

The
TROMBONE
of
ALEXANDER B. WILLIAMS
“SANDY”

Solographer: Jan Evensmo, assisted by Ola Rønnow, Arne Bryn and Tom
Buhmann
Last update: Oct. 6, 2011, Nov. 27, 2023

Born: Somerville, South Carolina, Oct. 24, 1907
 Died: NYC. April 25, 1991

Introduction:

Sandy Williams was an excellent trombone player, not quite achieving the renown of contemporaries like J. C. Higginbotham and Dicky Wells. However, the more one listens to Sandy's music, the more impressed one is likely to be, and he certainly deserves to have his music presented in a solography!

Early history:

During early childhood moved with his family to Washington, D. C. After both parents died he was sent to St. Joseph's Industrial School in Delaware, played in school band, first on brass bass, then trombone. After two years he returned to Washington, received tuition from James Miller Snr., also some lessons from Juan Tizol. Did local 'gigs' with various bands including Oliver Blackwell and Claude Hopkins, then resident job in pit orchestra at the Lincoln Theatre, Washington. Later joined the Miller Brothers' orchestra (sons of his teacher) at the Howard Theatre, also did a season in Atlantic City with Claude Hopkins (1927), continued to play with Hopkins at the Smile-a-While Inn, Ashbury Park, New Jersey (summer 1927). Moved into New York during 1927, only stayed for a brief time due to union problems, then moved back to Washington. Played in band led by drummer Tommy Myles, then left to tour with Horace Henderson's band (1929), with that band on and off for almost three years, excluding brief spells with Claude Hopkins, Fletcher Henderson and Cliff Jackson. Joined Fletcher Henderson from 1932 until summer of 1933, then long stay with Chick Webb from 1933, remained with the band and worked under the leadership of Ella Fitzgerald until spring of 1940. With Benny Carter's big band in spring of 1940, then from August 1940 until January 1941 with Coleman Hawkins' band. From early 1941 worked on and off for almost two years with Fletcher Henderson, brief spells for other leaders including Lucky Millinder, Cootie Williams, Sidney Bechet, Wild Bill Davison, Mezz Mezzrow and Pete Brown (ref. John Chilton: "Who's Who of Jazz").

Message:

Rarely is Sandy Williams alone playing trombone in a big orchestra; he has trombone companions also able to play professional soli. Although serious efforts have been made to identify SW, errors are certainly made. Feedback on solo identification is therefore strongly wanted!

SANDY WILLIAMS SOLOGRAPHY

FLETCHER HENDERSON & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. March 10, 1932
Bigband personnel including Sandy Williams, J. C. Higginbotham (tb).
Six titles were recorded for Victor but no SW.

NYC. March 11, 1932

Same/similar. Four titles were recorded for Melotone, one probably has SW:

11447-A How Am I Doin', Hey Hey Solo 4 bars. (FM)
11447-B How Am I Doin', Hey Hey As above? ()

Strong tone but a not quite successful break starts Sandy Williams' recording career. Take B is so far only known as test pressing, not available.

FLETCHER HENDERSON & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Dec. 9, 1932
Russell Smith, Bobby Stark, Rex Stewart (tp), J. C. Higginbotham, Sandy Williams (tb), Russell Procope, Hilton Jefferson (cl, as), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Fletcher Henderson (p, ldr), Freddie White (g), John Kirby (b), Walter Johnson (dm).
Three titles were recorded for Columbia, one has SW:

152325-1 New King Porter Stomp Solo 16 bars (mute) (1st (tb)-solo). (FM)

Better this one, strong tone and ambitious attack but not quite the originality of his more well known trombone companion.

FLETCHER HENDERSON & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Aug. 18, 1933
Russell Smith, Bobby Stark, Henry Allen (tp), Dicky Wells, Sandy Williams (tb), Russell Procope, Hilton Jefferson (cl, as), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Fletcher Henderson (p, ldr), Bernard Addidon (g), John Kirby (b), Walter Johnson (dm).
Two titles were recorded for Vocalion, no SW on 13829-1 "Queer Notions" but:

13830-1 Can You Take It? Solo 24 bars. (FM)
13830-2 Can You Take It As above. (FM)

SW leaves Fletcher Henderson with a prominent solo assignment, and we are so lucky as to have two takes of this one. His work on take 1 seems to be more firm than take 2. The differences are not that impressive though, so we missed a rare opportunity to learn about SW's improvisational capabilities.

CHICK WEBB'S SAVOY ORCHESTRA NYC. Dec. 20, 1933
Mario Bauza, Reunald Jones (tp), Taft Jordan (tp, vo), 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, no (tb)-solo on 152658 "On The Sunny Side Of The Street" but:

152659-2/4 Darktown Strutters' Ball Solo 6 bars. (F)

NYC. Jan. 15, 1934

Same. Two titles:

152686-3 When (If) Dreams Come True Solo 32 bars (mute). (M)
152687-2 (Let's) Get Together Solo 8 bars. With orch. (FM)

NYC. May 9, 1934

Same. Three titles, two issued, no (tb)-solo on 152734 "Imagination" but:

152733-2 I Can't Dance Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (FM)

NYC. May 18, 1934

Same. Two titles:

152735-4 Why Should I Beg For Love? Straight 16+6 bars,
orch on bridge. (SM)
152740-2 Stomping At The Savoy Solo 16+8 bars, (ts) on bridge. (FM)

The door is opened to the swing era, and Chick Webb and his orchestra is one of the major bigband contributors. SW seems to develop his style slowly but sure, still a bit constrained in his playing, but relaxing as time flies, and his soli on particularly "... Dance" and "... Savoy" are personal and very promising.

CHICK WEBB & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. July 6, 1934

Mario Bauza, Bobby Stark (tp), Taft Jordan (tp, vo), Sandy Williams, Fernando Arbello (tb), Wayman Carver (fl, ts), Pete Clarke (as), Edgar Sampson (as, arr), Elmer Williams (ts), Joe Steele (p), John Trueheart (bjo, g), John Kirby (b), Chick Webb (dm, ldr).

Four titles were recorded for Okeh, no (tb)-solo on 152770-2 "True" but on the other three, all by SW:

152769-2	Blue Minor	Solo 16+8 bars, orch on bridge. (M)
152771-2	Lonesome Moments	Solo 8 bars. (M)
152772-2	If It Ain't Love	Solo 6 bars. (M)

SW's positive development continues, as does the band itself, and there is some fine trombone playing here, particularly "... Minor" should be noted.

ETHEL WATERS VOCAL ACC. BY NYC. Sept. 5, 1934

Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Edgar Sampson (as, vln), Elmer Williams (ts), Joe Steele (p), John Trueheart (g), John Kirby (b).

Three titles were recorded for Decca, but no trombone soli.

CHICK WEBB & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Sept. 10, 1934

Mario Bauza, Bobby Stark (tp), Taft Jordan (tp, vo), Sandy Williams, Claude Jones (the latter probably false, as he records with Fletcher Henderson the following days) (tb), Wayman Carver (fl, ts), Pete Clarke (cl, as), Edgar Sampson (as, arr), Elmer Williams (ts), Joe Steele (Rust presents Don Kirkpatrick from now on) (p), John Trueheart (bjo, g), John Kirby (b), Chick Webb (dm, ldr).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have trombone, by SW:

38593-A	Rhythm Man	Solo 32 bars (mute). (F)
38596-A	Blue Minor	Solo 16+8 bars (mute), orch on bridge. (M)

NYC. Nov. 19, 1934

Same with Claude Jones (tb) definitely present.

Four titles, three have trombone, of which one has SW:

39141-A	What A Shuffle	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
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NYC. June 12, 1935

Same with Claude Jones omitted (ref. the CJ-solography), Fernando Arbello (tb), Ella Fitzgerald (vo) added.

Four titles, one has SW:

39617-A	Love And Kisses	Solo/straight 8 bars. (SM)
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NYC. Oct. 12, 1935

Same with Nat Story (tb), Bill Thomas (b) replaces Arbello and Kirby.

Five titles, two have trombone, but by NS.

NYC. Feb. 1936

Similar. Radio transcriptions, twelve titles, six have trombone:

Stompin' At The Savoy	Solo 16+8 bars (mute), (ts) on bridge. (FM)
Don't Be That Way	Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (F)
Go Harlem	Solo 4 bars. (FM)
Nit Wit Serenade	With orch (mute). (FM)
King Porter Stomp	Soli 4, 4 and 32 bars. (F)
If Dreams Come True	Solo 16 bars (mute). (FM)

NYC. April 7, 1936

Same (Mosaic has Claude Jones, Sandy Williams (tb) here).

Four titles, one has trombone, probably SW:

61001-A	Under The Spell Of The Blues	Straight with orch 16+8 bars, (as) on bridge. (SM)
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NYC. June 2, 1936

Same except Nat Story (tb) replaces Jones.

Five titles, two have SW:

61123-A	Go Harlem	Solo 4 bars. (FM)
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61125-A A Little Bit Later On Solo 8 bars. (M)

NYC. Oct. 29, 1936

Similar. Four titles, one has SW:

61362-A Swinging On The Reservation Solo 6 bars. (FM)

One may easily agree that Chick Webb found a unique vocalist in Ella, but it should be equally easy to admit that it was a sad day for bigband jazz. This great orchestra was minimized in record production steadily year by year, and only occasionally did it give its great soloists any chance to play more than a few bars. So also for SW. It definitely helps to have the existence of radio transcriptions, and SW's contributions on "... Savoy" and "... Way", although camouflaged by the orchestra, have solid trombone playing. And you don't get it hotter than "... Porter Stomp"!!

ELLA FITZGERALD & 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, one has SW:

61420-A Organ Grinder's Swing Solo 8 bars. (M)

Considering what Columbia and Billie Holiday managed to create, the Savoy Eight is only a backup band with few soloistic highspots. Note however that SW has a really strong and exciting trombone solo here.

STUFF SMITH & HIS LUCIDIN ORCHESTRA NYC. Jan. 1937

Jonah Jones, Mario Bauza, Bobby Stark, Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams, Nat Story (tb), Garvin Bushell, Andrew Brown (cl, as), Edgar Sampson (as, arr), Walter Thomas, Ben Webster (ts), Stuff Smith (vln), Clyde Hart (p), Bobby Bennett (g), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Ella Fitzgerald (vo).

WMCA broadcasts, "Let's Listen To Lucidin" eye lotion commercials.

Seven programs sent Jan. 6, 8, 11, 15, 18, 22 and Feb.?. The following titles have trombone soli, believed to be all by SW:

Jan. 6	Did You Mean It?	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
"	Stardust	Solo 16 bars to coda. (S)
"	Stompin' At The Savoy	Solo 6 bars. (FM)
"	The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise	Straight 32 bars to solo appr. 64 bars to coda. (F)
"	Blue Prelude	Brief excerpt. (SM)
Jan. 8	I Got Rhythm	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
"	Make Believe Ballroom	Solo 8 bars. (M)
"	Blue Prelude	Solo with (p) acc. 38 bars. Solo 8 bars to coda. (SM)
Jan. 11	The Organ Grinder's Swing	Solo 24 bars. (M)
Jan. 15	Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet	Solo 32 bars. (F)
"	Roses Of Picardy	Solo with (p) acc. 32 bars. (S)
Jan. 18	Honeysuckle Rose	Solo 24 bars (mute). (FM)
Feb. ?	Make Believe Ballroom	Solo 8 bars. (FM)

The existence of these commercial broadcasts is a true wonder, and they already appear in several solographies. Jazz music all the way, vintage holiday, a glimpse into a world long gone. As you can see from the above list, SW gets a very solid share of the soloing here and responds by playing solid and professional trombone of the best quality the thirties could offer. The highlight is "... The Sunrise", a full feature number, three choruses including the straight introduction, there is nothing to compare this to except Dicky Wells in Paris! Also several of the shorter soli are quite noteworthy, like "... The Savoy", "... Rhythm" and "... Ballroom". But then, listen to his duetting with Hart on "... Prelude" and "... Picardy", such long and pretty things you never find on the 78s of the era! But what do you need improvisation for anyway? Play "... Grey Bonnet" to find out, to conclude that SW has great qualities, and as a great goodbye to Lucidin!!

CHICK WEBB & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Jan. 14&15, 1937

Personnel including Sandy Williams, Nat Story (tb).

Four titles were recorded for Decca but no trombone soli.

NYC. March 24, 1937

Same. Eight titles, one has trombone:

62068-A Clap Hands! Here Comes Charley Solo 8 bars. (F)

On "... Charley" we get a glimpse of what this great band really could accomplish, including a first class trombone solo!

ELLA FITZGERALD & HER SAVOY EIGHT NYC. May 24, 1937

Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Louis Jordan (cl, as), Ted McRae (ts), Tommy Fulford (p), Bobby Johnson (g), Beverley Peer (b), Chick Webb (dm), Ella Fitzgerald (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have SW:

62213-A All Or Nothing At All Solo 8 bars. (SM)

62215-A Everyone's Wrong But Me Solo 8 bars. (M)

SW seems to thrive and feel free under these circumstances, because his soli here are among his very best ones!

THE GOTHAM STOMPERS NYC. March 25, 1937

Cootie Williams (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Barney Bigard (cl), Johnny Hodges (as), Harry Carney (bar), Tommy Fulford (p), Bernard Addison (g), Billy Taylor (b), Chick Webb (dm), Ivie Anderson (vo), Wayman Carver (arr).

Four titles were recorded for Variety, one has SW:

M301-1 My Honey's Lovin' Arms Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Little trombone here, but a fine solo on the beginning of "... Arms".

CHICK WEBB & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Oct. 27, 1937

Mario Bauza, Bobby Stark, Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams, Nat Story (tb), Wayman Carver (fl, ts), Chauncey Haughton (cl, as), Louis Jordan (as), Ted McRae (ts), Tommy Fulford (p), Bobby Johnson (g), Beverley Peer (b), Chick Webb (dm, ldr).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, but no trombone soli.

NYC. Nov. 1, 1937

Same. Three titles, one has trombone:

62740-A Harlem Congo Solo 8 bars. (F)

NYC. Dec. 10, 1937

Broadcast from the Savoy Ballroom, three titles, one has trombone:

Bronzeville Stomp Solo 16 bars. (M)

NYC. Dec. 17, 1937

Same, except Garvin Bushell (cl, as) replaces Haughton.

Five titles were recorded for Decca (62886/62889: 12"), no trombone on 62889 "Hallelujah" but:

62886-A I Want To Be Happy Solo 6 bars. (FM)

62886-B I Want To Be Happy As above. (FM)

62887-A The Dipsy Doodle Solo 10 bars. (M)

62888-A If Dreams Come True Solo/straight 8 bars. (M)

62889-A Midnite In A Madhouse As below, if exists? ()

62889-B Midnite In A Madhouse Soli 4 and 12 bars. (FM)

Small is sometimes good, and on these sessions with more upper tempi than usual SW shows his qualities on the fast "... Congo"! In fact, and possibly in contrast to earlier statements, on the particularly jazz Webb items from this period, SW seems to have a confidence in his playing not quite obvious in the first sessions, nice as they are. Note that "Bronzeville ..." seems to be Webb's first preserved broadcast, having also a fine trombone solo.

ELLA FITZGERALD & HER SAVOY EIGHT NYC. Dec. 21, 1937

Personnel as May 24.

Two titles were recorded for Decca, but no SW.

NYC. Jan. 25, 1938

Same. Two titles but no SW.

CHICK WEBB & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. May 2/3, 1938**

Mario Bauza, Bobby Stark, Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams, Nat Story, George Matthews (tb), Wayman Carver (fl, ts), Garvin Bushell (cl, as), Louis Jordan (as), Ted McRae (ts), Tommy Fulford (p), Bobby Johnson (g), Beverly Peer (b), Chick Webb (dm, ldr).

Six titles were recorded for Decca, two have SW:

63707-A Spinnin' The Web Solo 8 bars. (SM)
63708-A Liza Solo 8 bars. (FM)

May 2 is the date for that awful "... -Tasket", so let us just concentrate on SW and note that he has a fine solo on "... The Web", although he sometimes, as here, has some slight technical problems. Then "Liza", a gorgeous vehicle for the dunning master himself, also here we excellent trombone.

ELLA FITZGERALD & HER SAVOY EIGHT **NYC. May 3, 1938**

Personnel as May 24, 1937.

Six titles were recorded for Decca, one has SW:

63703-A This Time It's Real Solo 8 bars. (SM)

SW plays nicely on these smallband sessions, try this one!

CHICK WEBB & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. June 9, 1938**

Personnel as May 2, except Hilton Jefferson (as) replaces Jordan.

Four titles, one has trombone but by Nat Story.

NYC. Aug. 13, 1938

Broadcast, two titles but no trombone.

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

Personnel as June 9.

Five titles were recorded for Decca, two have trombone but by NS and GM.

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

Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Hilton Jefferson (as), Ted McRae (ts), Tommy Fulford (p), Bobby Johnson (g), Beverly Peer (b), Chick Webb (dm), Ella Fitzgerald (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Decca, one has SW:

64462-A Strictly From Dixie Solo 8 bars. (M)

Another fine trombone solo from SW here; in fact an item with other excellent qualities, go ahead!!

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

Personnel as June 9, except Dick Vance (tp) replaces Bauza.

Four titles were recorded for Decca, one has trombone but by GM.

NYC. Jan. 9, 1939

NBC Thesaurus transcriptions, twelve titles, ten have trombone, nine by SW:

One O'Clock Jump Solo 12+8 bars. (FM)
Blue Room Solo 8 bars. (FM)
Crazy Rhythm Solo 8 bars. (FM)
Grand Terrace Rhythm Solo 12 bars. (M)
Sugarfoot Stomp Soli 12 and 36 bars. (FM)
Blue Skies Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (FM)
Dinah Solo 6 bars. (FM)
Who Ya Hunchin'? Solo with orch 16 bars. (M)
Liza Solo 8 bars. (F)

NYC. Feb. 10, 1939

Broadcast from the Cocoanut Grove at the Hotel Park Central, six titles, four have trombone, two by SW:

Blue Room Solo 8 bars. (FM)
One O'Clock Jump Solo 12+8 bars. (FM)

NYC. Feb. 17, 1939

Same. Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have trombone:

65040-A 'Tain't What You Do Solo 8 bars. (M)
 65041-A In The Groove At The Grove Solo 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge. (M)

NYC. March 2, 1939

Same except John Trueheart (g) replaces Johnson.
 Four titles, one has trombone:

65094-A Sugar Pie Breaks. (M)

Note that Decca does a good job on "... The Grove", a really juicy trombone solo!!
 Otherwise however we are happy for radio transcriptions and broadcasts. One may
 get the feeling that SW gets progressively more confident as time passes, and that
 he now is one of Chick's most treasured men. Listen to his strong playing on
 "Sugarfoot ..." and "Blue Skies" and many others, as the few bars on "Dinah",
 from this period!

ELLA FITZGERALD & HER SAVOY EIGHT NYC. March 2, 1939

Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Hilton Jefferson (as), Ted McRae (ts),
 Tommy Fulford (p), John Trueheart (g), Beverley Peer (b), Chick Webb (dm), Ella
 Fitzgerald (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Decca but no trombone.

NYC. April 21, 1939

Same. Four titles but no trombone.

CHICK WEBB & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. April 21, 1939

Personnel as March 2.

Four titles were recorded for Decca, one has trombone but GM.

CHICK WEBB & HIS ORCHESTRA Boston, May 4, 1939

Personnel as March 2.

Broadcast from Southland Café, nine titles, four have trombone:

Poor Little Girl	Solo 24 bars. (F)
Breaking 'Em Down	Solo 34 bars. (M)
My Wild Irish Rose	Solo 16 bars. (F)
Stars And Stripes Forever	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Six weeks later Chick Webb died, and it is incredible that he can drive his band to
 heights like this (dig "... Irish Rose" and you won't believe what you hear!). It is
 almost as his men know that the end is coming, and with regard to SW, he never
 played hotter than this!!

ELLA FITZGERALD & HER ORCHESTRA NYC. June 29, 1939

Dick Vance, Bobby Stark, Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams, Nat Story, George
 Matthews (tb), Wayman Carver (fl, ts), Garvin Bushell (cl, as), Hilton Jefferson (as),
 Ted McRae (ts), Tommy Fulford (p), John Trueheart (g), Beverly Peer (b), Bill
 Beason (dm), Ella Fitzgerald (vo).

Five titles were recorded for Decca, one has trombone, by SW:

65906-A That's All, Brother Solo 4 bars. (M)

NYC. July 16, 1939

Broadcast from Savoy Ballroom, two have trombone, probably SW:

Sugarfoot Stomp	Soli 12 and 36 bars. (F)
What Is This Thing Called Love?	Solo 16 bars. (M)

NYC. July 20, 1939

Same. Broadcast from Savoy Ballroom, two titles have trombone:

Japanese Sandman	Solo 16+8 bars, orch on bridge. (FM)
Can't We Be Friends	Solo 8 bars. (FM)

NYC. Aug. 18, 1939

Same. Five titles were recorded for Decca, four issued, no trombone.

NYC. Aug. 24, 1939

Same. Broadcast from Savoy Ballroom, two titles:

Raggin' The Scale	Solo 16 bars. (F)
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Copenhagen Solo 18 bars. (FM)

NYC. Aug. 26, 1939

Same. Broadcast from Savoy Ballroom:

I Found A New Baby Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Blue Lou Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Sly Mongoose Solo 12 bars. (F)

Blue Skies Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (FM)

In The Groove At The Grove Solo 16+6 bars, (p) on bridge. (FM)

Stompin' at The Savoy Solo 16+8 bars, (ts) on bridge. (FM)

Chi. Sept. 21, 1939

Broadcast from Grand Terrace:

The Harlem Stride Solo 8 bars. (FM)

One O'Clock Jump (?) Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Chi. Oct. 12, 1939

Same. Six titles were recorded for Decca, one has trombone:

91840-A Lindy Hoppers' Delight Solo 16 bars. (FM)

NYC. Dec. 14, 1939

Broadcast from Savoy Ballroom:

Jubilee Swing Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Sing You Sinners (?) Solo with orch 24 bars. (FM)

NYC. Jan. 22&25, 1940

Same. Broadcasts from Savoy Ballroom. Twenty items, five trombone items found, four by SW:

'Tain't What You Do Solo with orch 8 bars. (M)

Breakin' It Up Solo with orch 34 bars. (M)

Limehouse Blues Soli 8 and 8 bars. (FM)

Blue Lou Solo 8 bars. (M)

NYC. early 1940

Same. Broadcast from Roseland Ballroom, but no SW.

NYC. Jan. 26, 1940

Same/similar. Four titles were recorded for Decca, but no trombone.

NYC. Feb. 15, 1940

Similar to below. Four titles, but no trombone.

NYC. March 20, 1940

Dick Vance, Irving Randolph, Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams, John Haughton, George Matthews (tb), Chauncey Haughton, Eddie Barefield (cl, as), Ted McRae (ts, bar), Sam Simmons (ts), Tommy Fulford (p), John Trueheart (g), Beverly Peer (b), Bill Beason (dm), Ella Fitzgerald (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have trombone:

67359-A Tea Dance Solo 8 bars. (M)

67360-A Jubilee Stomp Breaks. (M)

Chick Webb is gone, but Bill Beason was an excellent replacement on the drums, and the band could swing uptempo like in the old days, as you can note on "Lindy ...", also having a fine trombone solo, definitely by SW. This item is from Decca, and note that it is almost alone there, among all the boring vocal stuff. However, when we go to the broadcasts and the non-vocal items there, we enter a new world! Most of the broadcast items above stem from an excellent CD, full of true swing music, with solo space for everybody, so also for SW. Eighteen trombone soli from Savoy Ballroom alone! Can we say that SW leaves the Chick/Ella organization on the top of his artistic achievements?

BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. May 20, 1940

Bill Coleman, Shad Collins, Russell Smith (tp), Sandy Williams, Milton Robinson (tb), Benny Carter (cl, as, ldr), Carl Frye, George Dorsey (as), Stafford Simon,

Sammy Davis (ts), Sonny White (p), Ulysses Livingston (g), Hayes Alvis (b), William Purnell (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have SW:

67782-A	Pom Pom	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
67784-A	Serenade To A Sarong	Straight 8 bars (growl). (SM)

Benny Carter's bigbands are not hot like Webb but with its own qualities. SW's brief stay however gives rather modest results, with a close to straight solo on "... Pom".

**SIDNEY BECHET
& HIS NEW ORLEANS FEETWARMERS** **NYC. June 4, 1940**

Sidney De Paris (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Sidney Bechet (cl, sop), Cliff Jackson (p), Bernard Addison (g), Wellman Braud (b), Sid Catlett (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Victor:

51222-1	Shake It And Break It	In ens. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
51222-2	Shake It And Break It	As above. (FM)
51223-1	Old Man Blues	In ens. Solo 16+8 bars, (g) on bridge. (FM)
51223-2	Old Man Blues	As above. (FM)
51224-1	Wild Man Blues	In ens. (S)
51224-2	Wild Man Blues	As above. (S)
51225-1	Nobody Knows The Way IFDM	In ens. Solo 12 bars. (S)

The revival of the early jazz traditions is in full force here with Sidney Bechet as an unstoppable motor. SW seems to fit nicely into the developments, and his soloing here is excellent in all tempi.

COLEMAN HAWKINS & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Aug. 9, 1940**

Bigband personnel including William Cato, Claude Jones, Sandy Williams (tb).

Four titles were recorded for Okeh, one has trombone solo, but by whom?

HOT LIPS PAGE / JAM SESSION **NYC. Dec. 29, 1940**

Personnel including Hot Lips Page (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Coleman Hawkins (ts), unknown (rhythm).

Broadcast WNEW "Bundles For Britain", three titles, two have SW:

Cuttin' At Kelly's	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Theme	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Fine trombone soli here!

**SIDNEY BECHET
& HIS NEW ORLEANS FEETWARMERS** **NYC. April 28, 1941**

Gus Aiken (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Sidney Bechet (sop), Lem Johnson (ts), Cliff Jackson (p), Wilson Myers (b), Arthur Herbert (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Victor:

63823-1	Swing Parade	In ens. (FM)
63823-2	Swing Parade	As above. (FM)
63824-1	I Know That You Know	Solo 32 bars. (F)
63824-2	I Know That You Know	As above. (F)
63824-3	I Know That You Know	As above. (F)
63825-1	When It's Sleepy Time DS	Solo 8 bars. (S)
63826-1	I Ain't Gonna GNNOTJ-R	In ens. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
63826-2	I Ain't Gonna GNNOTJ-R	As above. (FM)

Another swinging Bechet-Victor session! SW gives everything he's got here, and particularly fun is to compare his two soli on "I Ain't ...", so different openings! Also "I Know ..." with three takes in very fast tempo, and there are many interesting details in the trombone soli, and there is no doubt that SW was a fine improviser! But don't forget the beautiful slow solo on "... Sleepy Time ..."!

LUCKY MILLINDER & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Nov. 6, 1941**

Bigband personnel including George Stevenson, Edward Morant, Sandy Williams (tb).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, one, "Let Me Off Uptown", has trombone solo, but by George Stevenson.

COOTIE WILLIAMS & HIS ORCHESTRA **Chi. April 1, 1942**

Bigband personnel including Jonas Walker, Robert Horton, Sandy Williams (tb).
Four titles were recorded for Okeh/Columbia, but no trombone soli.

SIDNEY BECHET **Wingdale, NY., Aug. 25, 1942**

Henry Goodwin (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Sidney Bechet (sop), Don Donaldson (p), Ernest Williamson (b), Gerald Hobson (dm).

Eight titles were recorded at Camp Unity. SW is heard clearly in the ensembles on all items in addition to soloing:

Embraceable You	Solo 16 bars. (S)
Medley: I Gotta Right To STB	Strongly with ens. (S)
Honeysuckle Rose	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Bugle Call Rag	Solo 24 bars. (F)
Royal Garden Blues	Break. Solo 24 bars. (M)
That's A Plenty	Solo 32 bars. (F)
Summertime	Duet with (sop). (S)
St. Louis Blues	Solo 24 bars. (S)

An excellent program with the genius of Sidney Bechet in center, but with interesting soli by all participants on items mostly close to five minutes. A fine addition to the SW-solography! All items have something to offer, but take "... Rose" as a solo highlight, and his cooperation with Bechet on "Summertime" is beautiful.

DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. June/July 1943**

Bigband personnel including Sandy Williams (tb).

SW takes part in sessions June 6 – July 14. Four solo items have been found through "The New Desor" (Massagli & Volonte), the three first from Hurricane Restaurant, the last from U.S. Treasury Dept. recording session:

4325e 18/6	Johnny Come Lately	Solo 8 bars. (M)
4325i 18/6	Blue Skies	Solo 8 bars. (M)
4328h 27/6	Dinah's In A Jam	Solo 8 bars. (M)
4329j	Things Ain't What They Used To Be	Solo with orch 12 bars. (SM)

No doubt about that, SW is soloing here, although there is no reason to be impressed over Duke's modest use of this excellent trombonist.

ART HODES' BACK ROOM BOYS **NYC. April 21, 1944**

Max Kaminsky (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Art Hodes (p), Jimmy Shirley (g), Israel Crosby (b).

Five titles were recorded for Blue Note, two have SW:

969-0	Low Down Blues	Soli 12 and 24 bars. (S)
970-0	Jughead Boogie alt. 1	As below. (M)
970-1	Jughead Boogie	Solo 24 bars. (M)
970-2	Jughead Boogie alt. 2	As above. (M)

Even back in 1944 Blue Note was a master company in producing fine jazz sessions, whatever style. Here SW starts the "Low Down ..." to return with another two great choruses; he obviously has not lost the least of his capabilities of the golden thirties. And on the three takes of "Jughead ..." he certainly makes interesting variations in his soli.

SANDY WILLIAMS' BIG EIGHT **NYC. Nov. 5, 1945**

Joe Thomas (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Johnny Hodges (as), Harry Carney (bar), Jimmy Jones (p), Brick Fleagle (g), Sid Weiss (b), Shelly Manne (dm).

Four titles were recorded for HRS, two have trombone soli:

1010	Sumpin' Jumpin' Round Here	Solo 8 bars. (M)
1012	Chili Con Carne	Soli 4 and 16 bars. (M)

Quoting DanM from the Mosaic liner notes: "The leader, Sandy Williams, had been the trombone star of Chick Webb's band (*in fact, its most interesting soloist* (my curative)), ... but heavy drinking had already made some dents in his playing, and he's not front and center here". Well, to be a session leader but exposing himself so little must tell something. He is most interesting on "... Carney".

SANDY WILLIAMS' BIG EIGHT **NYC. June 3, 1946**

Pee Wee Erwin (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Tab Smith (as), Cecil Scott (ts, bar), Jimmy Jones (p, cel), Brick Fleagle (g), Sid Weiss (b), Denzil Best (dm).

Great photo of SW from this session in the Mosaic box, p. 13!!

Five titles were recorded for HRS, four have trombone soli:

1037-4	Tea For Me	With ens. Solo with ens 32 bars. (M)
1039-1	Sam Pan	Solo 16 bars. (F)
1039-2	Sam Pan	As above. (F)
1040-1	Sandy's Blues	Soli 2 and 2+12 bars. (S)
1040-2	Sandy's Blues	As above. (S)
1041-2	Gee Baby, Ain't I Good To You	Solo 32 bars to coda. (S)

"The leader's in good shape and gets more opportunities than on his first date". Well, the nursery-rhymed "Tea ..." is pretty corny, and "... Pan" not much better, but the latter has two different trombone soli to compare. Dig instead the slow "... Blues" and "Gee Baby, ..." highly enjoyable.

REX STEWART **Stockholm, Nov. 1947**

Personnel as below with Simon Brehm (b), Honey Johnson (vo) added.

Broadcast, six titles, two have SW:

	Waitin' For The Train Come In	Solo 16 bars. (F)
	Basin Street Blues	Solo feature. (S/FM)

Note "Basin ..." where SW has the stage all for himself.

REX STEWART **Basel, Switzerland, Nov. 1947**

Rex Stewart (cnt), Sandy Williams (tb), George Kennedy (cl, as), Vernon Story (ts), Don Gais (p), Ted Curry (dm).

Broadcast? Five titles, three have SW:

	Stompin' At The Savoy	Soli 32 and 4 bars. (F)
	Muskrat Ramble	In ens. Solo 16 bars. (M)
	Mood Indigo	Solo 16 bars. (S)

The sound could have been better on the Black Jack LP, but listening closely there are much of interest here (dig the immensely legendary tenor saxophonist!), a mixture of old and new. A beautiful slow trombone solo on "... Indigo", a laidback "... Ramble" and a hot "... Savoy" (dig bar 9!).

REX STEWART **Paris, Dec. 5, 1947**

Rex Stewart (cnt), Sandy Williams (tb), John Harris (cl, as), Vernon Story (ts), Don Gais (p), Fred Hermelin (b), Ted Curry (dm).

Six titles were recorded at concert for Blue Star, only one has SW:

2234	I Cover The Waterfront	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
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Paris, Dec. 8, 1947

Same. Five titles were recorded in studio for Blue Star, two have SW:

2203-1	Feeling Fine	Solo 22 bars. (FM)
2206-1	Just Squeeze Me	Duet with (cnt) 16 bars. (M)

Paris, Dec. 9&10, 1947

Same, except Ladislav Czabanick (b).

Twelve titles, six have SW:

2205-2	I Cried For You	Solo feature for (tb). (SM)
2207-2	Stompin' At The Savoy	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
2209-4	Madeleine	Duet with (cnt) 14 bars. (SM)
2210-1	Muskrat Ramble	In ens. Solo 16 bars. (M)

2215-1 Let's Try It Again Solo 18 bars. (SM)
 2219-1 Jug Blues Solo 24 bars. (S)

This Rex Stewart group seems to be pretty well organized, playing a mixture of old and new and popular French taste. Highly notable for SW is of course is of course "I Cried ...", a kind of solo feature. Interesting also with a late version of old "... Savoy", and a groovy "Jug ..." blues.

REX STEWART **Nice, early June 1948**
 Rex Stewart (cnt), Sandy Williams (tb), George Kennedy (as), Vernon Story (ts), Don Gais (p), Ted Curry (dm).
 One title, "Perdido", was recorded at the Nice Jazz Festival, not available.

GLORIA MAC **NYC. May 5, 1949**
 Dick Vance (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Hilton Jefferson (as), George Nicholas (ts), Bill McRae (p), Thomas Barnes (b), Sid Catlett (dm), Gloria Mac (vo).
 Two titles were recorded for Abbey 75, not available.

HENRY "RED" ALLEN **NYC. Feb. 17, 1951**
 Collective personnel: Henry "Red" Allen (tp, vo), Johnny Windhurst (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Omer Simeon, Buster Bailey (cl), Bob Kuh (ts), Joe Sullivan (p), Arthur Herbert (dm).
 Broadcast probably from the Stuyvesant Casino, three titles:

Royal Garden Blues In ens. Solo 24 bars. Break. (FM)
 St. Louis Blues In ens. 12 bars 2/2 with (tp). (FM)
 When The Saints Go Marchin' In In ens. Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Good sound on this program (thanks to Franz Hoffmann). SW is very active in the ensembles, and solo highlight is "Royal Garden ...".

HOT LIPS PAGE **NYC. ca. 1951**
 Personnel as below with Bobby Byrne (tb, vo) added.
 Broadcast from the Stuyvesant Casino, six titles. It seems however that SW is soloing on the two first items only. Then Byrne is announced on "Royal Garden Blues" and "The Saint", and he seems also to continue on "On The Sunny Side Of The Street" and "After You've Gone". Thus:

Struttin' With Some Barbecue Solo 32 bars. (F)
 I'm Confessin' Duet with (cl) 16 bars. (SM)

Nothing particular with these two items.

HOT LIPS PAGE **NYC. Dec. 21, 1951**
 Hot Lips Page (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Cecil Scott (cl), Charlie Queener (p), Jim Thorpe (b), George Wettling (dm).
 Broadcast from the Stuyvesant Casino, one title:

When The Saints Go Marchin In (NC) In ens. (FM)

This is only the close of a full program, less than a minute, for some reason put at the end of a Storyville CD. The full program would be interesting, this item has no interest.

No further recording sessions.

Late history:

During the summer of 1943 played for 10 weeks with Duke Ellington (deputising for Lawrence Brown, who had temporarily moved back to the West Coast), later that year worked with Don Redman and Hot Lips Page. Short spell away from full-time music, then several months with Roy Eldridge big band from summer of 1944, subsequently rejoined Claude Hopkins for a year commencing November 1944. Worked with Rex Stewart for tour of Europe (autumn 1947), returned to the U.S.A. in March 1948. Left full-time music to undergo extensive treatment for his health. 'Gigged' at Ryan's with various leaders in 1949 and 1950, then suffered a complete breakdown in health. After his recovery he became the elevator operator at an apartment block, and from that time onwards has remained steadfastly teetotal. In the late 1950s, after years of musical inactivity, he began appearing occasionally at the Central Plaza. During the 1960s continued to practise regularly, but dental problems precluded long arrangements.

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