

# Jazz music essay example

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



The origin of jazz music was reportedly traced to dates which were as early as the 1800s through an era more commonly known as “ antebellum”.

During those times, jazz music was already identified to be part of black music. Jazz is actually defined as “ a style of music, an American culture and distinguished by flexible rhythmic tempo, as a base accompanied with improvisation of solo and ensemble on basic tunes and chord patterns” .

Since its historical origin, jazz music has transcended and evolved through the creative and innovative influences of musicians and musical instruments through time. The current discourse hereby aims to present a comparative analysis of two of the greatest American jazz musicians: Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong in terms of their respective stylistic contributions to jazz music.

## **Louis Armstrong**

Louis Armstrong, born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on August 4, 1901 manifested his talent as a musician and was first recognized in Chicago through allegedly joining King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band where he reportedly played the second cornet. He then was influenced by his first wife, Lillian Hardin, to transfer in New York and join Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra. Armstrong was noted to have exhibited the swing music style and swinging vocabulary to jazz music. Likewise, upon his noted return to Chicago, he was revealed to have formed his own band, Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five, and was disclosed to have created more than 60 records under OKeh Records .

Armstrong’s distinct style and vocal prowess enabled the composition of songs which became popular during his times: “” I Can't Give You Anything

But Love," " Star Dust" and " Body and Soul." Armstrong's daring vocal transformations of these songs completely changed the concept of popular singing in American popular music, and had lasting effects on all singers who came after him, including Bing Crosby, Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald” . His most popular albums were noted as follows: (1) West End Blues; (2) Louis Armstrong Plays W. C. Handy; (3) Ella and Louis; (4) What a Wonderful World; and (5) Hello, Dolly! . Duke Ellington

Duke Ellington was noted to have been born on the 29th of April, 1899, in Washington, DC . He was regarded to have called the type of music he played as distinctly American Music, as contrasted with pegging it as jazz music (Estates of Mercer K. Ellington and Edward K. “ Duke” Ellington, 2008). Ellington’s influence in jazz music was revealed to be significant given the innumerable compositions played estimated to be about 3, 000. Attesting to Ellington’s genuine talent for music has been evident from the awards and accolades generated during this lifetime. His style in creating music was effectively summed and described in such a way that he allegedly designed the jazz songs with a greater depth and empowerment through clearly ensuring that the message of the composition is relayed and understood; and that they integrate the varied experiences, challenges, and lives of African-Americans on a maximized realm (Estates of Mercer K. Ellington and Edward K. “ Duke” Ellington, 2008). Likewise, Ellington was disclosed to have sought musical artists with unique talents such as “ Bubber Miley, who used a plunger to make the “ wa-wa” sound, and Joe Nanton, who gave the world his trombone “ growl””. His famous compositions include: " Concerto for Cootie," " Cotton Tail" and " Ko-Ko"; and popular songs such as " It Don't Mean

a Thing if It Ain't Got That Swing," " Sophisticated Lady," " Prelude to a Kiss," " Solitude," and " Satin Doll" . Comparative Analysis

It was evident from the biographical information that the two musicians talents were showcased almost in similar time frames, with Ellington being born two years earlier than Armstrong; yet Ellington lived three years later than Armstrong. While Armstrong was noted to have been raised in a predominantly poor neighborhood with a father who abandoned him and a mother who was reported to have turned into prostitution . On the other hand, Ellington was reported to have been raised in a middle-income family. Thus, at a very young age of seven, he was reported to have learned how to play the piano. On the other hand, Armstrong was revealed not to have had any musical orientation until such time that he was provided musical instruction on the cornet during his stay at the Colored Waif's Home for Boys . These background have significant impacts on the way both musicals were apparently inspired in the kind of music that they composed. Ellington was cited that his inspiration to his musical work in his racial orientation and as such, stories within the songs where apparently of things that have allegedly gone wrong .

The most popular songs attributed to Armstrong from among those that were mentioned were definitely “ Start Dust”, “ Hello, Dolly!” And “ What a Wonderful World” which catapulted him to fame. These songs are considered groundbreaking, especially What a Wonderful World due to its jazzy melody in simple, yet inspiring lyrics. On the other hand, songs composed by Ellington such as " It Don't Mean a Thing if It Ain't Got That Swing," “ In a Sentimental Mood” and “ Solitude” were considered groundbreaking and

notable since these revolutionized American music at the time due to the distinct timbre, melody, and rhythmic patterns which made them easy to remember, fresh and appealing to listen to.

Concurrently, both have catapulted to fame within the years 1916 (Ellington) and 1918 (Armstrong) and have worked with bands to showcase their talents and skills in music. While Armstrong had been known as a vocalist and trumpet player, Ellington was basically a songwriter and various artists such as Ivie Anderson was known to have been his favorite vocalists for his compositions . Both musicians were therefore regarded as strongly influential in enriching American music through their respective musical styles and innovative compositions of songs and musical scores. Armstrong was more visible as his roles and endeavors, aside from being a singer and trumpet player, included being a comedian and a film star.

It was emphasized that Ellington’s music was distinct and paved the way to leave an idelible mark in American music through the a distinct form highlighting musical drama and the emphasis of blending movements, rhythmic patterns, and melodies, that provide enhanced emotional appeal to the audiences (A+E Television Networks, LLC, 2013). Likewise, Armstrong’s enthusiasm and genuine musical prowess continue to inspire musicians, especially in the genre of jazz music. He became famous for having recorded some of the firsts achievements for African-Americans. As such, these two musicians’ famous songs became their legacy to the American music lovers and to the world.

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