Louis Armstrong Timeline Essay, Research Paper

LOUIS ARMSTRONG TIMELINE

Louis Armstrong’s was born Aug. 4, 1901. He grew up in New Orleans and received his first music instruction in 1913 in a children’s home. By 1915 he was sitting in with local bands. He went to Chicago to join King Oliver in 1922 and made his first records with Oliver the the next April (”Chimes Blues”). Though Chicago would be his base for the next 12 years, he went to New York for the first time in September 1924 to join Fletcher Henderson’s band and record with various blues singers, including Bessie Smith, Clarence Williams, and Sidney Bechet. In November 1925 he went back to Chicago, where he began recording under his own name and building the core work which his reputation as a major entertainer would forever rest. These included the Hot Five and Hot Seven sessions and the early years of big band records from 1929 to 1934. ?During this period his trumpet style went from powerful New Orleans ensemble lead into a solo voice whose majesty seemed to soar with a voracious and ravenous splendor.

In 1929 Armstrong began recording popular songs. In songs such as “Stardust,” “Sweethearts On Parade,” “Lazy River” and many others, he helped lay the basis for the joining of jazz and popular music in the ’30s, and set the ?standards? in which such players as Red Allen, Harry James, Roy Eldridge, Taft Jordan, Bunny Berigan, Dizzy Gillespie and others would work for the next 10 to 15 years.

By the mid-1930s, as the swing era began and Armstrong took to performing a more settled show, the period of greatness in his career came to an end. His key solos took on an unchanging form, and a long recording association with Decca Records began. There would be updated arrangements of early pieces, many of them outstanding, but no new musical breakthroughs. The personality of Armstrong’s performance now came forward in radio, recordings with other Decca artists, and cameo film roles in Pennies From Heaven, Dr. Rhythm, Going Places, Cabin In The Sky, and many more.

In 1947 Armstrong officially dropped the big band and resumed performing traditional jazz with an all-star group that included Earl Hines, Sid Catlett, Jack Teagarden and Barney Bigard. Armstrong’s playing loosened up somewhat, though he never strayed far from established routines. He toured and recorded with various versions of the All-Stars for the rest of his career.

In 1955 he made his first concert tour of Europe since the early ’30s. Another tour followed taking him to Africa. ?The international tours in the political context of the Cold War earned him the title “Ambassador Satch.”

?In the mid-1950s he recorded his last unmitigated jazz masterpiece work, Armstrong Plays W.C. Handy, for Columbia. There were also some great reworkings of his early classics in A Musical Autobiography for Decca, and a few session with Ella Fitzgerald for Verve that became major sellers. He continued a full touring schedule until 1968, when his health finally gave in to a weakened heart. ?Armstrong died in July 1970, a wealthy and much beloved man, though his music was considered by some to be old-fashioned, and his performing style dated and politically incorrect.

In 1953, Armstrong became the first musician elected by Readers to the new Down Beat Hall of Fame.