

World Biography (../in... / An-Ba (index.html) / Louis Armstrong ...

Louis Armstrong Biography

Born: August 4, 1901

New Orleans, Louisiana

Died: July 6, 1971

New York, New York

African American jazz musician and singer

Louis Armstrong was a famous jazz trumpet player and singer. He is regarded as one of the most important and influential musicians in the history of jazz music.

(Early life

Louis Daniel Armstrong was born in New Orleans on August 4, 1901. He was one of two children born to Willie Armstrong, a turpentine worker, and Mary Ann Armstrong, whose grandparents had been slaves. As a youngster, he sang on the streets with friends. His parents separated when he was five. He lived with his sister, mother, and grandmother in a rundown area of New Orleans known as "the Battlefield" because of the gambling, drunkenness, fighting, and shooting that frequently occurred there.

In 1913 Armstrong was arrested for firing a gun into the air on New Year's Eve. He was sent to the Waif's Home (a reform school), where he took up the cornet (a trumpet-like instrument) and eventually played in a band. After his release he worked odd jobs and began performing with local groups. He was also befriended by Joe "King" Oliver, leader of the first great African American band to make records, who gave him trumpet lessons. Armstrong joined Oliver in Chicago, Illinois, in 1922, remaining there until 1924, when he went to New York City to play with Fletcher Henderson's band.

(Jazz pioneer

When Armstrong returned to Chicago in the fall of 1925, he organized a band and began to record one of the greatest series in the history of jazz. These Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings show his skill and experimentation with the trumpet. In 1928 he started recording with drummer Zutty Singleton and pianist Earl Hines, the latter a musician whose skill matched Armstrong's. Many of the resulting records are masterpieces of detailed construction and adventurous rhythms. During these years Armstrong was working with big bands in Chicago clubs and theaters. His vocals, featured on most records after 1925, are an extension of his trumpet playing in their rhythmic liveliness and are delivered in a unique throaty style. He was also the inventor of scat singing (the random use of nonsense syllables), which originated after he dropped his sheet music while recording a song and could not remember the lyrics.

By 1929 Armstrong was in New York City leading a nightclub band. Appearing in the theatrical revue *Hot Chocolates*, he sang "Fats" Waller's (1904–1943) "Ain't Misbehavin'," Armstrong's first popular song hit. From this period Armstrong performed mainly popular



Louis Armstrong.

Reproduced by permission of

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

song material, which presented a new challenge. Some notable performances resulted. His trumpet playing reached a peak around 1933. His style then became simpler, replacing the experimentation of his earlier years with a more mature approach that used every note to its greatest advantage. He rerecorded some of his earlier songs with great results.

(Later years

Armstrong continued to front big bands, often of lesser quality, until 1947, when the big-band era ended. He returned to leading a small group that, though it included first-class musicians at first, became a mere background for his talents over the years. During the 1930s Armstrong had achieved international fame, first touring Europe as a soloist and singer in 1932. After World War II (1939–45) and his 1948 trip to France, he became a constant world traveller. He journeyed through Europe, Africa, Japan, Australia, and South America. He also appeared in numerous films, the best of which was a documentary titled *Satchmo the Great* (1957).

The public had come to think of Louis Armstrong as a vaudeville entertainer (a light, often comic performer) in his later years—a fact reflected in much of his recorded output. But there were still occasions when he produced well-crafted, brilliant music. He died in New York City on July 6, 1971.

(For More Information

Bergreen, Laurence. *Louis Armstrong: An Extravagant Life*. New York: Broadway Books, 1997.

Giddins, Gary. *Satchmo*. New York: Doubleday, 1988.

Jones, Max, and John Chilton. *Louis: The Louis Armstrong Story 1900–1971*. London: Studio Vista, 1971.

(User Contributions:

1 **travis snell** Feb 26, 2008 @ 12:12 pm
 this web site helps alot with projects i hope it helps others to

2 **brandon** Nov 11, 2009 @ 1:13 pm
 ya this guy is amazing i think this websie is great for reaserch and lots of other things

3 **chad ellis (mailto:ellischad16 [at] yahoo [dot] com)** Feb 5, 2010 @ 7:07 am
 this web site helps alot because it tells u everything u need 2 know about people

4 **Travis** Feb 6, 2018 @ 10:10 am
 I searched up how Louis Armstong's mom died and this site came up, I clicked on it. And it gave me nothing. -_- Not impressed. But at least it gave actual facts because I know a lot about Louis Armstrong and it is true.

5 **i am yes** Feb 13, 2020 @ 10:10 am
 This website is very not gamer you know all of u arent gamers!! NO! undewrstadn me>>

6 **CHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE** Feb 20, 2020 @ 7:07 am
 This website helped a lot! I found a lot of info on Louis Armstrong for a school presentation.

7 **Rk** Feb 26, 2020 @ 6:18 pm
 Who was his wife and childrens and when who did married and her nam

8 **Alyssa Chaco** Mar 2, 2020 @ 4:16 pm
 This was helpful and had good stuff that helped me understand about Louis Armstrong.

Comment about this article, ask questions, or add new information about this topic:

Name:

E-mail:

Show my email publicly

Human Verification:

I'm not a robot reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms


Public Comment: (50-4000 characters)

 Send comment

Other articles you might like:



Follow City-Data.com Founder on our Forum (<http://www.city-data.com/forum/search.php?do=finduser&u=2173187>) or Twitter (<https://twitter.com/LechMazur/>)


Tweets by @LechMazur



Lech Mazur
@LechMazur
Replying to @LechMazur

And for the record, I'm against unjustified zoning restrictions that increase housing costs in cities. Then you get people asking for rent control, which makes matters worse.

  26m



Lech Mazur
@LechMazur

Doesn't Coronavirus put into question the widely held assumption that dense, walkable cities are better than the suburbs? I think it's fine to acknowledge that

[Embed](#) [View on Twitter](#)

Louis Armstrong Biography forum (/forum/)

[← Aristotle \(Aristotle.html\)](#)

[Armstrong, Neil > \(Armstrong-Neil.html\)](#)

© 2020 Advameg, Inc.