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Louis Armstrong

Music is a large part of history especially for Louisiana. The city of New Orleans is, if known for anything else greater, as the birthplace of Jazz music. Jazz is a type of music of black American origin characterized by improvisation, syncopation, and usually a regular or forced rhythm, emerging at the beginning of the 20th century. Many artists used this new and exciting style of music to start their careers, one of them being the trumpeter Louis Armstrong. Louis Armstrong popularized the style of swing jazz with his trumpet and played with countless bands around the world.

Louis Armstrong was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on August 4, 1901. He was born into a very poor family in an area known as “the battlefield.” His dad leaves during Armstrong’s mother’s infancy, and he spends the first few years living with his grandmother. At the age of twelve he fired a gun into the air during Mardi Gras causing him to be sent to a reform school, Colored Waif’s Home for Boys. This starts the beginning of the rest of his life as one of the greatest influences on Jazz music.

At the school, Armstrong is taught by the band director, Peter Davis; he is taught on the cornet. After being released from the school on June 16, 1914, he returns home first to his father

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shortly then his mother. He is then instructed by one of the greatest trumpet plays in New Orleans at the time, Joe Oliver. Along with performing in local groups, he delivers coal and sells newspapers to pay for him and his family’s living. In 1918, Joe Oliver moves to Chicago leaving a spot in his band, the Kid Ory band, which Armstrong happily took. The band was a very popular group in New Orleans at the time. Armstrong was then asked to perform on rivers boats traveling along the Mississippi River from New Orleans to St. Louis.

In August of 1922, Armstrong moves to Chicago to join his mentor’s band as second cornet. The next year, Armstrong makes his first recordings with King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band. In this band he meets the pianist, Lillian Hardin, whom he marries on February 5th, 1924. He moves to New York that same year recording with many people including Henderson, Sidney Bechet, Sippie Wallace, Clara Smith, and Ma Rainy. But on November 12th, 1925, he makes his firsts recordings as leader of the band, Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five. In 1930 he starts performing around the US in major cities like Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Washington D. C. He separates from Lillian Harden in 1931 and appears in his first film, Ex-Flame. In 1968 “What a Wonderful World” becomes not only his but one of the greatest hits knocking The Beatles off the number one spot on charts.

Louis Armstrong continued playing all around the world in many groups recording many albums, staring in movies, and being on magazines until his death in his home on July 6th, 1971. He was mourned by musicians and fans alike. No one person had more influence on the still popular today form of music known as Jazz. Louis Armstrong’s work influences works that are still written today making him the “King of Jazz.”

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References

www.louisarmstronghouse.org

www.redhotjazz.com/Louis.html

dictionary.reference.com/browse/jazz

Videos

Louis Armstrong’s “What a Wonderful World”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2VCwBzGdPM

Louis Armstrong’s “Mack the Knife”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgYgl4OodeY

Louis Armstrong’s “Hello Dolly”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmfeKUNDDYs

 