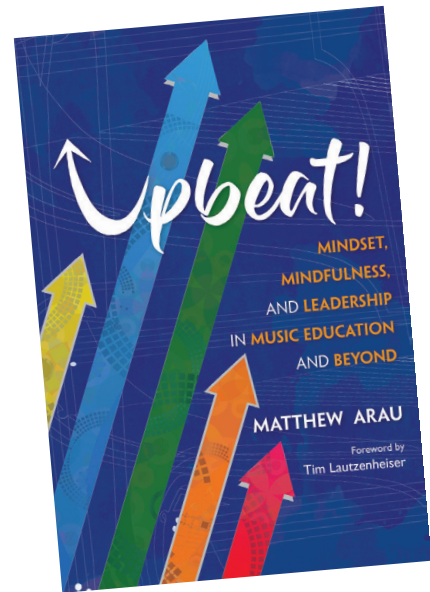


Reviewed by Emily Crowe Sobotko

Upbeat! Mindset, Mindfulness, and Leadership in Music Education and Beyond

Written by Matthew Arau
GIA Publications, 2022



60

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has been a highly prioritized practice in the world of education, especially since the global pandemic. Teachers are responding to their students' high stress levels, anxiety, and trauma while also facing their own battles with stress and burnout. It is a difficult time for everyone in education to feel grounded in the joy and passion that brought us to the teaching profession in the first place. To take care of our students' social emotional learning *and* their music learning, we must take care of ourselves as teachers first. Our own social emotional care is crucial to refilling our cups in order to pour into our music-making communities.

Dr. Matthew Arau's book, *Upbeat! Mindset, Mindfulness, and Leadership in Music Education and Beyond*, is a wonderful resource that encourages music educators to rethink the way we build leadership in ourselves and our students to inspire others to unlock their full potential. The impetus for this book came from Arau's own teaching experience during a few challenging years in his band classroom where student investment, general morale, and

musical outcomes were at an all-time low. Out of sheer survival for his personal well-being and the well-being of his program, Arau began to teach leadership to his band students. The turnaround in his program inspired a new approach of infusing leadership within music instruction that developed into global teacher workshops and his book.

The book is divided into three sections: "Ignite!" "Inspire!" "Lead!" Chapters in each section feature related topics, such as reframing our use of language. In Chapter 2, Arau demonstrates how to incorporate gratitude, enthusiasm, and treasure (also known as The Power of G.E.T.), while using mindfulness and a growth mindset in the classroom and developing actionable leadership within the music community. In each chapter readers receive applicable frameworks and techniques to put the focus into action. At the end of the chapter, he includes thoughtful journaling questions, quotes related to the chapter's topic, and teacher-written vignettes that share how applying these techniques, practices, and mindsets have affected their work in music education. Hearing stories from other teachers on how the *Upbeat* approach influenced their teaching and their students provides an inspirational transition between chapters. I found the book to be easy to assimilate and complete in a few sittings. Readers will want to keep pencils, highlighters, and sticky notes handy to flag or mark certain pages.

The applicable frameworks broken down in the various chapters focus on how to build personal sustainability and teach leadership to students, which will bring life and longevity to our programs.

Although Arau’s influence for this book came from his experience as a high school band director, the principles of mindset, attitude, language, and developing leadership work in every classroom setting. Arau focuses on developing an *Upbeat* approach to our work to foster collaborative, inclusive leadership that embraces everyone. The applicable frameworks broken down in the various chapters focus on how to build personal sustainability and teach leadership to students, which will bring life and longevity to our programs. In my work as a coach for other music teachers, I have found that profound, meaningful instruction is built around intentional classroom culture. The approach Arau outlines to infuse mindfulness, student leadership, trust, and community-driven core values creates an overall *Upbeat* culture that pays off immediately.

Upbeat! was designed and developed to prioritize the SEL in music education our teachers deserve to feel empowered in their profession and equipped to engage their students’ musical and personal development. To launch the third section of the book, Arau states “Leadership is a skill that can be learned and taught just like any other skill.” In addition to teaching literacy,

composition, technique, singing, and other musical skills, prioritizing leadership within Orff Schulwerk-based instruction gives students permission to invest in their classroom communities. Blending leadership with the Orff Schulwerk approach will continue to inspire the community-driven creativity our students need to unlock their fullest music and human potential.

Upbeat! Mindset, Mindfulness, and Leadership in Music Education and Beyond is sure to become a valuable resource for developing strong leaders in music education and for supporting and uplifting music teachers around the world, regardless of experience. Keep this book on your desk and revisit its various chapters when you need inspiration, guidance, or a new idea to help you through the challenges the school year brings.

EMILY CROWE SOBOTKO is the director of music programs for Uncommon Schools, a charter school network based in the Northeast. In her role, she oversees the growth and development of Uncommon’s music programs and coaches music teachers in Brooklyn, New York. She previously founded an Orff Schulwerk-driven elementary program in East Flatbush, Brooklyn. Emily is an active member in the New York City AOSA Chapter and is currently completing her Level III coursework.

INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Anderson University	62	San José State University	7
AOSA Professional Development Conference	inside back cover	SMU	27
Arizona State University	32	Sonor	inside front cover
Beatin’ Path	37	Studio 49	2
George Mason University	21	Teaching With Orff	5
LACAOSA (Los Angeles)	12	University of Hartford	59
Music is Elementary.	21	University of St. Thomas	19
Music Rhapsody	43	University of Kentucky	39
NNJOSA (New Jersey)	56	West Chester University	15
Peripole	back cover	West Music	9
Portland Orff.	54	Yamaha	1