Mary Lou Williams

Born on May 8, 1910, Mary Luo Williams was one of the greatest jazz pianists in the world. She was among the famous artists who performed with many successful artists and composed great jazz music in the 1940s and 1950s. She had a great interest in piano since childhood and received her early instructions from her mother, who was a trained pianist of her time. By the time she became 10, she was named "The Little Piano Girl" and was performing for small audiences back in her home town. She started working with the big bands and did her debut in a traveling show at the age of 12 in 1922 (Weiner, 2019). She thus toured with artists like Jelly Roll Morton, Willie Smith, Duke Ellington, and Fats Waller. She got married to a saxophonist, John William, who was a bandleader and moved with her to Oklahoma and took over the leadership of his band. She became famous for her solo performances and her arrangements, which include "Froggy Bottom," "Little Joe from Chicago," “Walkin’ and Swingin," “Mary’s Idea’ and “Roll ’Em."

By this time, she was already famous and was an influential musician to many bands like the Kansas City-Southwest Big Band, who got famous with the help of Twelve Clouds OF Joy. Her every work got recognition, but one of her notable works was "Trumpet No End," which was recorded by Ellington in 1946. She organized many bands and performed in many clubs in the city. She was popular among all the age groups, and she also performed with the youth and helped them become famous musicians like Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, and Bud Powel. She was known for her swing style, but it was not difficult for her to opt another style like the bebop and wrote several compositions in this bebop style (Peter O'Brien, 2019). Most of her work was done at home, and her home became a meeting place where famous artists met to work on different successful projects. She died in 1981, but her legacy is still alive. People remember her as a great pianist of all time.

# References

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