

# 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 June, we talked about how to be "in the zone" while playing and tips on being more consistent on the job. Today, we are going to talk 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.

**Q: Hi Mike, I love playing and getting paid for it, but sometimes I feel like I am really stoked on some gigs and other times I can barely crawl to work. What's wrong?**

A: Since you enjoy what you do, pacing is probably the problem. Most likely you probably don't have a good idea of how to pace yourself in your life and on the gig. This is so important. In fact, the better you get as a player, the more it becomes about pacing yourself rather than just playing. It's easy to overdo it in the practice room, especially when big things are coming up. The thing to real-

ly watch out for is overdoing it when practicing and then not having anything left for the gig. Dangerous! We have all fallen into this trap at some point and we have to be careful. There is nothing more trying than over-practicing during the week or weeks before the gig and then barely surviving through it or playing less than our best when we perform on the job.

The best rule of thumb is this: when you are practicing at home, and the thought comes in your head that says, "Maybe I should stop now?" STOP NOW. Take that thought seriously. We all have thoughts like these. I cannot tell you how many times it has saved my neck on the job and in the practice room to listen to such thoughts.

Sometimes, you may also know it's time to stop when your focus is gone and you start to play badly. That works for some people as well. Either way, it's time to stop! Not listening to such thoughts or paying attention when your focus drifts can be fatal to your career so take it seriously. Attention to such thoughts in your life can also be helpful when you are doing other things besides playing and will give you information as to when you

should be slowing down. Such thoughts can give you information and guidance about when you are drifting out of the zone. These thoughts come from your true self, which is the "Person A" I have talked about before, which is always right. Don't make the mistake of thinking that advice from others is the same as this voice; sometimes it is, sometimes it isn't. You can always tell if it's right by how things sound in the practice room or on the stage or studio. Learn to listen to what your true inner voice is saying when playing and you will go far. Accept no substitutes!

**Q: Dear Mr. Goode, I am embarrassed to say this, but this one particular conductor keeps picking on me all the time and I haven't done anything wrong. What can I do?**

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 will be empowered to handle this matter without getting entangled with the conductor's own personal issues. The next thing you should do is talk to the orchestra's union steward and

ask him or her for the best way to handle it. Stewards are great and they will speak up for you so that you don't have to take flak directly from a conductor. They will handle the matter for you in a gracious way. Call the Local if you don't know who your steward is. There is a famous occurrence which I may have mentioned before where an esteemed player in one of the top symphony orchestras in the world was getting wrongly picked on by a conductor. He went to the union steward and believe it or not, the conductor was banned from ever conducting that symphony orchestra ever again! So it does pay to talk to the steward to complain! If you don't then the abuse will continue which is not good for you, or for any of us. The union is here to help!

*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](http://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*

## Nazareth Gevorkian Violins

by appointment



I specialize in repairs and restorations on violins, violas, cellos and bows, as well as carrying a selection of instruments, bows, strings and accessories. Having had an extensive background in jewelry making and designing, I have achieved the highest quality work on instruments and bows. You'll get the best quality work, service and prices on the West Coast!

900 E. Cornell Dr.  
Burbank, CA 91504

818.843.4700 phone  
818.486.3539 cell

## UNION PLUS LEGAL SERVICES

### A Member Benefit

During these challenging economic times, are you taking full advantage of your Union benefits?

The *Union Plus Legal Services Network* (UPLSN) is a part of the Union Plus Program available to members of Musician's Local 47. As a union member, you are automatically a member of the UPLSN which entitles you to a free 30 minute consultation as well as a 30% discount on fees with a Union Plus participating attorney. When you're talking legal fees, that's a great discount!

One legal service that everyone should think about (and will ultimately need) is estate planning. Many people think that estate planning is simply the writing of a will. Actually, it is significantly more. Proper estate planning allows you, and not the Court, to determine who will take care of your minor children. A well drafted estate plan will also protect you in the event of your incapacity. It will determine who makes important decisions regarding your medical care should you be unable to speak for yourself. It will allow you to determine who will receive your assets after you die, preferably with

as little money going to legal fees and taxes as possible.

The best time to plan your estate is now – while you can and before you need it. None of us likes to think about our own mortality or the possibility of becoming incapacitated. Unfortunately, that is exactly why so many families are caught off guard and unprepared when incapacity or death strikes. In these tough times, spending a relatively small sum now can save thousands of dollars later.

We urge you to contact our office to take advantage of the Union Plus program.

### KRAMER LAW GROUP

STEPHEN W. KRAMER  
5858 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 205  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90056-4521  
PHONE (323) 964-7100  
[WWW.KRAMERLAW.BIZ](http://WWW.KRAMERLAW.BIZ)

