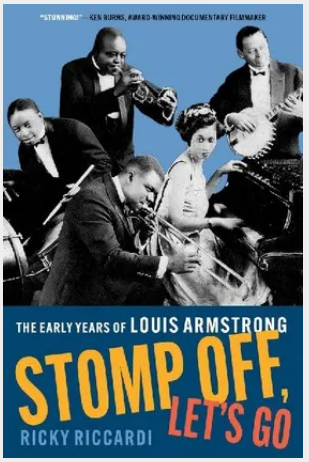
Riccardi

Stomp Off, Let's Go

The Early Years of Louis Armstrong



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The revelatory origin story of one of America's most beloved musicians, Louis Armstrong How did Louis Armstrong become Louis Armstrong? In Stomp Off, Let's Go, author and Armstrong expert Ricky Riccardi tells the enthralling story of the iconic trumpeter's meteoric rise to fame. Beginning with Armstrong's youth in New Orleans, Riccardi transports readers through Armstrong's musical and personal development, including his initial trip to Chicago to join Joe "King" Oliver's band, his first to New York to meet Fletcher Henderson, and his eventual return to Chicago, where he changed the course of music with the Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings. While this period of Armstrong's life is perhaps more familiar than others, Riccardi enriches extant narratives with recently unearthed archival materials, including a rare draft of pianist, composer, and Armstrong's second wife Lillian "Lil" Hardin Armstrong's autobiography. Riccardi similarly tackles the perceived notion of Armstrong as a "sell-out" during his later years, highlighting the many ways in which Armstrong's musical style and personal values in fact remained steady throughout his career. By foregrounding the voices of Armstrong and his contemporaries, Stomp Off, Let's Go offers a more intimate exploration of Armstrong's personal and professional relationships, in turn providing essential insights into how Armstrong evolved into one of America's most beloved icons.

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