

Outcome:
Ensemble Performance

Statement: Students will demonstrate technical and musical expertise in their ensemble performances.

Description:

One way in which students demonstrate their technical expertise is by learning to play together with others in an ensemble. This is one of the most useful skills a musician can have. Learning to play or sing “in tune” not just with oneself, but also with those around oneself is one a major challenge. Westmont ensembles have consistently demonstrated through concert reviews and recordings of their performances that they are proficient in this area. An area that demonstrates musical expertise has to do with corporate interpretation (i.e. one must sometimes subjugate the individual musical intuitions and reactions to a composition to mesh with the whole), rhythmic sensitivity (slowing, speeding up as one unit, not 56 individuals), and dynamic awareness (getting louder and softer together) and tonal unity (sounding as one voice or instrument rather than individual soloists). Through weekly rehearsals, these skills are learned with greater nuance until the performance when the best efforts of the students are put on display. For this reason, we felt it was important to include as one of our major departmental goals. NASM assessment procedures for repertoire are also adopted for assessment of this standard.

Benchmark:

The benchmark for expertise in performance comes from evaluation of the Christmas Concert by outside panelists with scores averaging 4 or higher (out of a possible five) in addition to written comments.

Results:

Performance is assessed in reviews of each concert performance held with the ensemble, both from an experiential level and in listening formats, as well as through the comments of outside evaluators. Thus far, our method of determining the student’s learning and demonstrating fluency in ensemble performance has been satisfactory for NASM and we are pleased with the results.