

Monfried, Walter. "Tuba Man Arnold Jacobs Enjoys Tilting at Wind Ills." *Milwaukee Journal*,
March 23, 1975

Several members of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, woodwind and brass players, have taken up their technical problems with Arnold Jacobs, the tuba player of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Like many others they have found him a most remarkable man.

Jacobs has appeared in Milwaukee about 300 times as a member of the Chicago Symphony and a few more times with brass ensembles at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. His reputation is that of being as good a tuba player as there is in the world. But those who know him personally – his students, disciples, colleagues and friends – recognize him as a top flight educational expert, a philosopher and scientist in his field. He has his own laboratory in downtown Chicago and has worked with the pulmonary departments of the medical colleges in that city.

Jacobs is well qualified to give the most expert, practical advice to all men and women who blow into musical instruments, from the sousaphone to the tiniest member of the flute family. His laboratory equipment reveals a person's lung strength and capacity, power of breath control, and many other details: What to do if the tongue is larger or smaller than average, if the "patient" has a physical ailment. And so on. He himself has long been a victim of asthma – which hasn't impaired his career in the slightest ~ so he is obviously in a position advise others about breathing and related details.

Book on Solti

Jacobs career is well chronicled in the bright informative book, "Season With Solti," written by the William Barry Furlong published by Macmillan. The author has delved into the activities not only of Maestro George Solti but of dozens of his brilliant colleagues of the Chicago Symphony roster.

Jacobs' father was an accountant in little Willowbrook, on the edge of Los Angeles and his mother played piano and organ in the silent film houses after having been a pianist on a vaudeville circuit.

Jacobs, who is now 58 and a muscular 215 pounder, was 10 when his parents gave him a bugle and soon the lad was winning Boy Scout prizes. Then he took up the trumpet, which he learned by ear, but he couldn't play as well as Herbert Clark, a famous virtuoso and recording star of the 1920s. So his father, dissatisfied with the boy's progress, switched him to the trombone, "I loved the trombone and might still be playing it except that I lost my instrument on a family vacation trip," he recalls.

In junior high school at Santa Monica (to which the family had moved) the bandmaster needed a tuba player, selected young Arnold and found him a natural at it. atT 15 he won a tuba scholarship at the renowned Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. In his spare time he played

trombone and trumpet at dances and theatres until the faculty forbade. "You must specialize, so stick to your tuba," he was ordered.

He followed orders - after a fashion. In those days, the early 1930s, the tuba was frequently with the Dixieland bands - the strong bass hadn't quite come into its current popularity. So in schoolwork Jacobs played the classics and at night, on his own time, he played "Tiger Rag" and such durable hits in the commercial shows and broadcasts. He also developed an aptitude for string bass and this he played with the society dance bands of Meyer Davis and such Impresarios.

Played for CBS

Jacobs became good enough on the string bass to be named a staff player at CBS in Chicago, then an important radio network center.

"The string bass almost led him off into another and separate career - in fact two or three of them," Furlong relates. One combo he joined was the Three Blue Blazers - violin, guitar, string bass, plus announcer and occasional vocalist. Jacobs soon found himself doing a lot of talking on the Blazers' programs and also he realized he had a good singing voice as well. In fact, he sang so well that Curtis offered him a vocal scholarship, but he turned it down to remain with bass instruments of wind and string.

At 18, still a Curtis student, he was offered a job with the Boston Symphony Orchestra led by the great Serge Koussevitzky. The pay was \$90 a week - just about what he was making with commercial jobs in Philadelphia. But the Boston Symphony in those days was non-union and the youth realized that if he joined that orchestra he would be automatically rejected by almost all other orchestras, which were union.

Enviably Reputation

It was in Chicago that the insatiably curious musician entered the biological aspects of wind instrument playing, somewhat as a hobby. Shortly after joining the Chicago Symphony, he suffered a minor physical ailment, consulted a physician friend and "told her I wanted to learn a little about the body and senses.

The doctor saw that he was serious and prescribed courses of study in physiology, anatomy and related subjects. He audited these subjects in colleges during his vacations and other spare time and after working in the University of Chicago laboratories he opened his own shop. He gained an enviable reputation in his new, broad field. Players of wind instruments come to him from many cities; even the medical men have asked his advice on the "vital capacity," as he calls it, for the intake, the storing and the emission of the essential air power.

The problems that he has' undertaken to solve can and do fill volumes. A woman oboist, for example, has an unusually large tongue. Another musician has oversize tonsils, still another

suffers emphysema. Jacobs has counseled with them, told them how to overcome their handicaps and continue their professional careers satisfactorily.