

Arnold Jacobs: Loss of a Master by M. Dee Stewart

On October 7, 1998, the world lost one of the most productive and unique individuals of the century. Arnold Jacobs had one special gift. He had an intuitive sense of function, whether the subject be tone production, music making, or personal relations. He was able to sense the pragmatic method to solve problems that have faced musicians forever. And when he needed authoritative proof to substantiate his beliefs, he was able to carry out the research necessary.

The one area that quickly comes to the mind is that of brass teacher. Jacobs certainly did have a grasp on efficient tone production - how to produce it and how to teach it. It is now difficult to imagine, but his ideas were directly opposed to the "folk lore" ideas developed by the teachers and musicians of the first half of the century. He had the ability to share his innovative information with students. Not just brass students, but all musicians who are responsible for the sound their instrument produces - string players, woodwinds, vocalists, etc.

The musician himself was superb. Everyone who heard the vintage Chicago Symphony Orchestra understood the significance of "that tuba player." The reaction of the balcony audience to the Peasant and the Bear solo in *Petroushka* as observed by this writer bears witness to that. It is extremely doubtful that any musician on any instrument will ever equal the tone, the musicianship, and the musical character of Arnold Jacobs.

The personality of the man was also special. He captivated everyone. It was simply enjoyable to be in his company.

Nevertheless, there is much more to the legacy of Arnold Jacobs. Musicians around the world feel this loss as not only that of a teacher and mentor, but also as a friend. Arnold and Gizella Jacobs were best friends to legions. Many are the cases of folks calling them for personal advice. Their counsel was always very caring but carefully nonprofessional. Their thoughts carried great weight in the making of many decisions. No longer can we pick up the phone and hear that voice. Although the richness had dimmed with time, it still inspired one to run to their horn and try to imitate the resonance.

All words pale when discussing Arnold Jacobs and his legacy. He was asked many times to write about his concepts, but he knew that these ideas were often individually specific and could be easily misinterpreted by the masses. Our world does know his work. Although the documentation is small, the results of his insights in the form of the new generation's knowledge and production are carried on into the next century. We have lost a unique and valuable personage. But we have gained so much. The torch has been passed. The next step is up to us.