

All-State: Efficient Rehearsal Technique

presented by Elliot Del Borgo

MNSOTA was delighted to host Elliot Del Borgo—composer, pedagogue, consultant, clinician, lecturer and adjudicator—as our keynote presenter at the All-State Workshop. The sessions summary that follows was compiled from participants who took the workshop for graduate credit.

Elliot Del Borgo was resolute that the teacher should quickly pace the rehearsal. He said to let the students play. He believes an orchestra teacher should talk less and let the students play more. He also believes that a teacher should not stop and stare at the score. Instead, a teacher should keep the students engaged constantly. Del Borgo thinks that every rehearsal should have a routine. The same warm ups should be done at every rehearsal but in different keys.

Del Borgo said to only put your hands up when the orchestra is going to play. Often teachers put their hands up and then get sidetracked talking about something. This teaches students not to pay attention to the conductor's signal to put their instru-

ments up and be ready to play.

According to Del Borgo, when preparing a piece you should, like a painter, outline first and then fill in the detail second. He believes in the gestalt approach: "sketch, add detail, final product." We want the entire piece perfected at one time.

Elliot briefly discussed his progression as a composer—first writing with the audience in mind, then with the students in mind, and then finally the teacher in mind. His ability to think about what it might feel like to be the cellist or violist is sometimes very evident in the interest of the parts that he writes! He is currently writing with the teacher in mind—what does it mean to be that person working with the music and

students for eight weeks before a concert?

His enthusiasm for teaching as an overarching ideal appeared throughout his presentation. He seemed genuinely interested in the success of the students and the teachers, and in maintaining interest for students. He reflected that our success as teachers is measured by how well the orchestra plays—so our job is to make our students play better so that we can argue from a position of strength. He suggested that orchestra teachers have an inferiority complex, but we shouldn't; we have the best literature, the best sound quality, and the best technique. Our expectations of students should be high. †