

American Musicians

Music is a form of entertainment, which allows you to express yourself in new and outlandish ways. Music has been around for hundreds of years. American musicians, I believe, are the most unique of them all. Three very different twentieth century American musicians have influenced and made astounding contributions to today's music style. Let me introduce you to Aaron Copeland, Louie Armstrong, and Elvis Presley.

Aaron Copland was the son of immigrant Jewish parents from Poland and Lithuania. He was born in Brooklyn ("Copland, Aaron (1900-1990)") in 1900 ("Aaron Copland Biography") and lived to become one of the great American composers. Aaron Copland, one of the oldest American classical musicians, has made a great contribution to this society. He studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger ("Copland, Aaron (1900-1990)"). Copland's best works consist of his concerts and ballets ("Aaron Copland Biography"). Some of his ballets were Billy the Kid, Appalachian Spring, and Rodeo. His most known orchestral work was Fanfare for the Common Man ("Copland, Aaron (1900-1990)"). For his contributions to American Culture, President Johnson awarded him the Medal of Freedom.

Copland was not only a composer but also a conductor, teacher, and author. Copland died on December 2, 1990 at the age of 90 ("Copland, Aaron).

Louis Armstrong was another great American musician. He was born on August 4, 1901, in New Orleans, Louisiana ("Louis Armstrong Biography"). During his early years, Armstrong was very poor. He was so poor that his family had hardly any money to put food on the table. When he was younger, he would search through garbage cans for something to eat for supper ("Louis Armstrong"). At age seven, Armstrong got his first musical instrument. At age eleven, he had his first music lesson ("Louis Armstrong: A Cultural Legacy"). But despite his destitute past, Armstrong became one of the best jazz musicians around (Louis Armstrong Biography). Joe "King" Oliver was Armstrong's mentor. Armstrong also loved the blues and ragtime style. Around the 1920's, his popularity began to grow (Louis Armstrong: A Cultural Legacy"). Some of the songs that increased his popularity were It Takes Two to Tango, What a Wonderful World, and Hello, Dolly! His voice was said to have a sound similar to his trumpet (Louis Armstrong: A Cultural Legacy").

Elvis Presley was a modern American musician that changed American life. Presley was the first rock and roll

mega-star ("Elvis Presley Biography"). He was such a big hit because he was a Caucasian who could perform like popular African-American musicians. His tunes were based on the blues ("Elvis Presley Biography"). Some of his popular songs were Blue Suede Shoes, Jail House Rock, and Love Me Tender, and Can't Help Falling in Love. Unlike Copland and Armstrong, he had billions of fans all over the world that loved to hear him sing and dance. He "juiced up" his performance with the shaking of his hips. Most older people thought him to be a bad influence on American teens. Presley, however, would change music forever ("Elvis Presley Biography"). Like Armstrong, Presley also grew up with little money in the rural south. When he began to earn big money, he bought his family and friends expensive gifts. He gave his last concert in Market Square Arena in Indianapolis, Indiana on June 26, 1977. Presley was pronounced dead on August 16, 1977 due to a prescribed drug overdose. Some eighty thousand people came to his funeral on August eighteenth. His fans still meet at Graceland, his home in Memphis Tennessee, to celebrate his legacy each year on the day he died ("Elvis Presley Biography").

As you can see, music has changed a great deal from Copland's time. Music today has gone in many directions,

from classical, to country, to pop, to jazz, and even to rap. Copland, Armstrong, and Presley marked the changing of the times. Today people like so many things about music, largely because of the wide variety. In today's world there are many different musicians to pick from. Music has become a multi-billion dollar industry. Having so many different music styles allows everyone the opportunity to choose music enjoyable to them.

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