

Rider, Wendell. "What I learned from Arnold Jacobs"

Arnold Jacobs, the late tubaist of the Chicago Symphony, was one of the most sought after teachers of our time. He was best known for his knowledge of breathing and how it relates to playing but his teaching was really much more than that. He had a remarkable ability to cut right to the heart of a student's problems. He was incredibly observant and always offered a relatively simple and practical solution to any given problem.

Most of all, to me, he just had very high musical standards. Once I was playing the Tchaikovsky 5th solo for him. I played it the way I had learned it over the years- mostly reflecting the influence of my teacher at Eastman, Verne Reynolds. I remember that at the time I was playing along I was thinking to myself, "hey this is going pretty well, I haven't missed anything and I'm getting the dynamics and my tone sounds pretty good today- not bad!" When I finished, Jake just quietly said "You know, that was very nice, but was it really the most beautiful way you could have played that piece?" You could say that I was a little shocked and taken aback but it just as quickly struck me that although I had made "all the right moves" it really wasn't the most beautiful way I could have played it. That was all he had to say.

Arnold Jacobs saved my career. His insights into my breathing and how he helped me develop a positive psychological approach to what I was doing took me to a higher level. At my seminars we will be incorporating the Jacobs approach into everything we do. I also own many of the breathing devices he used to work on better breathing. We will explore the many facets of a great man, and a great musician.