



**MORE ON POPS**

ON STAGE AND OFF STAGE personalities vary to a great extent. Many of our great comedians on stage are the least funny people when not working. Many gifted actors and talented actresses become virtually inarticulate without a prepared script.

In the case of the truly great—the once in a lifetime happenstances—on and off are the same. The person is one with the personality or personalities portrayed. Of such greatness is Louis Armstrong. There is only one Pops and he is the same wherever and whenever seen and/or heard.

Zen boiled down all the religious concepts of the early Indian Buddhist culture to "When I am hungry, I eat, and when I am tired, I sleep." Louis is that uncomplicated. As a person and as a performer.

In 1922, he made his first recordings. In 1964, he is just one or two Beatles away from the top selling single record in the United States, if not the world. At age 64 (July 4th), Louis has been headlining at the Riviera in Las Vegas and his schedule of performances for the balance of this year would defeat a performer half Pop's years.

My story today about Satch concerns the year 1959. Armstrong had been seriously ill in Italy. Louie denies it now but the reports were grim. Our first concern was his well being. From a selfish standpoint, Louis was committed upon return from Rome to do the long-awaited album with the Dukes of Dixieland. It was to be the fulfillment of a promise made by Pops to the Assunto boys, who were then just beginning to test their wings in New Orleans; and for this bearded one it was the anticipation of sitting in the control booth for a Louis Armstrong recording session.

Serious illness or not, Louis, lip and horn, were there in Chicago on that Monday in May, 1959. The Dukes were driving up from French Lick, Indiana, where they had participated in a Jazz Festival. (Can you think of a better-named place for a Jazz Festival than F. L.?) Freddie Williamson, Joe Glaser's man in the midwest, and this bearded one were in French Lick for the bash and together with our luggage, which consisted of two gargantuan hangovers, flew out (literally and figuratively) in Williamson's private plane that Monday morning.

Freddie W. forgot to gas up and we were forced down in Bloomington, Indiana, where we were told that it was raining to the North and that Chicago was weathered in or about to be. We took off anyway. The recording sessions were scheduled that afternoon. I was really unnecessary but Freddie represented Louis' interests and neither of us were about to miss this meeting for any reason. The balance of the trip included another forced landing in the rain in a corn field near Cedar Lake and still another at Meigs Field, downtown on the Lake in Chicago, with neither instruments nor visibility, just in time for the session.

POPS WAS JUST a little late, as usual. Upon his arrival, Frank, Fred, Louis and I discussed the first number. As I mentioned last week, the album was for Audio Fidelity and we were restricted to material that had not been performed by Louis for any of the other record companies during a period of five years prior to May, 1959. We were primarily concerned with Decca, which had put out a \$25 package containing original and re-recorded performances by Satch during the 1930's, 1940's and early 1950's. I had a list of fifteen carefully-culled selections which I planned to offer one at a time to Louis and the Dukes, letting them settle keys and tempo and then set up arrangements and solo sequences right on the spot. Spontaneity was my prime aim, together with a relaxed set of performances which would



**LOUIS ARMSTRONG**  
Pops Still Going Strong

be the best playing possible at that moment by the musicians involved.

Remembering Louis' recent indisposition, I watched him carefully, fearful of overtaking his strength. That afternoon we completed six selections. Then Louis Armstrong, Frank and Fred Assunto and I went to a studio where they posed for approximately four hours to get the photo which eventually was on the album cover for "Louis and the Dukes". Louis finally complained that he had had enough. He winked at me because Sid Frey, owner of the record company, wanted "just a few more poses." Frey gave in.

THE REAL REASON we called a halt was that Louis and I were anxious to get out to the South Side of Chicago for some soul food, New Orleans style. I cacked out at four a.m. That sick, old fellow Mr. A., was still swinging as I crawled home. The next afternoon we finished the other six sides.

Milt Gabler's secretary at Decca Records, in preparing the list of tunes which were restricted, had forgotten to include some tunes recorded but not yet released for sale. They were being held for a future release. The selections recorded that day in May may never see the light of day. It was nearly a year later that twelve different selections were recorded at Webster Hall, New York City, for release on Audio Fidelity. Nat Hentoff was there and did the liner notes. The original twelve selections are now locked up in litigation and are sitting with either Joe Glaser, Armstrong's friend, long time manager and agent, or with Sidney Frey, owner of Audio Fidelity.

I hope some day that all concerned will get together, that Decca will relent and that you will get to hear the sounds that were made by the indestructible Mr. Armstrong, shortly be-

**Bus Integration**  
**Arrests Barred**

Police in Jackson, Miss., are under federal order not to arrest Negroes who integrate transportation facilities in that city.

U. S. District Judge Sydney Mize has issued a sweeping injunction against the arrest of Negroes who defy laws requiring segregation on public bus, rail and air systems. The decision was ordered by the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of Negroes arrested when the first wave of "Freedom Riders" poured into Mississippi in 1961.

fore at death's door, plus the Dukes. I can't forget that it was en route to that session that the world nearly lost this bearded one and Freddie Williamson in a corn field in Indiana enroute from French Lick (I had to get that name in once more). Come to think of it, that would have been a hell of a way to cure two hangovers.

Next week, we will discuss Pop's first meeting with the current sensation from New Orleans, Al Hirt. Incidentally, Hirt has a record which for a time was challenging Louie's "Dolly" on the best selling lists—"Java".

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