

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 December, we talked about how to deal with some of the disappointments in the music business when they come up. Today, we are going to talk about what to do when your playing is going downhill and how young players can manage the overwhelming amount of information available on their instrument. Here's January's Q&A:

Q: Hey Mike, I have been playing in orchestras a long time and am having trouble concentrating and being consistent on the job. I've really been getting down on myself and feel like my playing is going downhill. I'm really

scared. What can I do? How do I handle this? Nobody else knows or can even tell at this point.

A: The first thing that you can do is look at how you are taking care of yourself physically. Are you getting enough sleep every night, eight to ten hours? Are you exercising regularly? Are you eating regular healthy meals? Are you drinking enough water, eight to ten cups a day? These are basic things as musicians we must do in order to keep healthy. The things we could get away with when we were just out of music school don't work as we get older. The trick is to find a way to make all these things a habit. You would be surprised to see how much doing these kinds of things improves everything; especially your concentration.

Also, you must look at your emotional state relating to these orchestra gigs. Are you sick of the music, or are you sick of the people you are working with, or are you dissatisfied with music as a career? Most of us still love music and want to continue but we can easily get discouraged and distracted when we get entangled and engaged in messy, mean, backbiting orchestra politics. The best way to handle these unpleasanties is to write an anger letter in which you state that "I am angry because..." and then fill in the blanks about what person or specific personnel situation at the gig is bothering

you. Sometimes we think that we just have to tough it out and push ourselves to play and ignore everything, even unpleasant personnel matters with our colleagues, but these take their toll and eventually can wreck our enjoyment and our focus on the music, which is why we started to play in the first place! By writing an anger letter about your situation, you can disengage emotionally from the upsetting situation and get your concentration, focus and enjoyment back. You will also get insight into what you really like most about your musical career and get new ideas about what you want to get from it.

Maybe you see playing your gig as a struggle. Writing an anger letter about the situation can detach you from the struggle and get you connected to what's right for you in the musical situation and help you make new decisions that will bring the enjoyment back!

Remember that an anger letter should always be private, uncensored and be torn up when you are finished writing it. And of course, NEVER send these to anyone! These are just for your own personal benefit. You will feel better after you write them. Of course, it is always a good idea to check with your doctor to make sure you are mentally and emotionally doing okay and that there are not more serious physical or emotional problems that need urgent attention which may be contributing to your problem.

Q: I'm just out of music school and trying to break into the business. It seems that there are so many teachers and people with advice on how to play, how to win auditions, it's really overwhelming and I don't know what to follow and how to decide what's right. What do I do?

A: It's good to seek out a teacher who is well-versed in all the methods out there for your particular instrument or voice and discuss with them their opinions on the various methodologies that are available so you can try some of these and see what works best for you. Don't be afraid to ask questions of teachers; it's the only way you'll learn! Having the courage to ask questions now and to ask why will save you countless wasted hours of pointless practice and unhappy experiences on gigs simply because you didn't know some piece of information. Music is a journey; you have to discover what your path is.

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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REHEARSAL ROOM SCHEDULE

All rehearsals will be 2½ hours in length ending at 9:30 p.m. on weeknights and 6:30 p.m. on weekends. Rates are \$10 per 2½-hour block for the regular rooms and \$15 per 2½-block for the large rooms (1 and 6). If you require more than two hours, an additional block of time must be purchased. The P.A. rate remains the same at \$10 per rehearsal.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULING:

MONDAY – FRIDAY
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
1 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
4 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
7 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY
10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
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4 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

For reservations call Amie Moore:
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