

Clinic: Making Connections between Private Studios and Public Schools

presented by Sally O'Reilly and Gwen Armwood

reported by Karin Boyce

The second session of the October 19 MNSOTA clinic addressed making a connection between the private studio and the public school orchestra class. The presenters were Sally O'Reilly of the University of Minnesota and Gwen Armwood of the

Wayzata School District. The discussion centered primarily on Ms. O'Reilly's and Ms. Armwood's experience as colleagues in Louisiana and Minnesota, and the way in which they formed a relationship between their respective university private studio and high school orchestra. The following summarizes the main points of the discussion.

Communication is vital among teachers; once a channel is opened, a sharing and exchange of information can take place. Often what works well in one setting may be incorporated or adapted to the other. Take teacher expectations, for example. If the teacher expectations are clearly laid down in one locale, they can certainly be followed through and upheld in the other as well. One simply need be made aware of such expectations. Consistency is key.

Instruction in either setting must strive toward developing accountability,

in effect "teaching the students to teach themselves," to take responsibility for the way they play. Some specific tools that are useful in both orchestra and the private studio are: a metronome, a dual-speed tape recorder (so students can listen at half speed), and a video camera. In the case of the latter two, the recorded material serves to reinforce critical evaluations, as well as supplying invaluable feedback as students observe and actively monitor their own playing.

Teachers should seek out each other's knowledge and expertise across the public/private domains often. As teach-

ers, we know how important it is to gain validation in the work that we do with our students. We can reinforce our strengths as educators and instructors if we make the effort to get connected.



Sally O'Reilly and Gwen Armwood

Karin Boyce teaches violin at MacPhail Center for the Arts and her home studio. She received her degrees from Luther College and the University of Texas.

She is a former member of the Corpus Christi Symphony Orchestra, the Victoria Symphony Orchestra, the Waco Symphony Orchestra and others.