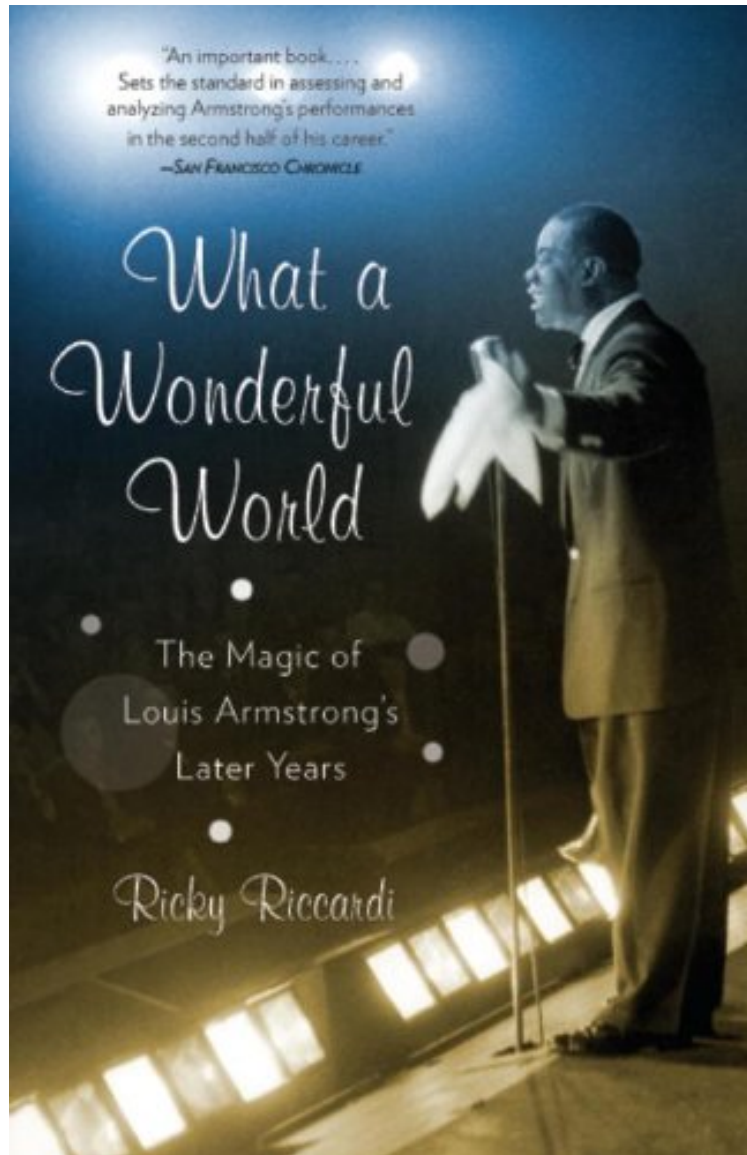


What a Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong's Later Years

Ricky Riccardi

*ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#725514 in eBooks 2011-06-21 2011-06-21 File Name: B0036S49UK | File size: 49.Mb

Ricky Riccardi : What a Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong's Later Years before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What a Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong's Later Years:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. On Pops' UnbirthdayBy Al BasileWhile my personal opinion is that there could never be enough books on Louis Armstrong, by anyone's standards this is a supremely important

addition to the body of attention focused on Pops. If good art makes us see something new, and great art makes us see in a new way, this book is both good and great in bringing even the experienced reader and listener to a new relationship with the depth of Armstrong's art and humanity. If it is fair to judge a person by the standards of the times in which he lived, Pops was well ahead of the social curve of racial justice in America - much of the view of him as a Tom was made through a generational lens by younger musicians for whom he was a father figure who must be superseded. What he did behind the scenes in his own way is revealed in this book, and it should put to rest the notion that Pops was merely a genial entertainer, bowing and scraping before the White Establishment (what he really called Orval Faubus in 1957 - instead of "an uneducated plowboy" as the press rewrote his remarks - is instructive). Whatever your take on the music some call jazz, at some point in the middle of the last century it came to be acknowledged as an art form. That this made some of its greatest musicians begin to think of themselves differently was a natural development, and over time the message of the music came to mirror more and more the message of mid-twentieth century art in general - it showed the changes in the human spirit inflicted by one of humanity's most brutal centuries. A crisis in faith, an increase in alienation, a dessication of sincerity in the face of monstrous cynicism - all these elements may be found in the music of the generations who followed Pops. Yet even though he came up under crushing circumstances, had to fight his way in a business where white criminals were your only potential protectors, had to endure indignities and injustice in order to keep his livelihood, mastered his own form of expression to a level none other reached yet was still misunderstood and undervalued by the white race and even his own during his lifetime, what do we remember above everything else? His unique distillation of joy in the midst of a precious yet flawed world, and his unrivaled power in the expression of personal freedom in music. His was a spirit of such towering strength that he could look at life in all its limitations and still make a joyful noise. That's why his music will be a beacon to humanity hundreds of years from now, in whatever condition of life it finds itself. In the end it's the revelations Riccardi is able to make about Armstrong the musician that are the most telling. The vast resources available to him at the Armstrong Archives and from experts and private collectors around the world support his contentions that Pops was himself - singing, creating, perfecting, entertaining - from the beginning of his career, and he continued to be himself until its end. The proof is in the documentation, and even more in the music itself, which is why Riccardi's invaluable Armstrong blog *The Wonderful World of Louis Armstrong* ([...]) is the natural complement to this book. In its priceless audio and video clips, and Riccardi's knowing and sharp-eared essays, you'll hear the most detailed study of Pops' musical legacy yet assembled for the public.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

REQUIRED READING FOR ARMSTRONG FANS AND SCHOLARS By F. Norman Vickers This book should be required reading for every fan of Louis Armstrong. The scope of the book deals with Armstrong's later years when he was traveling and performing with his small group. It effectively refutes the impression that Armstrong's creative years were behind him. Author Ricky Riccardi is a researcher/archivist at the Armstrong House Museum in Queens, NY. Take advantage of any opportunity to tour the museum and see examples of Armstrong's talent. Armstrong was a "recording nut." There are hundreds of reels of audio-tape in which the listener can get a "slice of life" listening to conversations at home and in Armstrong's dressing rooms. Riccardi had first access to these tapes when the home became a museum. Also, Armstrong would decorate each tape box with a collage of cut-out from papers or magazines and/or hand decorated in ink. Many are very clever. At many Satchmo Summerfests in New Orleans, I have heard Riccardi talk about his researches and show numerous videoclips of Armstrong performances.

F. Norman Vickers Jazz Pensacola Member Jazz Journalists Association

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Past perceptions? Leave it all behind you!

By Sean It's much easier to parrot what we hear or read rather than challenge it, so it was with admiration that I read Ricky Riccardi's attempt to dispel the standard lines regarding the latter portion of Louis Armstrong's career. Whether one agrees with Riccardi or not that the often accepted perceptions of Armstrong and his music are misguided, it cannot be denied that Riccardi is uncompromising in his research to make his case. Though not a jazz enthusiast myself, Riccardi's passion quickly becomes contagious, and the narrative of Louis's days with his All Stars becomes a page-turning insight to the artist's humor, goodwill, and, at times, his hurt. Though Riccardi handles the events of Armstrong's years (detailing just the right amount of minutia) with expertise, the book's life, like Louie's, centers around that horn. As the author describes the subtle nuances of recordings or performances that have long been dismissed as inferior to Armstrong's earlier work, his frustration almost seems palpable. Truly, Riccardi is at his most energetic in the text when he's allowed to wax poetic on material that he knows defies the criticisms people have swallowed for so long. And it is not attacks on Armstrong's music alone that Riccardi defends, but on the man himself. In the book, facts about Armstrong are revealed that contradict common held beliefs that often taint the memory of this great artist, almost as if still posthumously robbing him of his dignity. This lack of respect is one Riccardi simply cannot abide, apparent by the tenderness in the way he describes Armstrong's final days. Indeed, as Riccardi describes the twilight of Armstrong's life, filled with days the jazz man spent making collages with pictures of former bandmates, Riccardi can't help but betray the fourth wall, seeming to suffer right along side Satch from his own nostalgia for the characters he had spent previous pages and chapters chronicling. Because make no mistake - much of the charm of this book stems from how Riccardi is not merely an objective recorder, but an enthused fan, living along side his idol as he writes about him.

In this richly detailed and prodigiously researched book, jazz scholar and musician Ricky Riccardi reveals for the first time the genius and remarkable achievements of the last 25 years of Louis Armstrong's life, providing along the way a comprehensive study of one of the best-known and most accomplished jazz stars of our time. Much has been written about Armstrong, but the majority of it focuses on the early and middle stages of his career. During the last third of his career, Armstrong was often dismissed as a buffoonish if popular entertainer. Riccardi shows us instead the inventiveness and depth of his music during this time. These are the years of his highest-charting hits, including "Mack the Knife" and "Hello, Dolly"; the famed collaborations with Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington; and his legendary recordings with the All Stars. An eminently readable and insightful book, *What a Wonderful World* completes and enlarges our understanding of one of America's greatest and most beloved musical icons.

From *Publishers Weekly*: The legendary jazz trumpeter's final decades were not a collapse into lame minstrelsy, as critics complain, but a musical efflorescence, according to this exuberant biography. Journalist Riccardi surveys Armstrong's postwar career, during which he churned out recorded covers of forgettable pop tunes, got labeled an Uncle Tom for his grinning, clowning, eye-rolling antics before white audiences, and infuriated jazz purists by making signature tunes out of bland ballads like "Hello, Dolly" and "What a Wonderful World." Riccardi's Satchmo is certainly an eccentric coot, what with his epic marijuana and laxative habits. (He recommended the latter as a cure-all to President Eisenhower and Grace Kelly.) But he's also a consummate entertainer who knew what audiences wanted, took seriously his role as cultural ambassador, and vocally challenged racist conventions. Indeed, Riccardi argues, Armstrong's alleged musical decline actually produced his greatest jazz albums—the author's exegeses of these, based on session tapes, make for a luminous exploration of Armstrong's musicianship—and, yes, some sublime pop standards as well. Riccardi's narrative sometimes bogs down in the minutiae of touring, recording, and overlong reminiscences. But his lively prose and warm engagement with the music make this a satisfying appreciation of Armstrong's legacy. Photos. (June) "The story of Louis Armstrong's later years is the great untold tale of postwar jazz. Now Ricky Riccardi has told it to perfection. *What a Wonderful World* is a unique and indispensable landmark in Armstrong scholarship, a weathervane that will point the way to all future writings on his life and work." —Terry Teachout, author of *Pops: A Life of Louis Armstrong* "This is not only a tale of interest to jazz fans or academics but the climactic portion of the inspiring life story of a man who, against all odds, rose from extreme poverty and discrimination to become, indisputably, one of the stellar figures of the twentieth century . . . We need this book." —Dan Morgenstern, director of the Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University From the Hardcover edition. About the Author Ricky Riccardi holds a B.A. in journalism and an M.A. in Jazz History and Research from Rutgers University. He has lectured at the Institute of Jazz Studies, at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, and at the annual Satchmo SummerFest in New Orleans. He is the author of a popular Armstrong blog (dippermouth.blogspot.com) and is himself a jazz pianist. He is the project archivist for the Louis Armstrong House Museum. He lives in New Jersey.