

MEET THE Great Jazz Legends

By Ronald C. McCurdy, Ph.D.

Jazz music is truly an American treasure, performed and enjoyed all over the world. It is important for students to learn about some of the legendary musicians who made significant contributions to the development of jazz.

There are 17 jazz legends-lessons in this book. Each lesson contains:

1. A picture of the jazz legend, a fact box and suggested listening
2. The story of the jazz legend's life
3. A study of his/her music with insight about the time or place the jazz legend lived
4. A question and answer page for review in the form of a puzzle, true/false, or word scramble game

Each lesson is designed to be completed in a 20–30 minute session. Each session may be modified to fit whatever teaching situation exists. Teachers may extend each lesson by using the enhanced CD, which contains listening tracks for each lesson and a fully reproducible PDF of this book. Teachers who are using the lessons to teach privately may use a portion of the lesson with their students and assign other parts as homework.

The jazz legends included in this book span the entire twentieth century, from early New Orleans jazz through the Golden Age of Swing plus the Avant-Garde and Jazz Fusion eras. Jazz music, in comparison to Western art music, is still in its infancy. However, many of the changes in jazz occurred because of social, economic, political and religious variables that have always been a part of human existence and make a fascinating study for students of any age.



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NOTE: The enclosed Enhanced CD includes a fully reproducible PDF of the entire book. Purchase of this CD carries with it the right to photocopy and project these files. Limited to one school/organization only. NOT FOR RESALE.

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louis armstrong



Photo: Institute of Jazz Studies

IMPORTANT FACTS TO KNOW ABOUT LOUIS “SATCHMO” ARMSTRONG

Born:	August 4, 1901, New Orleans, Louisiana
Died:	July 6, 1971, Queens, New York
Period/Style of Jazz:	New Orleans Jazz
Instrument:	Cornet, trumpet, and vocalist
Major Compositions:	<i>Cornet Chop Suey, Knockin' a Jug, Weather Bird</i>
Interesting Facts:	Louis Armstrong's technical abilities on the trumpet set the standard for all trumpet players that followed. He was the first true jazz improviser. Armstrong was also known for his deep, gravelly voice.



Track 1

Included Listening: *Ain't Misbehavin'*

■ The Story of Louis Armstrong (1901–1971)

Louis Armstrong was born in the Storyville district of New Orleans, Louisiana, on August 4, 1901. Storyville was a lively part of town filled with dance halls, cabarets and gambling establishments called sporting houses. Louis grew up hearing blues, ragtime, and the new hot music called jazz being played in these venues by musicians such as his idol, trumpeter Joe “King” Oliver.

In his early teens, Louis was sent to a reform school for boys after shooting a gun in public. There he joined the band and learned to play the cornet. When he was released about two years later, he started playing professionally, first with King Oliver, then replacing Oliver in a popular jazz band led by trombonist Kid Ory when Oliver moved to Chicago in 1919.

In 1922, Louis received a telegram from Joe Oliver, asking him to join his Creole Jazz Band in Chicago. There, Louis met Lillian Hardin, the piano player for the band, and they were married in 1924.

He later recorded with his own bands, the Hot Five and the Hot Seven, which included his wife Lil’ and Kid Ory. Now considered classics, these recordings turned jazz into a soloist’s art form and Louis’s warm and soaring tone set the standard for jazz trumpet playing. His engaging personality as an entertainer earned Louis the nickname “Satchmo,” short for satchel mouth, because of his huge cheeks and wide smile. Later, Louis recorded the popular “West End Blues” and “Struttin’ with Some Barbecue.”



King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band



Magazine ad, 1954

Louis Armstrong was also a remarkable singer. According to Satchmo himself, while recording “Heebie Jeebies” in Chicago on February 26, 1926, the sheet music fell off the stand. Louis did not want to stop the recording session, so he continued singing, using nonsense syllables and making sounds similar to an instrument. The result was the first recorded example of what became known as scat singing, a jazz vocal practice still very popular today.

Armstrong eventually moved to New York and performed with many great musicians including the innovative arranger, Fletcher Henderson. As Armstrong’s popularity grew over the years, his music introduced the entire world to jazz. In 1968,

armstrong word search



Look down, across, backward and diagonally to find the words that will complete the sentences below. Circle the words.

R	G	N	I	G	N	I	S	T	A	C	S
O	J	G	H	X	Z	S	O	R	H	O	K
N	E	W	O	R	L	E	A	N	S	R	S
K	I	K	D	S	T	I	D	E	N	N	N
F	A	H	U	H	O	T	S	E	V	E	N
S	E	D	T	R	Y	A	S	D	U	T	U
H	U	Y	S	D	T	H	D	U	I	R	H
F	Y	J	K	C	H	I	C	A	G	O	D
B	W	R	H	O	T	F	I	V	E	T	S
M	U	M	C	D	L	H	Z	A	T	P	V
J	O	E	O	L	I	V	E	R	D	K	E

1. In 1901, Louis Armstrong was born in _____, Louisiana.
2. Louis Armstrong first played the _____.
3. When Louis was released from reform school, he joined a band led by _____.
4. When Louis Armstrong left New Orleans, he moved to _____.
5. Louis Armstrong's nickname: _____.
6. The names of Louis Armstrong's bands in the early 1920s: _____ and _____.
7. A kind of singing that involves the use of nonsense syllables: _____.

Vintage postcards of New Orleans

