

Topic Page: [Fitzgerald, Ella \(1917 - 1996\)](#)

Definition: **Fitzgerald, Ella** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

US jazz singer. Chick Webb discovered the "First Lady of Song" at Harlem's Apollo Theater in 1934. Fitzgerald's first hit was "A-Tisket A-Tasket" (1938). Her *Songbook* series of renditions of popular 'standards' by George Gershwin, Jerome Kern and Cole Porter have become definitive. She worked with most of the jazz greats of her era, including Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Louis Armstrong.

Summary Article: **Fitzgerald, Ella**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1917–96, American jazz singer, b. Newport News, Va. Probably the most celebrated jazz vocalist of her generation, Fitzgerald was reared in Yonkers, N.Y., moving after her mother's death (1932) to Harlem, where two years later she won an amateur contest at the Apollo Theater. Thereafter she performed with Chick Webb's band. After he died in 1939 she managed the band herself until 1942, when she began to make solo appearances in supper clubs and theaters. Principally a jazz and blues singer of remarkably sweet and effortless style, Fitzgerald was noted for her sophisticated interpretation of songs by George Gershwin and Cole Porter and for her scat singing, an extremely inventive form of vocal jazz improvisation.

Fitzgerald, whose superb voice, wide repertoire, and accessible singing style appealed to both jazz and pop audiences, scored her first recording hit with "A-Tisket A-Tasket" (1938) and went on to become a perennially popular artist with such performances as the million-selling "I'm Making Believe" (1944, with the Ink Spots), the historic scat "Flying Home" (1945), the be-bop "Lady Be Good" (1947), and many hundreds more. She also wrote a number of songs and made numerous concert tours of the United States, Europe, and Asia. She appeared in several films, including *Pete Kelly's Blues* (1955) and *St. Louis Blues* (1958). Despite ill health, Fitzgerald continued performing into the early 1990s.

See biography by S. Nicholson (1994);

Zwerin, C. , dir., *Ella Fitzgerald: Something to Live For* (documentary film, 1999).

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Fitzgerald, Ella. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fitzgerald_ella_1917_1996



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