

The gypsy swing cats and the beginning of jazz

[Art & Culture](#), [Music](#)



Joshua Pauly Professor Hsu Artistic/Cultural Plunge Essay 11 April 2013 The Gypsy Swing Cats and the Beginning of Jazz On Wednesday April 10th I decided to go to the Kaffee Meister Coffeehouse, located at 9225 Carlton Hills Blvd Santee Ca. 92071, for the specific reason of enjoying some Jazzmusicplayed by the San Diego based Gypsy Swing Cats. I was quite impressed with how they performed by mixing an energetic and innovated blend of Swing, Jazz, and Blues. From what I observed, their music merges Gypsy melodies and rhythms, with the influences of American Jazz reminiscent of Paris in the 1930's: cool, charming, and classy.

The music of the Gypsy Swing Cats is thoroughly modern infused with the wild, mysteriously free and exciting Gypsy flavors. The tantalizing melodies of the Gypsy Swing Cats bring the audience a unique and new experience. Their highly rhythmic sound will electrify your listening experience with a new exciting energy. Gypsy Jazz, also known as Gypsy Swing, is a musical expression often said to have been started by guitarist Jean " Django" Reinhardt. He was foremost amongst a group of Gypsy guitarists working in and around Paris in the 1930's.

The music combined the exciting sound of American Jazz that transformed the old into the new. The guitarists supercharged the music further by adding Swing to the fire and melancholia of the unique Gypsy sound. The tantalizing melodies of the Gypsy Swing Cats bring the audience a unique and new experience. My dad is a big fan of Jazz music and he played it a lot around me when I was growing up, but I never really paid attention to it or who the famous musicians of the genre were.

Yeah, this Jazz music was and still is very soothing to my mind, but I just personally never had any drive to listen to it on my own. After Hearing The Gypsy Swing Cats' band play this genre of music that I was not very familiar with, I decided to embark on a journey of discovering something new to add to my not-so-vastly knowledgeable brain, how Jazz was born. Jazz started when World War I had just ended and a social revolution was on its way. Customs and values of previous social norms were rejected. Life was to be lived to the fullest.

This was also known as the era of the "lost generations," and the "flapper" with her rolled stockings, short skirts, and straight up-and-down look. They disturbed their elders in the casino, night clubs, and speakeasies that replaced the ballrooms of prewar days. Dancing became more informal. At the close of the nineteenth century in the unpleasant dance halls and brothels of the South and Midwest, the word Jazz commonly meant sexual intercourse. Southern blacks, delivered from slavery a few decades before, started playing European music with Afro modifications.

The first place of jazz has many origins: New Orleans, St. Louis, Memphis, and Kansas City are just a few. But New Orleans was and still remains an important jazz center. The ethnic rainbow of people who went to the bars and brothels were a big part of the development of jazz. This city had been under Spanish French rule because of the Louisiana Purchase. By 1900 New Orleans was a blend of Spanish, French, English, German, Italian, Slavic and countless blacks originally brought in the country as slaves.

The first jazz bands contained a "rhythm section" consisting of a string bass, drums, and a guitar or banjo, and a "melodic section" with one or two

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cornets, a trombone, a clarinet, and sometimes even a violin. Years later, jazz was taken over by large orchestras; A "society jazz" contained fifteen or more musicians. Today, there is a renewed interest in the "big band" era, even though the music has very little to do with real jazz. Jazz is characterized by certain features. The first is a tendency to stress the weak beats of the bar (2nd and 4th) in contrast to traditional music which stressed the first and third beats.

The second feature is syncopation through an extensive repetition of short and strongly rhythmic phrases or "riffs". The third feature of jazz is swing (regular but subtle pulsation which animates 4/4 time). The swing must be present in every good jazz performance. Jazz as a musical style it has been with us for more than a century. Jazz originated in the United States, It has spread over the entire world, and its influence can be seen everywhere. It is a universal language and means of communication, understood by people in all nations and all walks of life.

It has been a major influence on many styles and classes of music since its origin in the late 1800's. It has also influenced dance, clothing styles, the recording industry, the film industry, radio and television, our language, and many other aspects of our lives. One major contributor to jazz was Louis Daniel Armstrong who was born in the Storyville District of New Orleans, Louisiana, on August 4, 1901. He always celebrated his birth as July 4, 1900 because that is what he was told and believed.

His real date of birth was not known until after his death July 6, 1971. His father Willie, a laborer, left the family soon after he was born, his mother, a domestic servant and a part time prostitute called Mayanne, left Louis and

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his sister Beatrice, also called Mama Lucy, in the care of his grandma much of the time, however he always believed the love of his family helped him make it through those rough times. Louis dressed in rags and usually shopped in garbage cans. He sang with other boys on the streets for tips and began to develop his musical talents.

At this time in his life, it was not a promising time for young Louis. To celebrate the New Year in 1913 Louis discharged a borrowed pistol into the air and was arrested. A very fortunate occurrence for Jazz and probably for him, he was then sent to the city's Colored Waif's Home for Boys, where he came under the very capable tutorship of Peter Davis, the music instructor at the home. Louis had some background in harmony singing, as a natural ability, and the experience of singing on the streets, but under Mr.

Davis he began to study music. First vocals, then percussion, then he became the home bugler, and finally cornet. The music was very structured mostly marches and other ensemble music. When being released from the waif's home at age fourteen, Louis worked selling papers, unloading boats, and selling coal from a horse and cart. He also listened to bands at clubs like the Come Clean Dance Hall and Mahogany Hall, in Storyville. Joe " King" Oliver with the Kid Ory Band was his favorite and he quickly became young Louis's mentor.

By 1917 Louis was playing in various groups at dive bars in New Orleans' Storyville section. In 1919 he joined Fate Marable's band in St. Louis, and stayed with him until 1921. Marable headed a band and he played in Zutty Singleton's Trio, Papa Celestin's Tuxedo Orchestra, The Silver Leaf Band, and When King Oliver left New Orleans in 1919 to go to Chicago, Louis took his

place in Kid Ory's band, at the suggestion of Oliver. In 1922 Louis received a telegram from Joe Oliver, asking him to join his Creole Jazz Band at Lincoln Gardens in Chicago.

Louis learned much working with Oliver. The experience of playing second cornet helped to develop his ear and harmonies, and, the importance of playing straight lead, as Oliver did, were lessons that he would use for the remainder of his life. While playing in Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, Louis met Lillian Hardin the piano player for the band, and they were married in February of 1924. By the end of 1924 she pressured Louis to leave the Oliver band. He moved to New York to play in Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra for 13 months.

While in New York he worked many recording sessions with numerous Blues singers including Bessie Smith on her 1925 classic recording of " St. Louis Blues". In 1925 Armstrong moved back to Chicago and joined his wife's band at the Dreamland. He recorded his first Hot Five records that same year. This was the first time Louis had made records under his own name. The records made by Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven are considered to be absolute jazz classics and the peak of his creative powers. The band never played live, but continued recording until 1928.

Louis Armstrong died in 1969 his manager was Joe Glaser. According to records the first person to play jazz music was a man born in 1878, the legendary Buddy Bolden. The old-time musicians say that Buddy Bolden was " the first musician to start the big noise in Jazz. " They say he'd shine his cornet " till it glistened like a woman's legs". Then he'd put his horn out the window and say to his band, " Let's call the children home". He would blow

and his children would come running. It has also been said that, " his trumpet could be heard all over New Orleans, and even across the river in Algiers".