

Ask Mike!

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



BY LOCAL 10-208 MEMBER
MICHAEL I. GOODE

In my last column, in May, we talked more about how you can create more unique opportunities for yourself and what to do when you are tired or sick on the job. Today we are going to talk about ways to go to an even higher level with your art. Here's June's Q&A:

Q. I feel like I am stuck in a rut with my playing. I have a regular gig, but

the music seems actually boring to me at this point. Do I hate the music or is something else happening?

A. You probably are not hating the music, you just haven't set any higher musical goals to make it interesting. The unconscious, which is also known as Person A, has really high standards and needs a very specific musical goal, otherwise it will get bored. You have reached a certain level right now in your playing and may think that since the conductor, bandleader or contractor likes what you do, everything is fine. However, by being bored, your real artistic Person A self is telling you that you need more stimulation to play well and be happy.

First, write an anger letter that says, "I am angry that I am bored with my current gig and the music we are playing," and see what ideas come into your head after you write it. From this you will see the blocks that are causing you to be bored.

After you have written your anger letter, take the music home if you can and try to come up with new musical ideas for what you are playing. If you can't take the book or music home, and are sight-reading jingles or commer-

cial, then quickly think on the job of a new way to approach the music mentally that stays within the boundaries of what the contractor or conductor wants.

Also, whether you are practicing at home or playing on the job, make sure that you are singing everything you play in your head. It is VERY IMPORTANT to make sure that you are doing other things besides music in your day and getting enough sleep, eating right and taking care of yourself outside of the job. One of the biggest reasons besides low artistic standards for boredom on the job is having no outside interests to fill the well to replenish yourself emotionally and spiritually. If you don't have outside interests to replenish your musical soul, your music will get boring.

You should also, as I mentioned before in May's column, listen to recordings of someone you admire on your instrument. This is very helpful and will improve your playing tremendously. You will gain new musical ideas by doing this. Listen to as many recordings of pieces your are playing or just listen in general to different styles being played on your instrument on different

types of pieces. We always learn something from everything we listen to. The goal is to find what resonates best for you as an artist. You are an artist. Start thinking of yourself that way instead of as a musical drone and your whole outlook and your playing will improve. You may actually start to look forward to going to work!

Remember, Leonard Bernstein always wanted musicians to think of why they started playing music in the first place and make music from that point, the idea that it is FUN. That's why we all started! When you get away from having FUN, your music and your whole attitude suffer.

Next month we will talk more about how to adjust to getting either that first big gig, or going from a great gig to one at an even higher level of achievement.

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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