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Louis Armstrong: American Myth, American Master

Louis Armstrong was the greatest jaz musician of all time. He dazzled audiences with his stunning high notes, gorgeous melodies and soul-stirring rhythms. Ground-breaking recordings such as “West End Blues” changed the face of music. But by all accounts, his live performances were even more amazing. Both as a trumpet player and a singer, Armstrong routinely performed musical feats that no other musician could match. His charismatic stage presence and daring improvisations cemented his status as an American master CITATION. His recordings with the Hot Fives and Hot Sevens are considered the most important in jazz history CITATION.

In this research paper, I attempt to trace the history of Louis Armstrong’s musical development, beginning with his early years in New Orleans, on through to his life on the road as a traveling musician, and, finally, to his last years in New York.

Childhood in New Orleans

Louis Armstrong born in New Orleans in 1901. His family was extremely poor, so poor that young Louis had to work from a very early age in order to help put food on the table. [Add more about Louis Armstrong’s early life in New Orleans.]

First Cornet

Young Louis was surrounded by music in New Orleans. Dance halls and street prades featured a host of talented musicians, from which he could learn a great deal. However, he might not have become a truly disciplined musician without the guidance of several teachers he encountered at a school for poor boys CITATION. At school, he played the cornet seriously for the first time. [Add more about his early years as a cornet player.]

Early Career

After he left school, Armstrong plunged into the world of New Orleans music. He began playing at dance halls and in the city’s frequent brass band parades. At that time he met his most important mentor, King Joe Oliver. [Add more about his time playing on river boats and, finally, his move to Chicago.]