

Ask Mike!

Stressed about an upcoming gig? Work got you singing the blues? Columnist Michael Goode can help!



BY MICHAEL I. GOODE,
LOCAL 10-208 MEMBER

In my last column, in November, we talked about the Internet, and how you can deal with it both positively and negatively and how to keep your dignity and what to do about malicious gossip. Today we are going to talk about how to deal with some of the disappointments in the music business when they come up. Here's December's Q&A:

Q: I just took a major symphony audition and things didn't quite work out. I am really bummed out. How do I pick myself back up and go on with it? This is really a drag!

A: Having taken symphonic auditions myself, I can truly understand. Things don't always come out as we plan them! Your emotions at this point are very important and you shouldn't ignore them or they may come back later on the job in a way that you don't want. This would be a good time to write one of the anger letters that I have recommended before; something like, "I am angry that this audition didn't work out the way I wanted it to" or something similar. This will help drain the normal emotions that you are feeling as a result of things not working out. Also, talk to your friends about what happened to try to get some perspective.

In addition, talking to a trusted teacher is a great idea to get some honest advice and get a perspective. This is very helpful. It will take time to get over the loss; don't fight your feelings on this. Doing these things will help you get back to making musical progress in your career and in your practicing fairly quickly. If people close to you tell you simply to "get over it and move on," this is bad advice; go with your own feelings, write an anger letter and "move on" when it is right for you, otherwise you risk having these negative feelings come up at a time that you can't control like on a gig which you don't want! If for some reason the feelings trigger you into a very depressed state, make sure you seek

professional help at once.

Q: A teacher of mine whom I have trusted for years gave me some advice that I have been following, and now in this new gig I have, if I follow that advice, they really don't like the way I play. I want to keep this new great gig but I am scared that they are going to fire me if I don't start playing the way they want. What can I do?

A: Every job we play on is different and it is very scary and disappointing when we discover that we think we know what the contractor wanted and then it turns out that we aren't even in the ballpark! If it is a great gig for you, and it sounds like it is, it wouldn't hurt to try to listen to recordings of the group you are playing with if they exist, especially ones with the same leader or conductor on them. If possible, you should also try to talk to others in the section and get together and play some duets or take a lesson, or just hang out over coffee.

To keep this job, you need to get the hang of what's happening musically that's different from what you expected right away. Sometimes this happens in our business that we either got steered the wrong way in the first place or somebody just didn't make it clear what was really required for the gig ahead of time and we end up looking unprepared or not ready for the job or

at the least we don't fit in. Don't panic about this, but write an anger letter like I mentioned above right away and get connected to somebody on the job who knows what they are looking for.

Even if you can't do the things I mentioned above, at least give somebody a telephone call. Musicians are NOTORIOUS for not talking about these kinds of things to each other and many times will just let people get hung by the contractor or other players on the job and then they don't ask you back and you never know why. This is ridiculous and sad and does not have to happen! We as professionals do need to communicate to each other and stop worrying that somehow we are going to lose our edge competitively or get less work if we help each other. This overly competitive and medieval attitude towards each other must stop; we will all get a lot better as players and create a much higher musical product if we work together rather than against each other.

Send your questions to: Ask Mike!, Trumpetworks Press, 715 Lake Street #269, Oak Park, IL 60301, 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." All names are confidential and will not be published.

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For reservations call Amie Moore:
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