



## ***The Life & Music of Louis Armstrong*** **Performance Guide**

This show includes Rich Begel of the Dayton Philharmonic and Dean Simms, a nationally touring Louis Armstrong artist. Rich and Dean will share the amazing music made famous by Louis Armstrong with Dean on vocals and trumpet, just like Louis! Between songs, there will be stories about Armstrong's humble beginnings, his performing career, civil rights activism, racism that he faced and the actions he took against it.

### **This performance guide includes:**

- Artist bio
- A warmup activity
- Pre-show thinking prompts
- Key vocabulary
- Suggested Q & A questions
- Post-show discussion questions
- A student survey link
- Post-show exercises
- Related Ohio Learning Standards

# BEFORE THE SHOW

## Meet the Artists



Virtuoso trumpeter **Dean Simms** is the leader of “The Satchmo Show.” Along with his uncanny re-creation of Louis Armstrong, Dean has performed or recorded lead trumpet with many famous acts, such as the Ohio Players, Rick James Stone City Band, Peabo Bryson, Little Anthony, Roger Troutman and many more. Simms plays trumpet like the master himself and matches his singing style exactly!

**Rich Begel** is a trombonist with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra. He has performed with numerous ensembles across the country. He currently teaches music technology, music appreciation and low brass at Sinclair Community College and surrounding schools. He maintains many teaching resources for aspiring brass students at his website [www.richbegel.com](http://www.richbegel.com).



## Classroom Warmup

Louis Armstrong’s gravelly voice and loose, improvisational style changed the sound of popular music. For an example of Armstrong’s ability to reshape songs, listen to the jazz standard “Stardust”: the original written and recorded by Hoagy Carmichael in 1927 and then Louis Armstrong’s interpretation from 1931.

As you listen to each song, make notes to describe the music and singing. (It doesn’t matter if you have no formal training – let your ear be your guide!)

- “Stardust” by Hoagy Carmichael:  
<https://youtu.be/j2fbOAYNOpM?si=WFFRgWDZ7ihrJSQR>
- “Stardust” by Louis Armstrong:  
<https://youtu.be/enEUZz9sLeo?si=-SBhrOhxzTcsBxyS>

What differences did you notice? What characteristics make Armstrong’s version distinctive? Discuss with a partner or as a class.

## Think While You Watch

Louis Armstrong is a foundational figure in jazz and one of popular music’s first big celebrities. Do you think musical artists today can have the same level of impact on music and society as Louis Armstrong? Why or why not?

# Meet Louis “Pops” Armstrong



Louis Armstrong was an internationally famous jazz trumpeter, bandleader, and singer. An all-star virtuoso, the New Orleans native came to prominence in the 1920s and influenced countless musicians with both his daring trumpet style and unique vocals. He made a life making music with touring bands, including his own: Louis Armstrong and the Hot Five (and later, the Hot Seven). The records he made with these groups from 1925-1928 are generally regarded as the most important and influential recordings in jazz history. Some of his many recognizable and influential songs include “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” “West End Blues,” “Swing That Music,” “When the Saints Go Marching In,” and “What a Wonderful World.” Louis Armstrong performed for audiences around the world until his death in 1971.

Excerpted from <https://www.biography.com/musicians/louis-armstrong>

## Vocabulary

Understanding the following terms will help you to enjoy the artists’ performance.

- *Cornet*: A brass instrument resembling a trumpet but smaller in shape and mellower in tone. Louis Armstrong’s first instrument.
- *Cultural ambassador*: Someone who promotes and represents the traditions, customs, and artistic expressions of their culture.
- *Jazz*: A music genre originating from New Orleans in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- *Little Rock Nine*: Nine African American students who famously faced enormous racial prejudice when attempting to integrate Little Rock Central High School in 1957.
- *New Orleans*: The birthplace of jazz and Louis Armstrong. New Orleans’ incredible musical innovations are a result of the intermixing of African American, Spanish, French, Creole, Cuban and Caribbean cultures.
- *Scatting*: Scat singing or scatting is vocal improvisation with wordless or nonsense syllables. Louis Armstrong was not the first but may be the most famous master of scatting.

## The Q & A

Artists love to answer thoughtful questions! If you are having trouble thinking of a question, here are some that the artists would love to answer for you.

- How did you learn to play your instrument?
- What kind of training do you need to have to be a successful musician?
- What advice would you have for someone wanting to follow in your footsteps?

# AFTER THE SHOW

## Post-Show Discussion

Discuss or write a reflection:

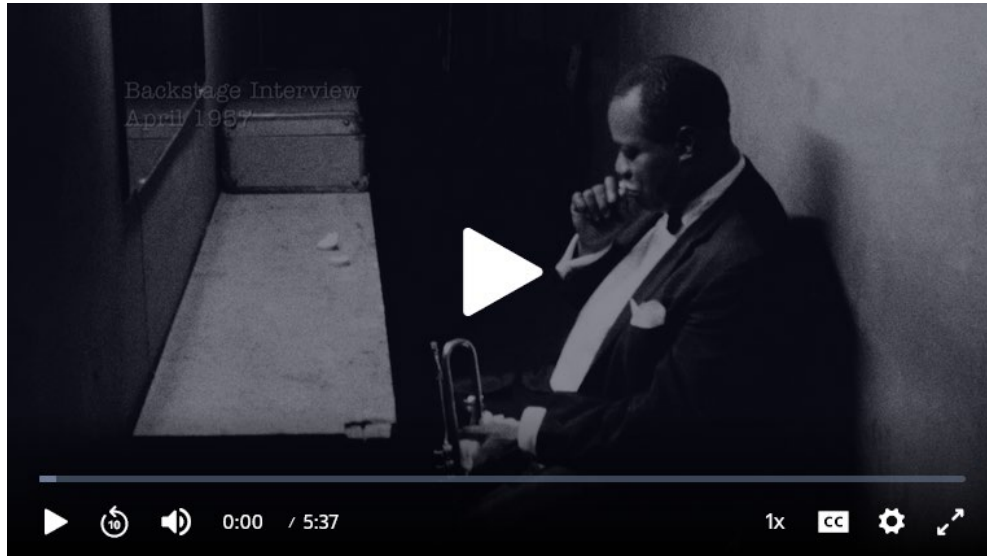
- What parts of the performance stood out for you and why?
- What stories or facts about Louis Armstrong's life did you find surprising?
- What questions do you still have? Where can you find the answers?

## Student Survey

Tell us about your experience at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3YTT9WQ>

## Post-Show Activity

### Louis Armstrong and the Civil Rights Movement



Learn about the role of Louis Armstrong in the national debate surrounding the story of the Little Rock Nine. PBS LearningMedia's resources include discussion questions, informational text, and teaching tips:

<https://thinktv.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/jazz-l8-ss-armstrong/the-jazz-ambassadors-louis-armstrong-and-the-civil-rights-movement/>

# FOR TEACHERS

## Related Ohio Learning Standards

The following standards are linked to the artist's performance and/or the activities in the performance guide. Teachers may be able to make additional connections.

### Music

<i>Enduring Understandings:</i> Artists/students engage in analysis and interpretation to understand and evaluate artistic works. Artists/students understand and communicate the value of creative expressions in internal and external contexts.	
<b>Responding (RE)</b>	
6.7RE	Compare and discuss the musical traditions of various cultures.
7.1RE	Identify aurally the style and historical period of various musical examples.
8.1RE	Examine contemporary music styles and describe the distinctive characteristics in a repertoire of exemplary works.
HSI.2RE	Explore and identify instruments from different historical periods and various cultures.
<b>Connecting (CO)</b>	
6.1CO	Describe the connection between emotion and music in selected musical works using elements of music.
6.2CO	Attend and critique live music performances and demonstrate appropriate audience behavior for the context and style of music performed.
6-7.5CO	Identify different careers in music.
6.7CO	Identify different functions and uses of music in American and other cultures.
7.7CO	Recognize and identify historical and cultural contexts (time and place of a music event) that have influenced music.
8.4CO	Discuss the purpose and value of music in various cultures and settings.
HSP.1CO	Identify moods and meanings of selected music pieces and identify social events/situations where the music would be appropriate.

### Drama/Theatre

<i>Enduring Understandings:</i> Artists/students engage in analysis and interpretation to understand and evaluate artistic works. Artists/students understand and communicate the value of creative expressions in internal and external contexts.	
<b>Responding (RE)</b>	
7.3RE	Explain how production elements work together to affect an audience.

## Social Studies

American History	Prosperity, Depression and The New Deal (1919-1941) Social Transformations in the United States (1945-1994)
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## Writing

CCR Anchor Standard 1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
CCR Anchor Standard 2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
CCR Anchor Standard 4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCR Anchor Standard 10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## Speaking and Listening

CCR Anchor Standard 1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
CCR Anchor Standard 2	Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
CCR Anchor Standard 3	Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

## Social and Emotional Learning

Self-Awareness	A2: Demonstrate awareness of personal interests and qualities, including strengths and challenges A4: Demonstrate a sense of personal responsibility, confidence, and advocacy
Relationship Skills	D1: Apply positive verbal and non-verbal communication and social skills to interact effectively with others and in groups D2: Develop and maintain positive relationships
Responsible Decision-making	E4: Explore and approach new situations with an open mind and curiosity while recognizing that some outcomes are not certain or comfortable