



TOB

THE MONTREUX JAZZ LABEL™

SWISS RADIO DAYS  
JAZZ SERIES

48

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG**  
**ALL STARS**  
LAUSANNE 1952



## LOUIS ARMSTRONG ALL STARS

LOUIS ARMSTRONG - TRUMPET, VOCAL | TRUMMY YOUNG - TROMBONE | BOB McCracken - CLARINET  
MARTY NAPOLEON - PIANO | ARVELL SHAW - BASS | COZY COLE - DRUMS | VELMA MIDDLETON - VOCAL (TRACKS 6 & 7)

### LAUSANNE 1952

- 1 WHEN IT'S SLEEPY TIME DOWN SOUTH 3:04 (Clarence Muse)
- 2 INDIANA 5:00 (James F. Hanley)
- 3 BLUEBERRY HILL 4:03 (Vincent Rose)
- 4 MY BUCKET'S GOT A HOLE IN IT 3:31 (Clarence Williams)
- 5 COQUETTE 3:12 (Johnny Green/Carmen Lombardo)
- 6 LOVER COME BACK TO ME 3:38 (Sigmund Romberg)
- 7 CAN ANYONE EXPLAIN 5:53 (Bennie Benjamin)
- 8 SAINT-LOUIS BLUES 5:59 (W.C. Handy)
- 9 A KISS TO BUILD A DREAM ON 5:22 (Bert Kalmar/Harry Ruby/Oscar Hammerstein II)
- 10 I'VE FOUND A NEW BABY 3:02 (Jack Palmer/Spencer Williams)
- 11 THE MAN I LOVE 5:28 (George & Ira Gershwin)
- 12 WHEN IT'S SLEEPY TIME DOWN SOUTH 1:16 (Clarence Muse)
- 13 NEW ORLEANS FUNCTION 3:58 (Traditional)
- 14 OH DIDN'T HE RAMBLE 3:32 (Rosamond Johnson/James Weldon Johnson/Bob Cole)
- 15 C'EST SI BON 2:53 (Henri Betti)
- 16 MUSKRAT RAMBLE 6:13 (Kid Ory)
- 17 ON THE ALAMO 2:57 (Isham Jones)
- 18 TIN ROOF BLUES 5:29 (New Orleans Rhythm Kings)

## Satchmo's wonderful world - "C'est Si Bon!"

Louis Armstrong was an immeasurable gift for the millions of listeners, fans and musicians who felt themselves born along the decades by the irresistible force of his trumpet playing and singing. From the revolutionary power and audacity of the '20s to the awe-inspiring essentiality of the last recordings from the very end of the '60s, his musical traverse is crisscrossed and underpinned by a generosity and expressiveness unmatched throughout the history of Jazz.

Naturally, the "Satchmo" of the '50s is no longer he of the Hot Five, the Hot Seven, the fabulous orchestra of the early '30s or even the flights of "Swing That Music" with Jimmy Dorsey's 1936 orchestra. But what moves us beyond words in the voyage of Louis and his "All Stars" is his perpetual quest to reunite with his roots as a kid from New Orleans - the galvanizing and formative sounds that he searches for in every corner of improvisation as if it were only now in these powerful memories that he finds himself completely.

In 1952 his sextet had changed a bit, even if the rhythm section was the same as the one that propelled Earl Hines, Jack Teagarden and Barney Bigard many years before. Texan Bob McCracken does an excellent job throughout the concert as an earthy and efficient "goodmanian", and as well knows perfectly how to place himself at an ideal distance from the microphone so that we can appreciate his clarinet sound... as if we were there! Trummy Young is the delicate charmer that we all know, powerful and expressive in his solo interventions, ideal twin of Louis in certain vocal improvisations and delicate "counter-singer" behind his... Master's voice! For his part, Marty Napoleon clearly appears "imperial" (noblesse oblige), and delivers a few solos with communicative dynamism. In this regard, his remarkable trio version of Saint-Louis Blues poses the question as to why Marty never really enjoyed the reputation that he deserved to have? As for the rhythmic tandem Arvell Shaw/Cozy Cole, it works like clockwork, providing the combo with an impeccable and brilliantly catchy foundation from start to finish. We sense in the relationship between the double bassist and his "big brother" Louis a sort of complementarity and friendship which evokes the type of role and complicity that Freddie Green had for Basie or Harry Carney for Duke... We should also mention that Arvell,

creator that evening of a delicious version of "The Man I Love", felt almost at home, since his wife was from Vevey - a town about twenty kilometers from the venue.

Saving the Lady for last... Dame Velma Middleton brings to the party her impertinent banter and habitual good humor, even taking off on a few flights of fancy, notably in "Lover Come Back To Me" and "Can Anyone Explain", which could probably be counted among the singer's best recorded performances. We also see a Satchmo in excellent mood, mischievous and good-naturedly bawdy, together playing off of each other to the audience's delight. Carried away by the high spirits of the moment, he even makes a nice little slip of the tongue by presenting the first of the two themes, calling it "Lover Come *Black* To Me"! Not to mention the double entendres and the rather nimble play on words that Velma comes back with when Louis mentions a friend from Maine and that she nicknames "Bangor", which of course can be understood in two very different ways...

As for Mister Satch... well! What can we add that hasn't already been said? Except that this performance in Lausanne appears to us to be of the highest and most beautiful quality, and that from start to finish Louis is overflowing with feeling and passion, managing to present these tunes that he'd repeated a thousand times as if he were offering them a new life with each fresh interpretation. Additionally, the overall high quality sound recording allows you to slip magically into the ambiance of the concert and feel a presence that is quite rare for testimonies from this period.

Finally, let us not forget that while certainly, quite a few critics will have spoken at length about the repetitive side of the repertoire and of the "Armstrongian" approach of this period, the public and fans who discovered Louis' music in concert for the first time were literally amazed by the power and the "Truth" that emanated from it. We know people who were there, and still speak to us today about this evening with tears in their eyes. For some, this moment was so revealing and salient that it determined their future life choice, which could be nowhere else than in music!

Dizzy Gillespie, speaking about Louis Armstrong, made it quite simple: "No him, no me." And when Louis died in 1971, Diz said, "Louis Armstrong's station in the history of Jazz is unimpeachable. If it weren't for him, there wouldn't be any of us." Miles Davis, for his part, summed it up very clearly: "You know you can't play anything on a horn that Louis hasn't played - I mean even modern."

Listen and listen again to "La Chanson de Louis". C'est Si Bon!

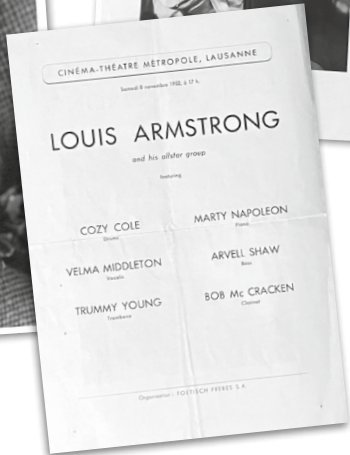
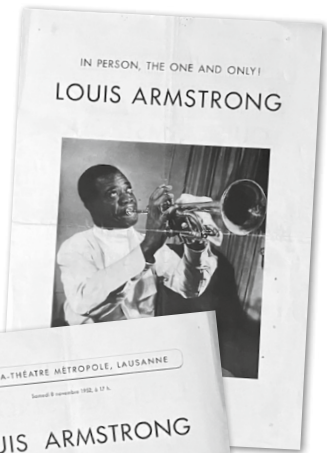
**Yvan Ischer**

Producer-Journalist

RTS-Radio Télévision Suisse

Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Consultant





Louis in 1934 - Photo by Germaine Martin © Musée historique de Lausanne/Germaine Martin

Satchmo in Lausanne



New Year's Eve celebration on December 31, 1933

## La Chanson de Louis... C'est Si Bon !

Louis Armstrong aura été un cadeau inestimable... et ce pour des millions d'auditeurs, de fans et de musiciens qui se sont sentis portés au travers des décennies par la force irrésistible de son jeu de trompette et de son chant. De la puissance et de l'audace révolutionnaires des années '20 à l'essentialité bouleversante des derniers enregistrements de la toute fin des années '60, son parcours musical est traversé et sous-tendu par une générosité et une expressivité inégalée dans toute l'histoire du Jazz.

Naturellement, le « Satchmo » des années '50 n'est plus celui des Hot Five, des Hot Seven ou du fabuleux orchestre du début des années '30 ou encore des envolées de « Swing That Music » avec l'orchestre de Jimmy Dorsey en 1936. Mais ce qui émeut au-delà des mots dans le parcours de Louis et de ses « All Stars », c'est cette quête perpétuelle de retrouvailles avec ses racines de gamin de La Nouvelle-Orléans, ces sonorités galvanisantes et formatrices qu'il recherche à chaque coin d'improvisation comme s'il n'y avait désormais que dans ces souvenirs porteurs qu'il se retrouvait complètement.

En 1952, son sextette s'est un peu transformé, même si la section rythmique est la même que celle qui propulsait Earl Hines, Jack Teagarden et Barney Bigard un lustre auparavant. Le Texan Bob McCracken fait un excellent travail tout au long du concert en goodmanien terrien et efficace, sachant par ailleurs se placer à une distance idéale du micro pour que l'on puisse apprécier sa sonorité de clarinette... comme si on y était ! Trummy Young est le délicat charmeur que l'on sait, puissant et expressif dans ses interventions en solo, jumeau idéal de Louis dans certaines improvisations vocales et « contre-chanteur » délicat derrière la voix de son... Maître ! Marty Napoleon, pour sa part, se montre évidemment... impérial (noblesse oblige) et délivre quelques soli d'un dynamisme communicatif. A cet égard, sa remarquable version en trio de Saint-Louis Blues interroge sur le fait que Marty n'ait jamais vraiment eu la réputation qu'il aurait mérité d'avoir. Quant au tandem rythmique Arvell Shaw/Cozy Cole, il fonctionne au doigt et à l'œil, fournissant au combo une assise impeccable et terriblement entraînante de bout en bout. Et on sent dans la relation entre le contrebassiste et son grand frère Louis une sorte de complémentarité et d'amitié qui évoque presque le type de rôle et de complicité qu'avait Freddie Green pour Basie ou Harry Carney pour Duke... En soulignant aussi qu'Arvell, auteur ce

soir-là d'un délicieux « The Man I Love », se sentait presque chez lui, puisqu'il avait épousé une Veveysanne - la ville de Vevey se trouvant à une vingtaine de kilomètres de Lausanne.

Et puis, Lady Last... Dame Velma Middleton apporte à l'ensemble sa gouaille et sa bonne humeur proverbiale, se payant même quelques envolées, notamment dans « Lover Come Back To Me » et « Can Anyone Explain », qui seront probablement à compter parmi les meilleures prestations en concert de la chanteuse. En soulignant aussi qu'un Satchmo d'excellente humeur, coquin et gentiment égrillard, lui donne la réplique de manière souvent très cocasse. Emporté par son enthousiasme amusé du moment, il commet même un joli petit lapsus en présentant le premier des deux thèmes et en l'appelant « Lover Come *Black* To Me ! »... Sans parler des doubles sens et du jeu de mots plutôt leste que lui retourne Velma lorsqu'il évoque cette amie qui vient du Maine et qu'elle évoque... « Bangor », ce qui peut naturellement, en anglais, se comprendre très... différemment !

Quant à Mister Satch... well ! Que peut-on ajouter qui n'ait pas déjà été dit ? Sinon que sa prestation lausannoise nous apparaît d'une grande et belle tenue et que d'un bout à l'autre, Louis déborde de feeling et de passion, parvenant à rejouer ces thèmes mille fois répétés comme s'il leur offrait à chaque interprétation un nouveau souffle. Par ailleurs, la prise de son globalement de grande qualité de cet enregistrement permet de se glisser magiquement dans l'ambiance du concert et confère à celui-ci une présence assez rare pour des témoignages de cette époque.

Enfin, n'oublions pas que si, certes, pas mal de critiques auront glosé en long et en large sur le côté répétitif du répertoire et de l'approche armstrongienne de cette époque, le public et les amateurs qui découvriraient la musique de Louis en concert pour la première fois étaient littéralement stupéfaits par la puissance et la « Vérité » qui s'en dégageait. On connaît des spectateurs qui nous parlent aujourd'hui encore de cette soirée les larmes aux yeux et pour certains, ce moment a été à ce point révélateur et marquant qu'il a déterminé leur choix de vie à venir, qui ne pourrait désormais plus que se concevoir... en musique !

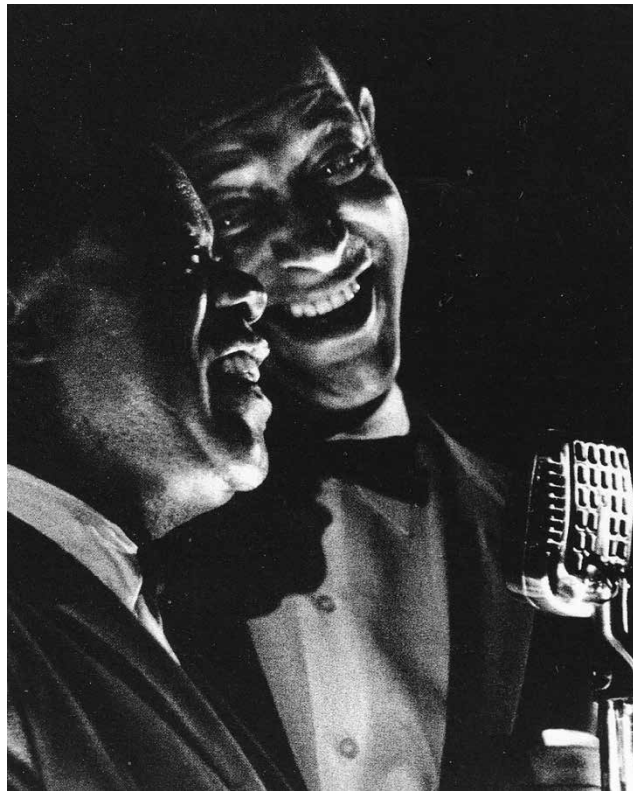
A la disparition de Louis, en 1971, Dizzy Gillespie avait déclaré : « Louis Armstrong's station in the history of Jazz is unimpeachable. If it weren't for him, there wouldn't be any of us. » Ou mieux encore : « No him, no me ! » Miles Davis, pour sa part, avait résumé la chose à sa manière : « You know you can't play anything on the trumpet that Louis hasn't played - I mean even modern. »

Ecoutez et ré-écoutez donc la Chanson de Louis : « C'est Si Bon ! »



**Yvan Ischer**  
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Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series









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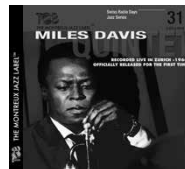
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