

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 February, we talked about health problems while playing, the importance of exercise, diet, seeing your doctor, and how to manage an overflow of private teaching with your playing schedule. Today, we are going to talk about the difference between an artist and a musician, and how to find a musical model for your playing.

Q: Hi Mike, you are always talking about being an artist and being a musician. Is there any difference?

A: Yes. In all of our business, we should always be musicians first, great musicians. Being a great musician involves having great technique and great technique depends on great training and using practice to get that technique in your bones so that it becomes second nature for you. Like my teacher Adolph Herseth implied, that's just the beginning. Then you have to make art. Making art is how you become an

artist. This where the fun part begins.

To make art, you have to transcend just getting all of the right notes; you have to tell an emotional story about what you are playing. When you start to tell stories, then you begin to make art. When I asked Mr. Herseth one time what he thinks of when he is playing "Scherezade," a famous piece by the Russian composer Rimsky-Korsakov, he told me that he pictures a children's book, "One Thousand and One Arabian Nights," that he read as a child, and he leafs through the pictures in the book in his mind as he is playing. You can hear this in his interpretation of the piece, and it is truly thrilling! It is much easier to try to tell stories first, then the technique and musicianship will take care of itself. Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Herseth, legends from the Chicago Symphony, both taught me this. When the brain has a clear storyline in music-making, the body will know what to do. Mr. Jacobs always said to me that no matter what style of music you play, "there are two instruments; one in the hand and one in the head. They should both be the same." This involves a lot of trust and familiarity with your instru-

ment, but it can be done and this is how to become an artist, to go beyond just being a musician. This is what we should all strive for. If we can consistently try more and more to tell stories when we play we can even become a great artist. It's a lot more fun and a lot more satisfying than just cranking the notes out!

Q: Mr. Goode, I enjoy reading your column. I have taken particularly seriously your idea of having a musical model to help one's playing. What are your suggestions for choosing a musical model?

A: The most important thing about a musical model is not what genre it is in, but that it resonates with you as a person and that it is somebody who is truly recognized by your peers as being exceptional. Although it is true that there have been some remarkable unknowns who have never done much public work, usually big success goes hand-in-hand with amazing and solid artistry so it's a pretty safe bet. When you hear this person's playing, does it take you to some special place? Does it move you? Do you get excited and

inspired listening to this person? And most of all, do you want to listen to this person again and again? These things are all true regardless of musical genre or style. If you are a classical musician, some conventions and technical considerations are important to note. Are these people considered true interpreters of a particular composer? For jazz, are they truly unique? For other styles, are the possible models considered truly memorable by others? These are the kinds of questions you must ask yourself when selecting a musical model to listen to. Listening to such musical models will help you develop and perfect your own style. Most of all, they must resonate with you as a person.

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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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.

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