

A DISCUSSION ON HEALTH, SURGERIES, ORAL PROBLEMS AND COMMITMENT



(Answer to an Internet Question in early 2017.) I read your post with much interest. This will be a long post, but I hope interesting to you. So many similar, yet different things in my 65 years of playing trumpet, and over 50 years of being a "pro.."

In College I pretty much said "screw the academics, I want to be a PLAYER." Just barely kept grades enough to stay in school, but I was playing on average 7 hours every day, between practicing, rehearsals, combo gigs, and working with the local Symphony.

I got out of college, went into the Navy Show Band and was playing 2 - 5 concerts a day. (You DID read that right.) Went right into the Kenton Orchestra - we all know what that is like..... And then started a career of being a clinician and leading my own bands.

THEN - about 17 years ago I ended up with lots of teeth and gum problems, which was strange because I have always taken very good care of my mouth. I lost five teeth, had to have some implants and my upper tooth structure actually moved.

For a while I couldn't even play a high C. Well one day I looked in the mirror and said to myself that I had better get it together, since I didn't know how to do anything else. I worked hard for a year and brought myself back -- frustration after frustration!!!!

About the only thing that didn't come back was the power in the extreme upper register, so I learned to live with what I had. A pretty hard thing to do for someone who had made a living playing up there. I made do and worked more on my jazz playing.

It has worked pretty well for me until recently. In 2016 I had emergency pacemaker surgery, hernia surgery, and then yet another oral surgery with bone graft on my upper jaw. I am back to not having a consistent upper range, not as much power and not great endurance. I guess I must add to this that the arthritis in my hands is starting to have an effect on my ability to just push those valves down at a rapid rate.

My answer to all of this??????? AND THIS TOO SHALL PASS!!!!!! I will work my way back because.....

1. I LOVE playing trumpet.
2. I don't know how to do anything else but music to make a living.
3. I LOVE performing for people and working with students.
4. I don't believe in EVER giving up!!!

Keep up with what you are doing. Play for yourself, and I will bet that before long you will be playing for others and they will LOVE what they hear!!!

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