

4 Ways to Improve Ensemble Performance

1. Practice! • Practice More (At Least 20 Minutes Per Day)

- Practice More Consistently (Every Day)
- Practice More Efficiently: If you can play everything but 3 notes, practice those 3 notes first. Practice slowly before speeding up. Practice the difficult sections first. Don't practice things you can already play perfectly!

2. Focus! • Concentrate on *every note* played in rehearsal in performance. Make it the best note possible.

- Begin focusing during warm-ups and keep focus through the end of rehearsal.
- *Use every second of rehearsal effectively!* When director is rehearsing other sections, mentally practice your own music (fingerings, rhythms, etc.) Always think about how you can make your playing better. (Don't do math, English, etc. homework during music class – ever!)

3. Watch! • Look at conductor at least 2 times every measure in every piece.

- Listen to what conductor says to all sections during rehearsal. It may affect you also.
- Rely on conductor for feedback on ensemble performance during rehearsals. The conductor is the only one who can evaluate the entire ensemble, especially for blend, balance, and precision issues.

4. Listen!

- Listen to every note you play, *always*.
- Listen and match others in your section. Make sure you can always hear the people sitting next to you.
- Listen for intonation always. Listen to the lowest instrument that you can hear.
- Listen for ensemble precision: where and how to start and end *every note*. Make sure you are matching note length with others in your section, and through the entire ensemble.
- Listen for blend and balance. Make sure you always know where the melody or melodic line is (which section/instrument/player), in every measure of every piece. If you don't know...ask!