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LOUIS ARMSTRONG

THE EARLY YEARS

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Acoustic Recordings: 1923-26

- King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band
[1] *Oliver's Blues* (2:58) 5.423
[2] *Tea for Two* (3:06) 6.323

Tommy Henderson and His Orchestra

- [3] *Coronation* (3:03) 30.1024

Clarence Williams' Blue Five

- [4] *Everybody Loves My Body (But My Body Don't Love Nobody But Me)* (2:38) 6.124

Edna Turner with Clarence Williams' Blue Five

- [5] *Cake Walking Babies From Home* (3:04) 8.125

Bessie Smith

- [6] *The St. Louis Blues* (3:11) 14.125

Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five

- [7] *Grid Busters Blues* (2:48) 12.1125
[8] *Muskrat Ramble* (2:33) 26.226
[9] *Hotter Feller* (2:58) 26.226
[10] *Corner Chop Slop* (3:03) 26.226

Electric Recordings: 1927-40

Louis Armstrong and His Hot Seven

- [11] *Swingin' Head Blues* (3:02) 10.527
[12] *Twelfth Street Rag* (3:11) 11.527

Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five

- [13] *West End Blues* (3:23) 27.628

Louis Armstrong and His Satchel Ballroom Five

- [14] *St. James Infirmary* (3:19) 12.128
[15] *Tupé Like This* (3:17) 12.128
[16] *I Can't Give You Anything But Love* (3:31) 53.29

Louis Armstrong and His Sebastian New Cotton Club Orchestra

- [17] *I'm A Ding Dong Daddy (From Dinah)* (3:13) 21.30

Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra

- [18] *Georgia On My Mind* (3:27) 5.131
[19] *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (2:40) 7.137
[20] *Can-Can* (2:58) 15.40

Transfer and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, March 2008

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Louis Armstrong
Total duration: 61:34 ©2008 Pristine Audio.

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LOUIS ARMSTRONG

THE EARLY YEARS

Louis Armstrong - Horn playing and early jazz

In his early years, Armstrong was best known for his virtuosity with the cornet and trumpet. The greatest trumpet playing of his early years can be heard on his Hot Five and Hot Seven records. The improvisations which he made on these records of New Orleans jazz standards and popular songs of the day continue to stack up brilliantly alongside those of any other later jazz performer. The older generation of New Orleans jazz musicians often referred to their improvisations as "varying the melody"; Armstrong's improvisations were daring and sophisticated for the time while often subtle and melodic.

He often essentially re-composed pop-tunes he played, making them more interesting. Armstrong's playing is filled with joyous, inspired original melodies, creative leaps, and subtle relaxed or driving rhythms. The genius of these creative passages is matched by Armstrong's playing technique, honed by constant practice, which extended the range, tone and capabilities of the trumpet. In these records, Armstrong almost single-handedly created the role of the jazz soloist, taking what was essentially a collective folk music and turning it into an art form with tremendous possibilities for individual expression.

Armstrong's work in the 1920s shows him playing at the outer limits of his abilities. The Hot Five records, especially, often have minor flubs and missed notes, which do little to detract from listening enjoyment since the energy of the spontaneous performance comes through. By the mid 1930s, Armstrong achieved a smooth assurance, knowing exactly what he could do and carrying out his ideas with perfectionism.

Notes from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Armstrong

The XR Remastering of these recordings

This collection represents the first outing of a new 'variant' of the XR remastering process, tailored particularly for acoustic 78rpm recordings.

By using a specially adapted 'double pass' XR approach I've been able to get much closer to the cleaner finished sound I want using equalisation alone, before bringing in digital noise reduction, whilst simultaneously tackling the problems of horn resonances and very uneven tonal response. Where noise is a huge problem, as on acoustic recordings, this is a real step forward - it allows much better preservation of the musical signal and reduces the risk of producing audible digital noise artefacts in the finished recording.

What's been particularly fascinating about the Armstrong tracks is the realisation that, thanks to the sheer energy and harmonic richness of the brass instruments used, there's much, much more on some of these recordings than one might have expected to find. Normally we see acoustic recordings petering out somewhere between 3500 and 4500Hz, yet in occasional instances of particularly high notes I've detected harmonics right up to 19kHz.

The achievement of the new aspects of XR used for this restoration is to preserve these high harmonics much more effectively than before. Sadly they do generally only exist in the really high-energy instruments when they're playing loudly - we're not suddenly going to unearth CD quality from acoustic horn recordings - but the fact that they're not only possible but clearly audible does suggest that a lot of traditional equalisation of acoustic recordings may have been throwing valuable music content away.

A.R.

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