

Ask Mike!

Stressed about an upcoming gig? Work got you singing the blues? Local 47 member Michael I. Goode can help!



In my last column, in July, we talked about how to pace yourself on your gigs and your life, and the importance of standing up graciously on the gig when you are the subject of abusive behavior. Today, we are going to talk about not feeling like just a number, and the importance of doing master classes if asked.

Q: Dear Mr. Goode, sometimes I get overwhelmed as a violinist in the orchestra, and feel that I am just one of the herd. I love my orchestra job, but I need to do something to differentiate myself from being just another one of the sheep after so many years. Any suggestions?

A: The first thing you can do is write an anger letter that you never send, like I have mentioned in this column before, so that you can think clearly of what it might be that you like to do most outside of playing in the violin section in the orchestra. Write something like, "I like my job, but I am angry and frustrated

that I can't seem to feel unique in it." This will give you clarity in your mind and remove any blockages that are keeping you from thinking of new, unique options. Keep the letter private and uncensored, and tear it up when you are done. Use pen and paper to write it, not the computer.

Once you have done this, ideas will come to you about the violin that will put the individuality and excitement back in your career. Perhaps you teach privately, but not enough; maybe you will want to conduct a local orchestra, or to acquire an adjunct faculty position. Or maybe you want to do workshops or clinics at local schools, or teach beginning students, or to start your own traveling string quartet. Some players start their own publishing company for their instrument. You might even be interested in doing some instrument repair.

One of my colleagues in the Chicago Reading Orchestra, Fred Spector, former esteemed Chicago Symphony violinist, started a hobby many years ago collecting string mutes. He now has one of the largest collections of mutes for violin and other strings in the world and gives talks about this all over the country. You never know what you might come up

with that will end up making you feel more than just a number in your career. Good luck!


Q: Recently, I have been approached to do a jazz workshop on saxophone by a local university. Although I play for a living and travel around the world, I just never have done this kind of thing and frankly, I am scared to death. But I always enjoy a challenge and want to try to do it. Any suggestions?

A: Once again, starting with an anger letter to remove the blocks that are causing the stage fright and get you to see why you are really afraid would help a lot. Write that first, like I mentioned above — private, uncensored, tear it up when done, and don't send it to anyone, of course. You could start with something like, "I am angry that I cannot see clearly why I am so afraid of doing this workshop..." and then keep writing from there. This will give you good insight where the sources of fear and blockages are and help you realize that there is really nothing to be afraid of about doing this workshop.

Call the school, talk to the person in charge, make sure they have anything


you need: audio equipment, wipe off board, copies of sheet music you might need, student volunteers on piano, bass and drums; and just go to the venue and just be yourself! You would be surprised how many people will learn a lot from you if you just play and tell your story. Focus on telling your story and playing, how you first learned the horn, who your teachers were, play some of the most important licks for the class. Then after 20 to 30 minutes make sure you open up your talk for questions to get your audience involved. They will love it! Also, if you are going to perform at this workshop, just check with the union first to make sure you know what kind of contract you should sign for such an event so that you and any other players at it get compensated fairly. Have fun!

Send your questions to: Ask Mike!, Trumpetworks Press, P.O. Box 11574, Marina del Rey, CA 90295 or you can check out my website at www.trumpetworkspress.com and see information on my book, "Stage Fright in Music Performance and Its Relationship to the Unconscious" and my upcoming book, "Your True Self." All names are confidential and will not be published. © 2009



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> Vice President's Report *cont'd from page 3*

our Referral Service website. Some of you may have experienced a glitch or two, and we have been very involved, identifying glitches and finding fixes. Not to say that this process has been easy, or swift, but we hear the cry and we are addressing it. I am confident that with the continued support of our Executive Board, officers, and you the membership, we will make significant strides in these areas and will make our site all that it should be. The Referral Service Ad Hoc Committee, Member Services and our computer staff have been very active and very involved and I want to thank them for their hard work, past, present and future! Since day one in office I have been working with our administration and staff to modernize our operations, reduce redundancy, cut costs, cut waste and improve our service to the membership. We have made progress, but there is much more work that needs to be done. I should note that nothing would get done if it wasn't for all of the dedicated people on our team.

We have also been busy trying to organize non-union musicians and venues. We are seeing some signs of hope, but there are big obstacles to making jobs union. We can only do so much; we need our members to help too. Don't take no for an answer when trying to get a contract on your gig — don't be pushy, offer the "soft sell."

Employers should understand why you'd like medical coverage; they should empathize with you needing to retire one day. Employers should appreciate that a union contract ensures clear terms of employment, and that a union contract provides you with scale wages and benefits. Many of you have been successful, and I congratulate you for your efforts. It's like the bumper sticker says: "Live Better, Work Union."

I had the pleasure to attend a health coverage summit at the SAG Foundation recently. The purpose of the summit was to help mobilize union support for a single-payer health care initiative for the state of California. We will be posting a link to our website for you to view the first video launching the campaign. Local 47 is looking at endorsing this initiative, and we hope you all will join us in making health care for all a reality. Health & Welfare is always a major issue in any contract negotiation, and if we can take this off the table once and for all, a significant burden will be lifted off of our shoulders.

Have a safe and happy summer!

In Unity,

John Acosta
Vice President