at his concerts singing hits like Adele's "When We Were Young," and let me tell you, he sounded phenomenal — he actually sounded nearly identical to Adele herself. If he could write and produce a ballad like that, it would be the greatest thing he could do for his career. Such a move would push people to take him more seriously, even after showing that he's not the most proficient when it comes to songwriting.

Boone needs to learn to take a risk and stray from the surface-level lyrics he's currently belting and backflipping to. People identify with artists not only through their beats but their lyrics as well, and right now, he's giving his audience nothing to hold onto or resonate with.

A long-lasting career is built on substance and depth, and if Boone keeps recycling the same shallow lines, he will continue to be an internet joke. The sad part is that it doesn't have to be this way for him — he has an immense amount of potential, he just isn't digging deep enough.

As of right now, it's impossible to see Boone's value when the first thing that pops into your mind after hearing his name is not actually how much talent he has, but how brainless his music is.

He sings like a star, but writes like a clown.

So until he figures out how to make timeless tracks, his career will continue to be the punchline to a silly joke rather than a legitimate legacy.

Stop paying extra for torture

The cruelty behind foie gras

By VIVIAN GAGE
Copy Editor

The gourmet food industry gets a free pass for animal cruelty, and that needs to change.

At a Michelin-star restaurant, where one meal is worth an entire paycheck for some, it is reasonable to expect quality food that was planned meticulously and tastes delicious. One should not expect ducks with tubes down their throats being force-fed until their bodies give out.

Enter: foie gras.

The dish, which translates to 'fatty liver' in French, has a long history, dating back to ancient Egypt. Today, it is eaten all over the world, but is most popular in France. According to foie gras lovers and distributors, it has a rich taste and "stands as a hallmark of culinary excellence."

Recently, top chefs from around the world were asked to prepare a dish incorporating foie gras in the 2025 Bocus d'Or, a cooking competition which is widely considered the "Olympics of cooking." Ironically, the French team won.

The highly coveted Bocus d'Or, which was livestreamed this year, helped to push rhetoric that the dish is still relevant, delicious and valuable in the gourmet world, keeping the hellish industry alive.

Simultaneously, animal rights activists pushed back with full force.

Organizations like PETA have spoken out against the cruelty. Animal Equality, an international animal protection organization, has staged countless protests "on a global mission to end the force-feeding of ducks and geese for foie gras." The Animal Legal Defense Fund, a nonprofit organization, is currently working to ban the sale of it in New York City, again.

Their anger is justified.

To create livers fatty enough to be labeled a delicacy, male ducks or geese are force-fed grain multiple times a day through metal or plastic tubes inserted down their throats.

This process, known as gavage, is extremely harmful to the birds' health and often results in injuries, which go untreated. Such injuries include brain damage, bruising or perforation of the bird's esophagus, broken bones and beaks and painful swelling of the abdomen; the result of a ten times increase in liver size.

Producers begin force-feeding when the birds are just 10-14 weeks of age, according to a 2012 paper by Agribusiness Reports. In the first feeding, around 0.4 lb of food is shoved down the bird's throat. By the last feeding, 12 to 15 days later, it's 1 lb or more, "injected in as little as 2 seconds."

Because only male birds are used, all the female chicks are either killed immediately or shipped elsewhere to be raised for meat.

The gavage process is sickening to think about, and most people, after hearing about its production, would agree that it should be banned.

If only that worked.

In 2022, New York City's law prohibiting the sale of foie gras, Local Law 202, was supposed to take effect. Instead, La Belle Farms and Hudson Valley Foie Gras, two foie gras farms in New York, sued to challenge the ban, and in 2024, succeeded.

Through the use of legal loopholes and the support of famous chefs, over 1,000 New York City restaurants got to keep the unique-tasting foie gras on the menu, and farms got to keep producing it, "protecting farmers' right to make a living."

"Foie gras has been a delicacy for thousands of years," said Daniel Boulud, a famed Michelin-starred restaurateur and foie gras advocate, during an interview with The New York Post. "There's bigger issues in America to worry about than foie gras," he said.

He might be right. There are bigger issues than foie gras. However, when we allow small, preventable cruelties to prevail, we open up cracks in our moral compass. Turning a blind eye because fatty liver just tastes too good is the cowardly way out.

Foie gras is still eaten for many reasons. Number one is that delicacies, such as foie gras, are indicators of class and wealth. They cater to the rich and those pretending to be.

The dish is ridiculously expensive. For example, a pound of the liver from Hudson Valley Foie Gras costs $65. In comparison, a pound of filet mignon ranges from $20 to $45. It is, undoubtedly, a delicacy only a few can afford, which is exactly why it is still around. The rich, along with gourmet enthusiasts, are quite literally paying to get away with torture, and it needs to stop.

If the dish's past hadn't been littered with royals and aristocrats, there would be no hesitation in banning it. Current foie gras lovers would oppose the blatant abuse (at least publicly) if it weren't for the centuries of luxury and indulgence associated with it.

This is concerning. When society makes exceptions for abuse on account of history, communities become stagnant, and progress starts feeling optional. When we let wealthy people get away with mistreatment because they can afford it… well, we've seen what happens.

Banning foie gras (successfully) throughout the country won't stop all animal abuse, or end the class divide, or usher in world peace. But it would be a small step in the right direction, and we are running out of reasons not to take it.

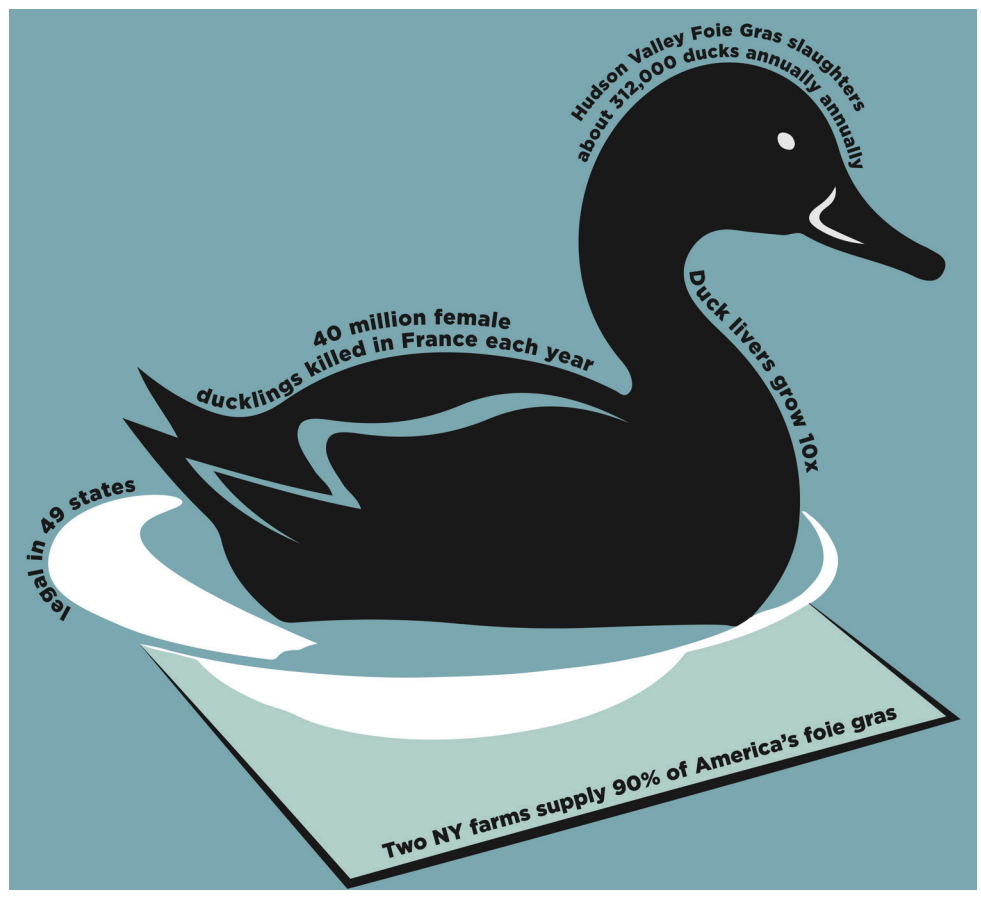


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