

All-State: Ten “Easy” Ways to Immediately Improve Your Orchestra

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 featured as our main clinician for the 2010 MNSOTA All-State Teachers Workshop. He went through his ten “easy” (complicated) ways to immediately improve your orchestra David Letterman “Top Ten” style:

10. Play easier music. He said that the students should be able to make actual music out of the sheet in front of them. You shouldn't have to stop more than 3 to 5 times throughout the first reading of the piece.
9. Have the students bow half way between the bridge and fingerboard. For some kids this is a definite struggle and needs to be continually addressed.
8. Sing at rehearsal. It helps our intonation. When we play we are substituting the singing voice.
7. Warm-up! Warm ups should be something the students can do from memory to “focus on a perfect sound.” They only should be 5-7 minutes (quick!). Use singing, scales, bowings, and rhythms.
6. Play like a band. Play with a rhythmic and articulated drive with a full sound!
5. Play lots of Baroque music. It helps develop the solidity of string playing.
4. Rehearse and read at concert tempo. This helps expose problem areas and it shows students how it will be at the performance.
3. Repetition is your best friend. You want your students to run on autopilot at the concert.
2. Play music you love. If the conductor/teacher loves it, it will show through to the students and their enthusiasm for it will grow as well.
1. Play lots of Del Borgo! ☺ †