

Arnold Jacobs

Photo: *Song and Wind* by Brian Frederickson

"Quotes"

Announcement: Mr. Jacobs passed away at the age of 83, October 7 of this year, 1998. For those of you that are not familiar with Arnold Jacobs, he was the principal tubist for the Chicago Symphony. Although he has never written anything about his teachings, his ideas have spread rapidly. Known among many brass players, Mr. Jacobs is also known by many woodwind players.

I'll post a few quotes from Arnold Jacobs every few weeks, ultimately accumulating a nice collection of quotes. You can easily find these quotes from master class notes and the books *Song and Wind* by Brian Frederiksen ([WindSong Press Limited](#)) and *Legacy of a Master*. These books are currently available. The master class notes are always "floating" around somewhere!

Personally, I'm an Arnold Jacobs fan/believer. Everything he says is simple, direct, honest, and more importantly, easy to understand. I hope these quotes help you with the understanding of your own playing and others as much as they have helped me with mine.

1. *"In general, the lips have good circulation but under extreme circumstances can be bruised. The usual result of this mistreatment is a circulation problem. If a player holds the mouthpiece on the lips too long, swelling develops from fluid collection. If the swelling disrupts the embouchure, rest is the best cure. If that's not possible, use a slightly smaller dynamic range and avoid the very top notes of the instrument. The swelling from fluid accumulation will clear up within 24 to 48 hours of rest. The procedure is to keep the brain occupied with musical thoughts, keeping it from self-analysis and possible downward spiral."* - A.J. Master Class, 1988

2. *"Don't encourage mediocrity. Play at your best and don't be second class in the head."* - A.J. Master Class 1988

3. *"The most common problems I have seen over the last sixty-odd years I have been teaching are with respiration problems and the tongue. Surprisingly enough, I rarely find problems with the embouchure." - A.J. Song and Wind*
4. *"Practicing is 85 percent making statements and 15 percent asking questions. When starting to practice, it is better to make a statement and practice what is right than ask questions and practice what is wrong." - A.J. Song and Wind*
5. *"Make each note worth \$500, not \$5" - A.J. Song and Wind*
6. *"The brain influences the body and the body influences the brain. So if the brain is in turmoil, then put the body in a calmer situation. If we start with slow, measured inhalations, the pulse starts to slow a bit. Normally, in anxiety, breathing becomes rapid and shallow. The pulse goes up. Blood pressure goes up. So you try to create the opposite conditions! - A.J. Song and Wind*
7. *"The more you play in public, the easier it is." - A.J. Song and Wind*
8. *"The important thing is not what you sound like. It's what you want to sound like. I have people who come to me and only listen to themselves-they are not conceiving." - A.J. Song and Wind*
9. *"We take a young mind, we take somebody who is just learning something new. We are showing him excellence, not musculatures in terms of activities, but results. Here's your trumpet, here's your mouthpiece, and it can sound beautiful. Imitate by trial and error. Be willing to make a mistake." - A.J. Song and Wind*
10. *"Your muscles have the potential for great stiffness. You must find weakness through minimal effort. Strength is your enemy-weakness is your friend." - A.J. Song and Wind*