

Breathing, Blowing, and Tonguing
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Arnold Jacobs's "Hippocratic" Principle: First and foremost, be an Artist!

Music and musicianship always should be the primary focus. It's about the art form of music and communication, not muscles and "meat".

Notable Jacobs Quotes...

Breathing...

Inhale Somewhat above half full if not using a lot of air while playing, or considerably above half full if doing big heroic playing.

Don't make a science on the study of the breath. Instead, make a science on the study of resonance and tone, and use the breath as needed. I think we make too much out of the study of breath.

What we want is a flow; a river of air, associated with your concept of music.

Core Principle: Air – Suck in lots of it, at the lips.

It's free, so go ahead and waste it.

The art of inhalation is based on suction, not on the expansion of the body. Breathe to expand, don't expand to breathe. The body can lie.

Inhalation should not be the machine activity of expansion; it should be suction.

Shallow breathers will have trouble playing the end of their phrases. If they take a poor second breath, they will really be in trouble because their reflexes are going to be activated and they will start to tense up (or start to close) their throat. Their chest will also become tense and everything will go in a downward spiral from that point on.

When breathing, I want the focus of air to be moving into the mouth, not the abdomen. Breathe from the lips.

With airflow there will always be air pressure. But with air pressure there may not always be airflow.

React to sensations of pressure or tension with an increased awareness/thoughts of air flow.

It is important to think of air as having motion, such as a flow of wind, from the lips. In so doing, air flow increases while air pressure decreases.

Jacobs asked his students to blow air from the lips, not to the tongue.

Articulations or Tonguing

The attack is always built upon the downward stroke of the tongue and not the upward stroke of the tongue. You have to blow your attacks not release them.

We need to be more aware of what good articulation sounds like, rather than what it should feel like.

When tonguing, the vowel has to be dominant over the consonant. You'll find in your pronunciation that the vowel is always open, and the consonant is always closed. The study of great tone is rooted in the study of vowels [ah, oh, ooh], not consonants. [tOH or tOE rather than Toh or Toe]

The key to playing a brass instrument is found in speech.

Use the tongue as when you use it in speech, so use it for timing and diction purposes. Music [on brass instruments] is always a combination of air and the embouchure buzzing.

You don't want to build up the air pressure behind the tongue. It's air and lip that plays music [not air and tongue]. ... The psychology of it is that the air should be at the outer part of your lip, and not inside of your mouth. You want to play down as much of the interference of the tongue as you can. Your job is to connect the air with the lip.

Briefly about Embouchure

Embouchure is not a study of meat, it is a study of sound.

The notes have to be more in your brain and less in your lip. ...

The embouchure's duty is not to provide resistance, but instead, it's duty is to provide buzz.

The lips become vocal chords. *Sing* with them! Put the notes into the cup of the mouthpiece. By the time it reaches the throat of the mouthpiece, it's success or failure because everything on the other side of the mouthpiece is acoustics. You always must have the voice in your head because that is the signal that goes down the seventh cranial nerve to your lip. The ability to perform is tied into your sense of sending a message (as when you use your lips as vocal chords). That is the job of the seventh cranial nerve.