

FROM ORIGINAL ANALOG MASTER

2<sup>x</sup>HD

# LOUIS ARMSTRONG

& His ALL STARS



STORYVILLE



July 6, 1971, and it was impossible to believe that Louis Armstrong was dead. Musicians and Jazz lovers alike felt a sense of desperate personal loss, which to this day is undiminished. For Louis Armstrong seemed, somehow, to be immortal. And it was impossible that his trumpet, which had showered Jazz with musical gifts of unaccountable worth was stilled, that the generous man from New Orleans, whose love of life and humankind was inexhaustible had finally had to go away for ever. "Guys like Louis were part of my history", Bobby Hackett told Max Jones (Melody Maker June 19, 76) "and so a little of you dies with'em each time. You can't help but feel like that". And so, with recordings like these we can return with love to a younger day and for a little time live with Louis again.

On this beautifully recorded LP, Louis Armstrong and his All-Stars are heard doing what they loved and did best; playing Jazz of a quality that defies description and, as Louis would have said "pleasing the people". There's proof to spare that "pleasing the people" was fundamental to Louis; a pointer to the deep compassion for mankind which he felt and which brought him as much love as his consummate faultless artistry as a trumpet player. And for this writer at least, the two characteristics are inter-dependent.

It's inevitable perhaps that since Armstrong's death critics (and even some musicians) have cast doubts upon the genuinity of his apparently inexhaustible love of life, and snatched upon isolated disenchanted remarks and bursts of temper as indications that Armstrong was really just another mortal, filled with pent-up frustrations and carefully concealed disenchantment with his role. A considered look at the large part of Armstrong's existence, however, leads this writer to view such opinions with (as Humphrey Lyttleton once termed it) a large hunk of rock salt. Louis Armstrong happened to be, quite arguably, the greatest trumpeter of his time in the world blessed with a technique that enabled him to exercise his unbounded musical inspiration to the full. The artistic fulfilment he must have derived from such a situation, coupled with a natural good spirit filled him, I suspect, with the kind of love of life that few lesser mortals experience.

And if, as has been suggested, he appeared sometimes to be approachable but impenetrable this was, conceivably, because the joy of consummate talent – like that heard in these recordings – made deep revelations of hidden feelings redundant. For simply – beyond peaceful self-satisfaction – there were none to reveal. And it's significant, I think, that the few much vaunted Armstrong outbursts made themselves felt only when advancing age and deteriorating health threw a late and unaccustomed question mark over his physical ability to play as he knew he was once able.

These recordings, happily, capture Louis and his cohorts at the glorious height of their powers during two engagements (broadcast from the Downbeat and Hangover clubs in San Francisco) of the kind that often formed the All-Stars' nightly round. The band pursued a punishing schedule of dates that stretched their physical and mental powers to the ultimate and frequently left every member exhausted, though seldom uninspired. Guttridge and Smith (in their 1960 biography "*Jack Teagarden*") have described the "stretches of hollow showmanship, vexing periods of dullness, sleazy hotels and noisy audiences" that assailed the All-Stars during their Teagarden-Hines period. But this later unit, paradoxically, seemed to thrive on the pressures of constant travel. "This band plays best when it's tired", Trummy Young observed once and there's a joyful urgency in the music recorded here that makes a mockery of fatigue or over-familiarity. Seldom, if ever, have Armstrong and his All-Stars been captured in more exultant form.

Besides Louis' stellar work throughout, the musicians accompanying him on this recording arguably formed the greatest All-Stars ever. In Trummy Young, Armstrong found the perfect foil; a tough durable professional, not only a brilliant Jazzman in his own right, but the only trombonist partner whose on-stage presence and sense of humour matched Louis' own. And because Barney Bigard and Billy Kyle as well as being outstanding soloists understood the (equally difficult) art of ensemble playing, the All-Stars mark 2 achieved a cohesion seldom found in the Teagarden-Hines era. Listen to '*Back O' Town Blues*' for confirmation. And it was of course these musicians who contributed so largely to recorded jazz history with (amongst others) the W.C. Handy album (which Louis regarded as "my finest ever"), a comparable follow-up in 'Satch plays Fats', and the immortal performances that graced Hollywood's *Glenn Miller Story*.

From the roars of applause that greet Louis Armstrong, every track on this album reveals the All-Stars at the zenith of their creative powers. '*Indiana*' the standard Louis 'opener' presented with a flaring urgency, highlighted by an exultant trumpet solo is outstanding even by Armstrong standards. Renewed applause greets Velma Middleton who mugs happily through '*Big Butter and Egg Man*' before Louis' climbing trumpet leads the ensemble home. '*High Society*' with outstanding Bigard again reveals the staggering form that Armstrong was in that night; listen, for proof, to the whiplash top C, held with luxuriant confidence for several bars over the clarinet solo. Elsewhere there is a carefree humour, notably on '*The Dummy Song*' (really 'Washington and Lee Swing' and, incredibly, popularised in Britain by Max Bygraves and Peter Brough), and the '*Saints*', which shows in a nutshell how to mix hilarity and jazz of monumental worth.

Such performances as this are seminal to Jazz. They deserve the loving attention of Jazz people everywhere. For, like Louis Armstrong, music like this will never come again.

# LOUIS ARMSTRONG

& His ALL STARS

- 1 **SHADRACK** 3:15  
(trad.)
- 2 **WHEN THE SAINTS** 3:02  
(trad.)
- 3 **WEST END BLUES** 4:42  
(Cl. Williams-J. Oliver)
- 4 **DUMMY SONG** 2:48  
(Brown-Rose-Henderson)
- 5 **TIN ROOF BLUES** 5:08  
(Melrose-Rappolo-Mares-Brunies)
- 6 **BUCKET'S GOT A HOLE IN IT** 2:38  
(trad.)
- 7 **INDIANA** 4:06  
(Hanley)
- 8 **BIG BUTTER AND EGG MAN** 3:40  
(Venable)
- 9 **BACK O' TOWN BLUES** 5:35  
(L. Armstrong)
- 10 **SLEEPY TIME DOWN SOUTH** 2:51  
(L. Rene-O.- Rene-C. -Muse)
- 11 **HIGH SOCIETY** 2:18  
(Cl. Williams-A.J. Piron)

## Tracks 1,2,3,4,5,6,10

Louis Armstrong (tp, vo);  
Trummy Young (tb);  
Barney Bigard  
(cl & vo on track 5);  
Billy Kyle (p);  
Milt Hinton (b);  
Kenny Jones (dm);  
Velma Middleton  
(vo on track 4)  
*Recorded at Club Hangover,  
San Francisco,  
January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1954*

## Tracks 7,8,9,11

Louis Armstrong (tp, vo);  
Trummy Young (tb);  
Barney Bigard (cl);  
Billy Kyle (p);  
Arvell Shaw (b);  
Milt Hinton;  
Kenny Jones(dm)  
*Recorded at Downbeat,  
San Francisco,  
December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1954*

Liner notes; Dig Fairweather

## 2XHD MASTERING:

René Laflamme

## 2XHD EXECUTIVE

PRODUCER: André Perry

Album cover and booklet  
concept and graphics:  
André Perry  
Graphics: Sylvie Labelle





## THE 2xHD MASTERING PROCESS



The mastering chain consists of a selection of high-end vacuum tube equipment. For the recordings on this album, the original ¼" 15 ips NAB master tapes were played on a Nagra-T tape recorder, modified with high-end tube playback electronics, wired with OCC silver cable from the playback head direct to a Nick Doshi tube head preamplifier. The Nagra T, with its four direct drive motors, two pinch rollers and a tape tension head, has one of the best transports ever made. A custom-built carbon fiber head block and a head damping electronic system permit 2xHD to obtain a better resolution and 3D imaging.

The resulting signal is then transferred into high resolution formats by recording it in DSD 11.2 MHz using a Merging Technologies' Horus A to D converter. All analog and digital cables that are used are state of the art. The 2xHD FUSION mastering system is powered by a super capacitor power supply, using a new technology that lowers the digital noise found in the lowest level of the spectrum. A vacuum tube NAGRA HDdac (DSD) is used as a reference digital playback converter in order to A and B with the original analog master tape, permitting the fusion of the warmth of analog with the refinement of digital.

2xHD was created by producer/studio owner André Perry and audiophile sound engineer René Laflamme.

2xHD Mastering by: René Laflamme  
2xHD Executive Producer: André Perry

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