Colonel’s Book Club – Let’s Get Started!

In my ongoing work with several wonderful young music educators, we decide what books that we will read together and then discuss those during a telephone or Skype session. One of them recommended that I expand that circle to include all SBO readers. Every three months I will feature a book that I believe will be helpful and interesting to music educators of all ages. Once the article is posted on SBO, I will post it on my business Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/THPMusicLLC/> or just go to Facebook and search for THP Music) where we can then start a discussion about that book. No one has to do a book report! This would just be a discussion among colleagues that could include what you got out of it, what you agreed/disagreed with, how you can apply it in your work and/or life. These are just a few examples.

I will basically alternate books about leadership, learning, or other useful topics with books about music. Why leadership? Well, hopefully all educators are leaders, but we are unique. While the academic teacher is basically going to impart knowledge, in contrast, we are striving to form a high functioning team. Also, as you progress through your career, you may find yourself in a leadership position as Director of Bands or Orchestras or as a department chair or fine arts supervisor. Hopefully, you have worked for gifted leaders in those positions but that’s not always the case. Don’t you wish they had spent some time developing their leadership skills before becoming your boss?

In following book club articles, we will discuss leadership and learning and how those things impact our ability to not only teach but to produce the high functioning team. But for this first book, let’s focus on you as a leader.

We will start with “Why Should Anyone Be Led by You?: What It Takes To Be An Authentic Leader,” by Robert Goffee and Gareth Jones. The reason I like this as a starting point in discussing leadership is because it focuses on how you can improve your awareness of who you are as a person and how you present yourself to those you hope to inspire and motivate.

Too many leadership texts in my opinion are written at the CEO level when the reality is, most of us are quite a bit lower on the leadership ladder. I think this book does a good job of addressing how each of us can improve our effectiveness as leaders within that small slice of the organization that we can influence.

Next month’s article will be one that many have asked for. It will be titled “Teaching the American March.” I will share some sources and some techniques (that I’ve stolen from others!) to help your ensemble properly perform the most important but often the most neglected part of the band repertoire.