

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 August, we talked about how to not feel like just a number and the importance of doing master classes if asked. Today, we are going to talk about what to do about tough economic times and traveling with your instrument.

Q: Hi Mike, things have really gotten tough for me. My gigs have lessened due to the economy and I am really bummed out about this. What do I do? All I've ever known is music. I want to play for a living, not do other stuff.

A: If it's any consolation, lots of other people are in the same boat — not that it makes it any better for you. The economic downturn has hurt everybody; gigs that we have all had for a long time have been affected, especially by the losses in the stock market that were so much a part of many musical organizations' endowments.

The gigs are out there — it is going to require more networking and marketing

of yourself than you are used to. We all have been on lists and people have just called us for various jobs over the years. The problem is when the funding for some of these gigs dries up, people stop calling.

I suggest that you come up with a list of phone numbers and e-mails of people that you know and start contacting them once a week, not to be a pest, but just to let them know you are around and ready to work. If you think certain people will feel less bugged by calling them every two weeks or less often, then respect their space and do that.

You will ultimately have to use your judgment on how often to call, but the point is get a list of numbers and e-mails together and start calling and e-mailing people on your list. Be friendly, it never helps to be totally cold and businesslike. And don't feel like you're trying to "schmooze" your way into a gig. This is L.A. People like each other out here and like to work with others, so the social part of getting gigs is as important as the money to a lot of people. Also, this is how people get gigs — everybody wants to play with somebody they either know or feel that they can get along with. There are lots of great players out there.

The difference many times in who gets the gig is a person's personality. So go for it!

Q: Dear Mr. Goode. I will be traveling a lot this year as my out-of-town gigs have been picking up. The gigs pay for my plane ticket but they are not a charter so I have to carry my instrument on board. What have you heard about airlines and instruments as carry-ons with the increases in security?


A: I just recently traveled to Florida on American and they were very good. They didn't give me any problems whatsoever. Now, since I have a two-horn case and it is made exactly to carry-on specs, that probably helps. It is really important to have a case that meets the exact measurements required for a carry-on.

Also, most airlines will allow one carry-on and one personal item like a purse, computer or briefcase. So as long as you can keep yourself to that and check in any other bags, you should be OK. There were problems with Delta in the past, but they responded to AFM pressure and are now allowing musicians to carry on small instruments and

guitars on all flights. But check with the individual airline on their toll-free line and ask them directly what their policy is. You don't want to have an embarrassing situation as you are boarding the plane where you are forced to explain why you must carry on your valuable instrument.


For larger instruments, like cellos and basses, you may have to buy an extra seat. Give the union a call and ask them how you can get a copy of their travel letter and also ask them what they know to be the latest information on the travel situation especially if you are flying internationally. I know that some orchestras actually had to cancel international tours because some airlines would not let the musicians carry on their instruments. Give the union a call and they will know the answer. Have a great trip!

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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Required: application and \$35.00 non-refundable fee as well as demo CD or DVD. Deadline is October 31, 2009 at 5:00 PM. Further details on application. To obtain an application: send a self-addressed stamped envelope to **Jamie Self, 2139 Kress Street, Los Angeles, CA. 90046.**