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When my good friend, Steve Dillon, asked me to write an article about "Breathing" (he knows that my teacher is Arnold Jacobs) a myriad of things came to mind. So, what I'd like to do for the first of what I hope to be a series of articles based on Mr. Jacobs' teaching, is to give you a general idea of what I've learned and what I try to pass on to my students.

Before I do that - I shod tell you a little about Arnold Jacobs. . .

Mr. Jacobs joined the Chicago Symphony in 1944 and played with them for over forty years. Any brass player will tell you that the brass section of the Chicago symphony was the bench mark for orchestral playing for many, many years. Arnold Jacobs was a major reason for this reputation! His playing was beyond reproach and his study of the human body -specifically, the respiratory system – is of equal fame. Singers and wind instrumentalists from all over the world still to this day, seek him out for lessons.

The general public's idea of what Mr. Jacobs teaches is respiratory function - breathing. Actually, that is only a small part of what is involved when you study with him. He is an expert in this area - but this knowledge, once learned is only a tool to help you get the job done. Breathing, articulation, etc; . . . are not an art form. MUSIC is the goal. Music making is the art form. To paraphrase Mr. Jacobs, "You know that there's a huge diamond laying in a patch of skunk cabbage. You have three choices: 1) Walk away, 2) Peel off leaf-by-smelly-leaf until you find the diamond. (It's a very large patch!), or 3) Dive right in and get rich (stinking rich!!?)"

All of us at one time or another have gotten "stuck" in our playing ... going nowhere fast - and we try to fix it. We read different books. We ask our friends - and we end up with many different ideas as to how to fix our playing. We get so many ideas that we become paralyzed. The human brain is a fantastic analyzer and problem solver . . . for things outside our bodies. We have to become storytellers. Just a good story holds your interest – a good musical performance must do the same.

The process of achieving a performance that will captivate the listener requires the use of something usually not talked about in method books – the IMAGINATION. There's another great story Mr. Jacobs and a trumpet player who came to Mr. Jacobs for a lesson. The trumpet player played for a while for him and then Mr. Jacobs asked him to stop and asked him if he attended any Chicago Symphony Orchestra concerts. "Oh yes" said the trumpet player. "I've been to lots of CSO concerts!" "Well then you're familiar with the principal trumpet player – Mr. Bud Herseth?" Mr. Jacobs asked. "He's my favorite player!" said the student. Mr. Jacobs smiled and said "Excellent! This time play me that difficult passage and show me how Mr. Herseth would sound on the same piece of music." So the student played and after a few seconds – had to stop because he couldn't believe how well he had just played! Perplexed, he looked at Mr. Jacobs who just smiled and said, "The reason is a simple one – Bud Herseth is a much better player

than you are!!” to put it simply, you must develop concepts of how whatever piece of music that you happen to be working should SOUND. You must play with two instruments – one in your hands and one in your head. The one in your head is the idea, the concept. This instrument has no limitations and it doesn’t make mistakes. Your goal, then, is to develop the instrument in your hands into a mirror image of the one in your head.

This is where fundamentals come into play. If we are going to play professionally, the complete mastery of our instrument is essential. We start out by learning the basics. We acquire the tools that will enable us to perform with little or no physical restrictions. The learning of music and the nurturing of our imagination is of equal importance. By listening to many Performances – recorded or live - we develop ideas, and from ideas grow concepts. This is how one becomes a well-rounded musician.

For me, the one big key for my conception is EMOTION. A good example is the film score composer. The next time you rent a movie, pay attention to the music. You'll notice that the music plays a big part in, the emotional impact of any given scene.

Then, as an experiment, rewind the movie and watch for a while without any sound. Obviously, this will not work better when there’s no dialog! Just imagine Star Wars and the big battle at the end without music! Music in its most primal sense must convey emotion.

As a simple exercise, pick an etude – something that you already know – and think of a story. In essence, write your own mini-movie around this piece of music. Now, play it and really try to get the story across. Do it again using a different story line. Try to have different emotions in the story; love, anger, joy, etc; . . . In time this will become a part of your performance preparations. And the audience doesn’t have to know the story. As a matter of fact, if you do this well, you'll find that if asked, they'll have experienced - guess what? EMOTION!! You will also no doubt discover that your playing will have taken on a new life - at least with regards to the etude! With practice all of your music making will be like this. Don't take my word for it – tape yourself. I think that you'll be pleasantly surprised.

I'm only showing you the tip of a very large iceberg, but I hope that this serves as an introduction to the greatness of this man. In future articles I'll try to explain the breathing process as well as ideas on articulation, dynamics and practice habits.