

The  
**DRUMS**  
of  
**WILLIAM WEBB**  
**“CHICK”**

Solographer: Jan Evensmo  
Last update: Jan. 21, 2019

Born: Baltimore, Maryland, Feb. 10,  
year unknown, 1897, 1902, 1905, 1907 and 1909 have been suggested  
(ref. Mosaic's Chick Webb box)

Died: Montgomery, Alabama, June 16, 1939

*Introduction:*

We loved Chick Webb back then in Oslo Jazz Circle. And we hated Ella Fitzgerald because she sung too much; even took over the whole thing and made so many boring records instead of letting the band swing, among the hottest jazz units on the swing era!

*History:*

Overcame physical deformity caused by tuberculosis of the spine. Bought first set of drums from his earnings as a newspaper boy. Joined local boys' band at the age of 11, later (together with John Trueheart) worked in the Jazzola Orchestra, playing mainly on pleasure steamers. Moved to New York (ca. 1925), subsequently worked briefly in Edgar Dowell's Orchestra. In 1926 led own five-piece band at The Black Bottom Club, New York, for five-month residency. Later led own eight-piece band at the Paddocks Club, before leading own 'Harlem Stompers' at Savoy Ballroom from January 1927. Added three more musicians for stint at Rose Danceland (from December 1927). Worked mainly in New York during the late 1920s – several periods of inactivity – but during 1928 and 1929 played various venues including Strand Roof, Roseland, Cotton Club (July 1929), etc. During the early 1930s played the Roseland, Savoy Ballroom, and toured with the 'Hot Chocolates' revue. From late 1931 the band began playing long regular seasons at the Savoy Ballroom (later fronted by Bardu Ali). They continued to play theatre dates and tours and also did a season at the Casino de Paris, New York, in 1934 (in late 1932 the band did a series of theatre dates accompanying Louis Armstrong). By the mid-1930s Chick Webb's name was virtually synonymous with the Savoy Ballroom, in 1935 he introduced his new vocaliste, Ella Fitzgerald. The band also did regular far-ranging tours. During the summer of 1938 they broke the all-time attendance records at ballrooms and theatres, by then Chick's health had begun to fail. He left hospital in November 1938 and began tour of Texas, he was stricken by pleurisy and again entered hospital until January 1939. He continued to appear regularly with the band until shortly before his death, playing his last engagement on a big riverboat sailing out of Washington. He died in the John Hopkins Hospital, shortly after undergoing a major urological operation. The personnel of the band remained to work for a while under Ella Fitzgerald's leadership (ref. John Chilton).

*Message:*

Be patient with me regular looking at this solography! Depending on your recording equipment, your records from mint to worn outs, and your hearing (many of you probably need technical aid now), you will hear different things. My intention is only to guide you to those items having most audible drums, using only tempo notation when drums are only in the background, adding 'breaks' when Chick is actively pushing his instrument to the foreground, and using 'solo' when this pushing reaches 4 bars or more.

## CHICK WEBB SOLOGRAPHY

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. ca. March 1929**

Personnel includes Ward Pinkett (tp), Bennie Morton (tb), Elmer Williams (ts), John Truehart (g), Chick Webb (dm).

Paramount short "After Seben" set in a Harlem night club during a dance contest with music by Chick Webb, three titles, "Sweet Sue", "Tiger Rag" and "I Ain't Got Nobody". Chick Webb cannot be seen during these titles, nor has he any particular drums contributions, but when the band is playing a few introductory bars, he can be seen briefly up in the left corner of the frame.

**THE JUNGLE BAND** **NYC. June 14, 1929**

Ward Pinkett (tp, vo), Edwin Swayzee (tp), Robert Horton (tb), Hilton Jefferson, Joe Garland (as), Elmer Williams (ts), Don Kirkpatrick (p), John Trueheart (bjo), Elmer James (tu), Chick Webb (dm).

One title was recorded for Brunswick:

E30039-A Dog Bottom With orch 12 and 4 bars. (F)

Active drumming here, the first example of CW's capabilities!

**NYC. June 27, 1929**

Same personnel with reeds doubling on (cl), John Trueheart (g).

One title:

E30091-A Jungle Mamma (SM)

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. March 30, 1931**

Shelton Hemphill, Louis Hunt (tp), Louis Bacon (tp, vo), Jimmy Harrison (tb), Benny Carter (cl, as, arr), Hilton Jefferson (cl, as), Elmer Williams (cl, ts), Don Kirkpatrick (p), John Trueheart (bjo, g), Elmer James (b, tu), Chick Webb (dm, dir).

Three titles were recorded for Vocalion:

E-36432 Heebie Jeebies (FM)

E-36433-A Blues In My Heart (M)

E-36434 Soft And Sweet (M)

Although Chick Webb does not solo here, his presence can be felt, and these are also great bigband recordings!

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG  
AND HIS ORCHESTRA****Camden, NJ. Dec. 8, 1932**

Louis Armstrong (tp, vo), Louis Bacon, Louis Hunt, Billy Hicks (tp), Charlie Green (tb), Pete Clarke (cl, as), Edgar Sampson (as, vln), Elmer Williams (ts), Don Kirkpatrick (p), John Trueheart (g), Elmer James (b, tu), Chick Webb (dm), Mezz Mezzrow (bells-74821).

Four titles were recorded for Victor:

74820-1 That's My Home Breaks. (SM)

74820-2 That's My Home (SM)

74821-1 Hobo, You Can't Ride This Train Breaks. (FM)

74821-2 Hobo, You Can't Ride This Train Breaks. (FM)

74821-1 I Hate To Leave You Now (SM)

74821-2 I Hate To Leave You Now (SM)

74823-1 You'll Wish You'd Never Been Born (F)

74823-2 You'll Wish You'd Never Been Born (F)

CW keeps well in the background on this very nice Louis Armstrong, but he can heard with a few soft breaks on "... Home", but take 1 only, and of course is participating in the simulation of a train on "Hobo ...".

**CHICK WEBB'S SAVOY ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Dec. 20, 1933**

Mario Bauza, Reunald Jones (tp), Taft Jordan (tp, vo-152658), Sandy Williams (tb), Pete Clarke (as), Edgar Sampson (as, arr), Elmer Williams (ts), Joe Steele (p), John Trueheart (bjo, g), John Kirby (b), Chick Webb (dm, ldr).

Two titles were recorded for Columbia:

152658-1 On The Sunny Side Of The Street Break. (SM)  
 152659-2 Darktown Strutters' Ball Breaks. (F)

**NYC. Jan. 15, 1934**

Same personnel. Three titles:

152659-4 Darktown Strutters' Ball Breaks. (F)  
 152686-3 If Dreams Come True (FM)  
 152687-2 Let's Get Together Breaks. (FM)

This is the orchestra that the famous Timme Rosenkrantz writes so vividly about in his fantastic book about his life in and among jazz. He visited Savoy Ballroom with John Hammond in 1934. What we hear on these otherwise great bigband recordings must however be only a pale reflections of what really went on up there on Lenox Avenue and 141/142 Street. CW swings the band but never allows himself to stand forth as a drum soloist. Nevertheless these items are true jazz vintage treasures, the basis of our fascination for this tiny, crippled man with such power and powers!

**MEZZ MEZZROW & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. May 7, 1934**

Max Kaminsky, Reunald Jones, Chelsea Quealey (tp), Floyd O'Brien (tb, arr), Mezz Mezzrow (cl, as, arr), Benny Carter (as), Bud Freeman (ts), Willie "The Lion" Smith (p), John Kirby (b), Chick Webb (dm), Alex Hill (arr).

Four titles were recorded for Victor:

82392-1 Old Fashioned Love Break. (M)  
 82393-1 Apologies Coda 8 bars. (FM)  
 82394-1 Sendin' The Vipers Acc. (p). (FM)  
 82395-1 35<sup>th</sup> And Calumet Bombs. (FM)

An early mixed black/white recording session but with CW in a supporting role only. Note however a pure solo concluding "Apologies".

**CHICK WEBB'S SAVOY ORCHESTRA NYC. May 9, 1934**

Personnel as Dec. 20, 1933. Chuck Richards (vo-152734). Taft Jordan (vo-152733). Three titles were recorded for Columbia, two issued:

152733-2 I Can't Dance Breaks. (FM)  
 152734-2 Imagination (SM)

**NYC. May 18, 1934**

Same personnel. Taft Jordan (vo-152735). Two titles:

152735-4 Why Should I Beg For Love? (SM)  
 152740-2 Stomping At The Savoy Breaks. (FM)

**NYC. July 6, 1934**

Personnel as Dec. 20, 1933 except Bobby Stark (tp) replaces R. Jones; Fernando Arbello (tb), Wayman Carver (ts, fl) added. Charles Linton (vo-152772).

Four titles were recorded for Okeh:

152769-2 Blue Minor (M)  
 152770-2 True Breaks. (M)  
 152771-2 Lonesome Moments Breaks. (M)  
 152772-2 If It Ain't Love Breaks. (M)

Nothing is changed on the remaining recording sessions for Columbia/Okeh; CW limits himself to brief breaks once in awhile, note particularly "... Savoy", though there may be details hidden in the imperfect LP/CD releases, and mint 78 rpm.s may reveal more of his tricks. Again however it must be noted that these items are great examples of black bigband jazz in the middle thirties.

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Sept. 10, 1934**

Mario Bauza, Bobby Stark (tp), Taft Jordan (tp, vo-38593,94), Sandy Williams, Claude Jones (tb), Pete Clarke (cl, as), Edgar Sampson (as, arr), Wayman Carver

(fl, ts), Elmer Williams (ts), Joe Steele (p), John Trueheart (g), John Kirby (b, tu), Chick Webb (dm, ldr).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

38593-A	Rhythm Man	(F)
38594-A	On The Sunny Side Of The Street	(M)
38595-A	Lona	(FM)
38596-A	Blue Minor	(FM)

**NYC. Nov. 19, 1934**

Same personnel. Taft Jordan (vo-39138). Four titles:

39138-A	It's Over Because We're Through	(SM)
39140-A	Don't Be That Way	Breaks. Solo 6 bars. (FM)
39141-A	What A Shuffle	Breaks. (M)
39142-A	Blue Lou	Breaks. (M)

The change from Okeh to Decca does not seem to influence CW much, holding a quite low profile on the two first sessions. "... That Way" is a nice exception where he involves on several occasions and gives a real solo on the last bridge. Also some concluding remarks also on "... Shuffle" and "... Lou".

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. June 12, 1935**

Mario Bauza, Bobby Stark (tp), Taft Jordan (tp, vo), Claude Jones, Sandy Williams (tb), Pete Clark (as), Edgar Sampson (as, arr), Wayman Carver (fl, ts, arr), Elmer Williams (ts), Don Kirkpatrick (p), John Trueheart (g), John Kirby (b), Chick Webb (dm, ldr), Ella Fitzgerald (vo-39614,17), Charles Linton (vo-39616).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

39614-A	I'll Chase The Blues Away	(M)
39615-A	Down Home Rag	(FM)
39616-A	Are You Here To Stay?	(SM)
39617-A	Love And Kisses	Breaks. (SM)

**NYC. Oct. 12, 1935**

Personnel as June 12, 1935, except Bill Thomas (b) replaces John Kirby. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-60054,56), Charles Linton (vo-60055). Taft Jordan (vo-60057).

Five titles:

60054-A	Rhythm And Romance	(M)
60055-A	Moonlight and Magnolias	(SM)
60056-A	I'll Chase The Blues Away	(FM)
60057-A	I May Be Wrong	(M)
60058-A	Facts And Figures	Breaks. (F)

This is the entrance of Ella Fitzgerald and thus the decline of the Chick Webb orchestra! Of course not, Ella is certainly not to blame, and her presence made certainly greater attention and economic income to everybody. The sad thing is that the Decca recording company more and more relied on her singing with less attention to that great band as such. Although it had great soloists and that magnificent drummer, few instrumentals were recorded in the thirties (we have a good exception in ... Figures" here), the band played hot music every night, it is only a sad fact that we will never be part of it. From these nine titles, pick "... Kisses", go towards the end and listen to what one beat on a drum can do!

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Feb. 19, 1936**

Chick Webb (dm, dir), Mario Bauza, Bobby Stark, Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams, Claude Jones (tb), Pete Clarke (cl, as), Edgar Sampson (as, arr), Ted McRae (cl, ts), Wayman Carver (ts, fl), Don Kirkpatrick (p), John Trueheart (g), Bill Thomas (b), Ella Fitzgerald (vo-"... Stop", "Shine", "... Ball", "... Romance"), Charles Linton (vo-"... True").

Twelve items were recorded for World Transcriptions:

Go Harlem	(FM)
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Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now	(M)
Nit Wit Serenade	(FM)
King Porter Stomp	(F)
Stompin' At The Savoy	Breaks. (FM)
Shine	(SM)
Rhythm And Romance	(M)
Big John Special	(M)
You Hit The Spot	(M)
Don't Be That Way	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
Darktown Strutters Ball	Breaks. (M)
If Dreams Come True	(FM)

Great these transcriptions, generally hotter than what the Decca company managed to produce. That does not mean that CW is more featured, on the contrary, he is heard sparsely, apart from his basic work of course. One good exception though; note particularly the violent drum solo on "... That Way"!

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. April 7, 1936**  
 Personnel as Feb. 1936. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-all).  
 Four titles were recorded for Decca:

60999-A	Love, You're Just A Laugh	(SM)
61000-A	Crying My Heart Out For You	(SM)
61001-A	Under The Spell Of The Blues	(SM)
61002-A	When I Get Low I Get High	Soli 2 and 2 bars. (FM)

**NYC. June 2, 1936**  
 Personnel as Feb. 1936, except Nat Story (tb) replaces Claude Jones. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-except 61123).  
 Five titles:

61123-A	Go Harlem	Breaks. (FM)
61124-A	Sing Me A Swing Song	Breaks. (M)
61125-A	A Little Bit Later On	Breaks. (M)
61126-A	Love, You're Just A Laugh	Breaks. (M)
61127-A	Devoting My Time To You	Breaks. (M)

Waiting for a real drum solo, we become disappointed again and again. More so because the few examples of active drumming show how dynamic CW was. Just listen to his two breaks, or called them soli, on "... Get High"!

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Oct. 29, 1936**  
 Mario Bauza, Bobby Stark, Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams, Nat Story (tb), Pete Clarke (cl, as, bar), Louis Jordan (as), Wayman Carver (fl, ts), Ted McRae (ts), Tommy Fulford (p), John Trueheart (g), Beverly Peer (b), Chick Webb (dm), Ella Fitzgerald (vo-all).  
 Four titles were recorded for Decca:

61361-A	You'll Have To Swing It	Breaks. (SM)
61361-B	You'll Have To Swing It	Breaks. (SM)
61362-A	Swinging On The Reservation	Breaks. Coda. (M)
61363-A	I Got The Spring Fever Blues	(SM)
61364-A	Vote For Mr. Rhythm	Breaks. (M)

Note that the breaks after Ella's first vocal section are different, take A most colourful. Some very strong and notable moments also on "... Reservation" and "... Mr. Rhythm". In fact it seems that CW exposes himself more now compared to the earlier sessions.

**ELLA FITZGERALD AND HER SAVOY EIGHT** NYC. Nov. 18/19, 1936  
Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Pete Clark (cl), Ted McRae (ts, bar), Tommy Fulford (p), John Trueheart (g), Beverley Peer (b), Chick Webb (dm), Ella Fitzgerald (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

61419-A	My Last Affair	(SM)
61420-A	Organ Grinder's Swing	(M)
61421-A	Shine	(M)
61422-B	Darktown Strutters Ball	Breaks. (FM)

Ella is now firmly attached to the Chick Webb organization, in fact its most valuable asset, and now she gets her own billing through a mini-band. Only "... Ball" has some interest with regard to drums.

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** NYC. Jan. 14/15, 1937  
Personnel as Oct. 29, 1936. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-61520,27), Charles Linton (vo-61520,28), Louis Jordan (vo-61520,30).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

61527-A	Take Another Guess	(M)
61528-A	Love Marches On	Breaks. (M)
61520-A	There's Frost On The Moon	(M)
61530-A	Gee, But You're Swell	Breaks. (M)

Some lovely breaks on "Love ..." and "... Swell"!

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** NYC. Feb. 8, 1937  
Personnel probably as as above.  
Broadcast "Good Times Society":

	That's A Plenty	(F)
	Big Boy Blue	Breaks. (M)

**JIMMY MUNDY'S SWING CLUB SEVEN** NYC. March 3, 1937  
Walter Fuller (tp, vo), Trummy Young (tb), Omer Simeon (cl, as), Jimmy Mundy (ts, arr), Billy Kyle (p), Dick Palmer (g), Quinn Wilson (b), Chick Webb (dm).  
Two titles were recorded for Variety:

M159-1	I Surrender Dear	Breaks. (M)
M160-1	Ain't Misbehavin'	Solo 4 bars. (FM)

One of CW's few small band session participations, a very nice one too, and one can only wonder why they made only two sides. Strong drumming in the final ensemble on "... Dear", and the break on "... Misbehavin'" develops into what might be considered a solo, magnificent!

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** NYC. March 24, 1937  
Same personnel. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-62065,67,69,72), Louis Jordan (vo-62064-66).  
Eight titles were recorded for Decca:

62064-A	Rusty Hinge	(M)
62065-A	Wake Up And Live	(M)
62066-A	It's Swell Of You	(M)
62067-A	You Showed Me The Way	Breaks. (SM)
62067-B	You Showed Me The Way	Breaks (SM)
62068-A	Clap Hands! Here Comes Charley	Intro. With orch. (F)
62069-A	Cryin' Mood	(SM)
62072-A	Love Is The Thing, So They Say	Breaks. (SM)
62073-A	That Naughty Waltz	(FM)

A strong drum intro on "... Charley" is very promising, and towards the end CW really lets loose the way we have been waiting for!

**THE GOTHAM STOMPERS** **NYC. March 25, 1937**  
Cootie Williams (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Barney Bigard (cl, ts), Johnny Hodges (as), Harry Carney (bar), Tommy Fulford (p), Bernard Addison (g), Billy Taylor (b), Chick Webb (dm), Wayman Carver (arr), Ivie Anderson (vo-301,02,04).  
Four titles were recorded for Variety:

M301-1	My Honey's Lovin' Arms	Breaks. (FM)
M302-1	Did Anyone Ever Tell You?	Breaks. (M)
M302-2	Did Anyone Ever Tell You?	Breaks. (M)
M303-1	Alabama Home	(FM)
M304-1	Where Are You?	Breaks. Solo 4 bars. (M)

Only three weeks after the Mundy session, CW is again in a supporting role for a smallband session, this time an Ellington/Webb hybrid. The date belongs to major pleasure wells of the swing era, when jazz was at its very height. CW's drums create a perfect foundation for everybody, and numerous solographies have or will write in awe about the proceedings. My favourite item is the one where CW only is heard working in the background, but if you are listening for his trademarks, the conclusion of "... Arms" and "... You?" will make you scream with joy!

**ELLA FITZGERALD AND HER SAVOY EIGHT** **NYC. May 24, 1937**  
Personnel as Nov. 18, 1936, except Louis Jordan (as), Buddy Johnson (g) replace Clark and Trueheart.  
Four titles were recorded for Decca:

62213-A	All Or Nothing At All	Break. (SM)
62214-A	If You Ever Should Leave	Break. (SM)
62214-B	If You Ever Should Leave	Break. (SM)
62215-A	Everyone's Wrong But Me	Break. (M)
62216-A	Deep In The Heart Of The South	Breaks. (SM)

A few breaks here and there show that CW is with us, but one has to listen closely, mostly at the end of the items.

**CHICK WEBB & HIS LITTLE CHICKS** **NYC. Sept. 21, 1937**  
Chauncey Haughton (cl), Wayman Carver (fl), Tommy Fulford (p), Beverly Peer (b), Chick Webb (dm).  
Three titles were recorded for Decca:

62618-A	In A Little Spanish Town	Breaks. (FM)
62619-A	I Got Rhythm	Solo 16+10 bars, (fl) on bridge. (F)
62620-A	I Ain't Got Nobody	Brushes. (M)

Here comes another spinoff from the Chick Webb mother organization, in my opinion very important because of the excellent flutist Wayman Carver, one of the very first who made real jazz on that instrument. One might feel that the Little Chicks is sweet intermission idea, but it has much jazz in it. CW is fooling around the end of "... Town", while on "... Nobody" he is more felt than heard but note the conclusion. The drum highlight is "... Rhythm", and for once CW behaves like an ordinary soloist, playing a true chorus, although giving the bridge to the flute. We need more like this!

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Oct. 27, 1937**  
Personnel as Oct. 29, 1936 except Chauncey Haughton (cl, as), Bobby Johnson (g) replace Clark and Trueheart. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-62725,26,28).  
Four titles were recorded for Decca:

62725-A	Just A Simple Melody	(M)
62726-A	I Got A Guy	(SM)
62727-A	Strictly Jive	Breaks. (M)
62728-A	Holiday In Harlem	(M)

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Nov. 1, 1937**

Personnel as above. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-62738).  
Four titles (62737 is by the **LITTLE CHICKS**):

62737-B	Sweet Sue, Just You	Solo 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge. (F)
62738-A	Rock It For Me	Breaks. (SM)
62739-A	Squeeze Me	Breaks. Solo 4 bars. (SM)
62740-A	Harlem Congo	Breaks. Solo 24 bars. (F)

If one has to choose the sessions most important for hearing CW's soloing abilities, this can be one candidate, possibly the most important. "Sweet Sue ..." shows him in the smallband context, and for once he is heard strongly all way through the record with his brushes and also takes a real solo, a rare item! But this isn't all! Very strong breaks in the middle of Ella's domain on "Rock It ..." come as pleasant surprises. Then he gives "Squeeze ...", surprisingly a non-vocal number, an extra touch with his active drumming. Finally, "Harlem ...", one good reason to go there, then, this is what the Chick Webb was all about, the leader swings the band like mad, and then for once takes a quite long unaccompanied superdynamic solo going into slow tempo at the end, magnificent!!

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Nov. 2, 1937**

Same. Two titles, 62743 "Hallelujah!" (matrix of -A said to exist) and 62744 "I Want To Be Happy", were recorded for Decca, rejected.

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Dec. 10, 1937**

Personnel as Oct. 27, except Garvin Bushell (cl, as) replaces Haughton. Ella Fitzgerald (vo- "... Terrific", "... Rose").

Broadcast from the Savoy Ballroom, three titles:

Bronzeville Stomp	Breaks. (M)
He's Tall, He's Tan, He's Terrific	Breaks. (M)
Honeysuckle Rose	Breaks. (FM)

No drum soli, even at the Savoy, otherwise these are fine and swinging items. Note particularly the chopping drum breaks on "...Rose".

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Dec. 17, 1937**

Same. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-62886-89).

Five titles were recorded for Decca:

62886-A	I Want To Be Happy	Soli 4 and 8 bars. (FM)
62886-B	I Want To Be Happy	As above. (FM)
62887-A	The Dipsy Doodle	Breaks. (FM)
62888-A	If Dreams Come True	(M)
62889-A	Hallelujah!	Breaks. (M)
62890-B	Midnite In A Madhouse	Breaks. (FM)

Uptempo session with opportunities for drums, but used sparingly except for "... Happy", arranged partly as a mixture of the full band and the little chicks, originally issued on 12" 78rpm., thus allowing 4 ½ minutes of great music including a very active CW. Rarely do we hear CW soloing as much as this! The flip side was "Hallelujah!" but less exciting, though six slashes on the cymbal. The instrumental "... Madhouse" is not at all mad but a fine swinger.

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **ca. 1937**

Movie soundtrack from a dance contest. The titles are "Sweet Sue No. 1-2-3", "Tiger Rag" and "Theme", not available.

**ELLA FITZGERALD AND HER SAVOY EIGHT** **NYC. Dec. 21, 1937**

Personnel as May 24, 1937.

Two titles were recorded for Decca:

62896-A	Bei Mir Bist Do Schön	(M)
62897-A	It's My Turn Now	(SM)

**NYC. Jan. 25, 1938**

Same. Two titles:

63225-A It's Wonderful (SM)  
63226-A I Was Doing All Right (SM)

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. May 2/3, 1938**  
Personnel as Dec. 10, 1937 plus George Matthews (tb). Ella Fitzgerald (vo-63693-95). Six titles were recorded for Decca:

63693-A A-Tisket, A-Tasket Breaks. (M)  
63694-A Heart Of Mine Breaks. (M)  
63695-A I'm Just A Jitterbug Breaks. Solo 4 bars. (M)  
63696-C Azure (SM)  
63707-A Spinnin' The Webb Breaks. (M)  
63708-A Liza Feature number for (dm). 2:45. (F)

"Liza" is CW's main vehicle, or so it seems from what he has left us. This one is the first of three versions, and one must sit (or dance) with open mouth to such a fireworks of bigband drumming, nothing like it on the vintage years!! Note also a brief but strong solo on "... Jitterbug".

**ELLA FITZGERALD AND HER SAVOY EIGHT** **NYC. May 3, 1938**  
Personnel as May 24, 1937.  
Six titles were recorded for Decca:

63703-A This Time It's Real (SM)  
63704-A What Do You Know About Love? (SM)  
63705-A You Can't Be Mine (SM)  
63705-B You Can't Be Mine (SM)  
63706-A We Can't Go On This Way (SM)  
63709-B Saving Myself From You (SM)  
63710-B If You Only Knew (SM)

As you can see, the downsized orchestra was absolutely not intended to give better solo opportunities for the leader and his men, but only a backup for the female vocal. The recordings have their charm, but drumming is far away.

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. June 9, 1938**  
Personnel as May 2, 1938, except Hilton Jefferson (as) replaces Louis Jordan. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-all), Taft Jordan (vo-63937).  
Four titles were recorded for Decca:

63934-A Pack Up Your Sins And Go To The Devil Breaks. (M)  
63935-A MacPherson Is Rehearsin' Breaks. (FM)  
63936-A Everybody Step Breaks. (M)  
63937-A Ella Breaks. (M)

These are typical for the situation now, pretty commercial items with focus on the vocal, but a swinging tempo is revealing a prominent jazz orchestra and soloists, and there is room for occasional strong drum breaks.

**SATURDAY NIGHT SWING CLUB ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Aug. 13, 1938**  
Bigband personnel (unidentified personnel from a CBS studio orchestra directed by Leith Stevens) supplemented with Roy Eldridge (tp-"Liza"), Chick Webb (dm), Ella Fitzgerald (vo-"... Tasket").  
Broadcast "Saturday Night Swing Club" from CBS Studios, two titles have CW:

A-Tisket, A-Tasket Breaks. (M)  
Liza Feature number for (dm). 2:03. (F)

The second "Liza", using the same arrangement as the Decca recording but with much faster tempo and with Roy Eldridge taking the allocated trumpet solo. CW is

“in full-of solo mode over the band most of the way” to quote John McDonough on Mosaic. Fantastic energetic drumming, nothing like it!!

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Aug. 17/18, 1938**

Same. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-all except 64464).

Five titles were recorded for Decca:

64459-A	Wacky Dust	(M)
64460-A	Gotta Pebble In My Shoe	(M)
64461-A	I Can't Stop Lovin' You	(M)
64464-A	Who Ya Hunchin'?	Solo 4 bars. Breaks. (M)
64465-A	I Let A Tear Fall In The River	(SM)

Only one item of interest, but non-vocal “Who Ya ...” has CW chopping behind the trumpet solo, several notable breaks and a fine but brief solo.

**ELLA FITZGERALD AND HER SAVOY EIGHT** **NYC. Aug. 18, 1938**

Personnel as May 24, 1937, except Hilton Jefferson (as) replaces Jordan.

Two titles were recorded for Decca:

64462-A	Strictly From Dixie	(M)
64463-A	Woe Is Me	(SM)

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Oct. 6, 1938**

Personnel as June 9, 1938, except Dick Vance (tp) replaces Bauza. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-all).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

64573-A	F. D. R. Jones	(M)
64574-A	I Love Each Move You Make	(M)
64575-A	It's Foxy	(M)
64576-A	I Found My Yellow Basket	(M)

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Jan. 9, 1939**

Personnel same/similar to above.

Twelve titles recorded by RCA Victor for NBC Thesaurus transcriptions:

Tea For Two	(FM)
How Am I To Know?	(M)
One O'Clock Jump	Breaks. (FM)
Blue Room	(FM)
Crazy Rhythm	(FM)
Sugar Foot Stomp	Breaks. (F)
Grand Terrace Rhythm	Breaks. (M)
By Heck	Soli 16 and 16 bars. (M)
Blue Skies	Breaks. (FM)
Dinah	(FM)
Who Ya' Hunchin'?	Solo 4 bars. Breaks. (M)
Liza	Feature number for (dm). 2:30. (F)

These transcriptions seem to contain some of the best CW there is, but sources with better sound probably exist; much of what I have on LP is quite terrible and offer only a pale impression of the real music. “... O'Clock ...” is white hot with much active drumming and so is “... Terrace ...”. Then out of nothing comes some quite unusual drumming on “By Heck”! “... Hunchin'?” and “Liza”, the third version, follow the same arrangements as the Decca recordings, but the drums have different details, exciting!

**CHICK WEBB & HIS LITTLE CHICKS** **NYC. Jan. 1939**

Chauncey Haughton (cl), Wayman Carver (fl), Tommy Fulford (p), Beverly Peer (b), Chick Webb (dm).

One title was recorded at a "Saturday Night Swing Club" program:

Stompin' At The Savoy Solo 32 bars. Coda. (F)

There is not much little chicks preserved, so this is a very valuable item (lovely flute solo also!), and for a rarity CW appear with a solo in a smallband context. The fact that he treats it as he was behind the bigband, blowing as hard and fast as he can, would appear surprising, except that it seems this was his way of doing it!!

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Jan. 21, 1939**

Personnel as Oct. 6, 1938.

Broadcast, Saturday Night Swing Club.

I Let A Tear Fall In The River (SM)

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Feb. 10, 1939**

Personnel probably as usual.

NBC broadcast from the Cocoanut Grove at the Hotel Park Central, six titles, one not available:

Let's Get Together (Theme) Intro 8 bars. (F)

Blue Room Breaks. (FM)

Deep In A Dream (SM)

One O'Clock Jump (FM)

That Was My Heart (SM)

Everybody Step

The broadcast opens with strong eight bars from Chick, then he stops, the announcer follows the full band into "... Together", and then not really much more.

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Feb. 17, 1939**

Same. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-all except 65041).

Five titles were recorded for Decca:

65039-A Undecided Breaks. Solo 4 bars. (FM)

65040-A 'Tain't What You Do Breaks. (M)

65041-A In The Groove At The Grove Breaks. (M)

65042-A One Side Of Me (SM)

65043-A My Heart Belongs To Daddy Break. (SM)

**NYC. March 2, 1939**

Same, except John Trueheart (g) replaces Bobby Johnson. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-all).

Four titles:

65094-A Sugar Pie (M)

65095-A It's Slumbertime Along The Swanee (SM)

65096-A I'm Up A Tree (S)

65097-A Chew Chew Chew Chew Breaks. (M)

There is some hot music and drums on these session, most notable on "Undecided", but also "... Grove" and "Chew ..." (otherwise terrible!) have some nice moments.

**ELLA FITZGERALD AND HER SAVOY EIGHT NYC. March 2, 1939**

Personnel as Aug. 18, 1939, except John Trueheart (g) replaces Bobby Johnson.

Two titles were recorded for Decca:

65092-A Once Is Enough For Me (SM)

65093-A I Had To Live And Learn (SM)

**NYC. April 21, 1939**

Same. Four titles were recorded for Decca:

65441-A Don't Worry 'Bout Me (SM)

65442-A If Anything Happened To You (SM)

- 65443-A If That's What You're Thinking (SM)  
 65444-A If You Ever Change Your Mind (SM)

The end of the Savoy Eight recording sessions. The results can at their best have some of the feeling of the contemporary Billie Holiday sessions, though sometimes only runthrough for Ella to cope with the current hits and with no particular jazz purpose. With any viewpoint, CW is in the middle, making things happen but not really being a part of it, at least keeping an extremely low profile.

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. April 21, 1939**

Personnel as March 2, 1939. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-all).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

- 65445-A Have Mercy (S)  
 65446-A Little White Lies (M)  
 65447-A Coochi-Coochi-Coo Breaks. (SM)  
 65448-A That Was My Heart (SM)

The last studio recording session, although the band continued to record in June with a new and very good drummer, Bill Beason, and under Ella's name. No reason to spend time on "Coochi ...".

**CHICK WEBB AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Boston, May 4, 1939**

Personnel probably as above. Ella Fitzgerald (vo-,"... Serenade", "... Care", "... Speak", "... Chew").

Broadcast from the Southland Cafe, nine titles:

- |                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Let's Together (Theme)          | Intro. (FM)                  |
| Poor Little Rich Girl           | Breaks. (F)                  |
| A New Moon And An Old Serenade  | (SM)                         |
| Breakin' 'Em Down               | Breaks. (M)                  |
| If I Didn't Care                | (SM)                         |
| The Stars And Stripes Forever   | Breaks. (FM)                 |
| I Never Knew Heaven Could Speak | (SM)                         |
| My Wild Irish Rose              | Feature number for (dm). (F) |
| Chew Chew Chew Chew             | Breaks. (M)                  |
| Let's Get Together (Theme)      | (FM)                         |

That Chick Webb should die only a few weeks after this broadcast is difficult to understand, because he is so full of energy and life on this magnificent broadcast!! Also here the sound quality on the available version on LP is below par, but the force of the drummer and his men cannot be camouflaged. All numbers in medium and up are gorgeous, even if the titles do not seem very promising. Would you believe that "... Irish Rose" is a fast and hot number, featuring CW and in the same category as the famous "Liza"? Because it is, great!! A well chosen number to say goodbye to us, (possibly) only 30 years old!!

No further recording sessions.

...ooo...