

**The**

**TRUMPET**

**of**

**DUPREE IRA LEWIS  
BOLTON**

Born: Oklahoma City, March 3, 1929  
Died: Alameda, Ca., June 5, 1993

*Introduction:*

It took me five minutes after listening to my first Dupree Bolton recording, late in life, to decide he was one of the greatest of modern trumpet jazz, worthy of further studies. My opinions will be found below.

*History:*

Father Dupree Sr. played piano, guitar, banjo and perhaps also violin, his brother Dodge played trombone before switching to piano. Family moved to Los Angeles in the early 1940s. DB is said to have left LA. at the age of 13-14 to join Jay McShann's band. In 1944 he was in New York and played with Buddy Johnson's orchestra. Later appearing with Benny Carter's orchestra. Silent for many years. Jail would be the dominant factor throughout the years of what should have been DB's musical prime, directly or indirectly connected to his addiction to drugs. Appeared and recorded with Harold Land (1959); after another jail visit joined Curtis Amy, recorded and appeared on TV with him (1962-63), then disappeared again. Was jailed in Oklahoma, recorded with the prison band in 1980. Out of jail he played in Oakland, later was seen playing on the street of San Francisco, last observation in 1986. (abbreviated from liner notes of CD: Dupree Bolton – Fireball”).

*Message:*

Note many questions related to the Buddy Johnson sessions! Need to have your opinion on the early Dupree Bolton! Postscript of Jan. 20, 2015: Opinions are now coming in from Mario Schneeberger and Bob Porter, and also information from Bob Weir's discography on Bolton. What is your opinion?

## DUPREE BOLTON SOLOGRAPHY

### **BUDDY JOHNSON & HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. Oct. 4, 1944**

Gus Aiken, Dupree Bolton (as Lewis Dupree), Henry Glover, Willis Nelson, Herbert Turner (tp), Bernard Archer, Leonard Briggs, Gordon Thomas (tb), Joe O'Laughlin, Maxwell Lucas (as), Frank Henderson, Jimmy Stanford (ts), Teddy Conyers (bar), Buddy Johnson (p, vo, arr, dir), Leon Spann (b), George Jenkins (dm), Ella Johnson, Arthur Prysock (vo).

Five titles were recorded for Decca, two have trumpet soli:

72407	One Of Them Good Ones	Soli with orch 10 and 8 bars. (M)
72409	Fine Brown Frame	Solo with orch 16 bars. (SM)

**NYC. Oct. 16, 1945**

Dupree Bolton, Willis Nelson, Frank Brown, John Wilson (tp), Bernard Archer, Leonard Briggs, Gordon Thomas (tb), Joe O'Laughlin, Al Robinson (as), David Van Dyke, Jimmy Stanford (ts), Teddy Conyers (bar), Buddy Johnson (p, arr, dir), Jerome Darr (g), Leon Spann (b), Teddy Stewart (dm), Ella Johnson, Arthur Prysock (vo).

ABC broadcast from Savoy Ballroom, seven titles, six issued, four have trumpet soli:

Opus Two	Solo 12 bars. Solo 36 bars. (M)
St. Louis Blues	Solo 36 bars. (FM)
Night Shift	Solo 16+8 bars, orch on bridge. Solo 12 bars. (FM)
Jodi	Solo 32 bars (mute). (M)

**same period**

Same, eight titles, five have trumpet soli:

One O'Clock Boogie	Solo 20 bars. Solo 12 bars. (M)
Exactly Like You	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
One For A Nickel	Soli 8, 8 and 8 bars. (M)
In There	Solo 32 bars. (F)
Traffic Jam	Solo 64 bars. (F)

Note: There are two Buddy Johnson AFRS One Night Stand programs, 767 listed as Oct. 9 and 832 listed as Oct. 23. Mackenzie & Polomski in their book on ONS however state that many of these titles have been used on the Jazz Archives LP 25 which is referred to above as Oct. 16 and 'same period'. If we assume that M&P are correct, 767 has one unissued item: "Dearest Darling", while 832 have several unissued items, including "I Want To Be Happy". Note also that both programs list "Night Shift", maybe two or three versions exist? More research is needed!!

**NYC. Nov. 7, 1945**

Personnel as Oct. 16 except Jonas Walker (tb) replaces Thomas.

Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have trumpet soli:

73103	Opus Two	Solo 12 bars. Solo with orch 24 bars. (FM)
73106	Walk 'Em	Solo with orch 12 bars. (M)

The above list has all recorded trumpet soli in the Buddy Johnson orchestra during the time Dupree Bolton was a member. The difficult question is now: Who are playing them?? This is obviously more complicated than originally thought. There are five main points to consider: 1. Dupree Bolton was only 15 ½ years old in the first session and not yet 17 at the last session, but nevertheless reported to play most of hot soli (Bob Porter from Arthur Prysock), can we really trust this? 2. Willis Nelson was a much more important trumpet player than I realized (as an example listen to his Fats Navarro like solo on "Pullamo" Dec. 26, 1947); he could certainly have played many of the soli otherwise attributed to Dupree Bolton. 3. LP liner notes gives Henry Glover as the trumpet soloist on "Fine Brown Frame" from the first session, but where does this information come from? In my previous solography I put Dupree Bolton as the soloist on this item, because I felt it sounded just what a very young but modern-oriented kid might produce. 4. We do not have 'fixed point' to start the comparisons with, first definite solo with Bolton is on 1959, much too far away to be used even if one

knew Bolton personally (as Bob Porter did). 5. Not on a single solo is there full agreement between the persons mentioned and involved in the above discussion. Therefore I choose to publish this revised but 'contents-less' solography, asking everybody to come forth with their ideas. Use your ears!!! And what about "Jump Call" with Benny Carter below?

**BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Dec. 12, 1945**  
Bigband personnel including Louis Gray, Wallace Jones, Dupree Bolton, Idrees Sulieman (as Leonard Graham), Benny Carter (tp).  
Four titles were recorded for Capitol, 838-5, but no DP ("Cuttin' Time" has a fine modern trumpet solo, but Mosaic liner notes attributes it to Idrees Sulieman).

**NYC. Jan. 5, 1946**  
Similar. Three titles were recorded for DeLuxe, two issued, 167 "Patience And Fortitude" has no trumpet soli but:

166	Jump Call	Possibly the last of two trumpet soli, both 16 bars (open). (F)
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Note: First trumpet solo on "Jump Call" sounds like Emmett Berry, present on the DeLuxe recording session two days later! Postscript: Also here Idrees Sulieman seems to be a better candidate according to close listening feedback.

**HAROLD LAND QUINTET** **LA. Aug. 1959**  
Dupree Bolton (tp), Harold Land (ts), Elmo Hope (p), Herbie Lewis (b), Frank Butler (dm).  
Six titles were recorded for Hifijazz/Contemporary, issued as "The Fox":

The Fox	Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. 9 choruses 8/8, 4/4 and 2/2 with (dm/ts). (F)
Mirror-Mind Roses	Straight/duet/ens. Solo 8 bars. (S)
One Second, Please	Solo 64 bars. 64 bars 4/4 with (dm/ts). (FM)
Sims A-Plenty	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Little Chris	Solo 52 bars. (FM)
One Down	Solo 2 choruses of 40 bars. (FM)

This session may easily be called the main reason for DP's legendary status as one extremely exciting and talented trumpet player! Certainly this is the only session which has been reasonably available during the years, until recently there has been a DB boom of hitherto unknown stuff. Listening closely to it, many things spring to my mind. Based mainly upon Elmo Hope's complex musical world, composing four of the six titles (Land the two others, "The Fox" and "Little Chris"), they are not easy vehicles for improvisation. The album title is a plain albeit extremely fast blues, and this is easy match. On "One Second ..." however, he has several problems (ex. listen to bar 3), although the comparison to Clifford Brown is very tempting here. It also seems that DB has some problems in general with the upper register on this session. Therefore I regret that he could not have better opportunities in slow ballads; the only example here, "... Roses" is heavily arranged. "Little ..." is also a tricky piece, "Sims ..." and "One ..." slightly easier, and all them have brilliant trumpet soli but not with the freedom of expression one might wish for. One one hand we have a trumpeter of hitherto unknown enormous talent and creativity, on the other one might wish for a more simple jam session with familiar material, to see more clearly what he could do. These comments are not to be seen negatively, there is so much innovative trumpet playing on this session!! Possibly you should play the three last items first do have a feeling of DB's capabilities. As fascinating and thrilling this session and DB's playing is, I nevertheless dare to say that the following sessions feature him to even greater advantage.

**CURTIS AMY SEXTET** **LA. late 1962?**  
Dupree Bolton (tp), Curtis Amy (ts), Charles "Dodo" Coker (p), Ray Crawford (elg), Victor Gaskin (b), Ronald Selico (dm), Frank Evans (mc).  
TV programme in the "Frankly Jazz" series (25 minutes), six titles:

Theme	No solo.
Summertime	Solo 16 bars. (M)
Katanga	Solo 3 choruses of 24 bars. (F)
Laura	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
Blues For Amy	Solo 16 bars. (M)

Theme

No solo.

Encountering this programme after listening to and commenting the “Katanga”-session below, one is out of superlatives! This “Katanga” is really thrilling, and DB cannot have had much fear of tv-cameras, he goes out on his solo as was it his last chance ever. And then a long, slow, moving “Laura”, the sound of his so brilliant with a vibrato, playing mostly the melody rather straight but once in awhile put in some surprises to tease us. One of modern jazz’ most memorable trumpet ballads, equaled by only a few (Clifford, Miles, Chet)! “Summertime” has some slight problems in the opening bars but continues with great style. And listen to how he starts out on “... Amy” and continues with strong, sharp notes, each one with its clear identity, challenging the listener, ‘grab me’ grab me’! Vow, this is quite a program, hope to view it one day!! Postscript: Now I have!!

**CURTIS AMY SEXTET****LA. Feb. 3, 1963**

Dupree Bolton (tp), Curtis Amy (sop, ts), Jack Wilson (p), Ray Crawford (elg), Victor Gaskin (b), Doug Sides (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Pacific Jazz, issued as “Katanga”:

Native Land	1:50, ca. 32 bars. (SM)
Katanga	Solo 4 choruses of 24 bars. Solo 8 bars. (F)
Lonely Woman	No solo. (S)
Amyable	Solo 80 bars. (FM)
You Don’t Know What Love Is	Solo 24 bars. (S)
A Shade Of Brown	Solo 64 bars. (FM)

A brilliant session for all purposes, would have been even without DB!! But he is there!! The title numbers and “Native ...” have trumpet playing interesting enough, but there are three more important numbers. The thought struck me, imagine a jam session between Clifford Brown and Dupree Bolton, two of a kind, the hair raises on my arms while thinking about it (maybe they jam right now up there, who knows ...), same brilliance in the sound of their horns, same unlimited creativity. The two fast medium titles “Amyable” and “... Brown” (which Brown do they have in mind ?...) have long, elaborate and yet explosive soli of a kind rarely heard. And then finally the lovely ballad “... Love Is”, for the third time I am thinking of Clifford Brown, in principle contrary to the jazz solography idea, but as an exception, it tells something of what we are dealing with here, a trumpeter who wasted an enormous talent for reasons unknown, drugs yes, but can that really explain all?

**ONZY MATTHEWS****LA. Feb. 6, 1963**

Dupree Bolton, Bob Rolfe (tp), Horace Tapscott, Lou Blackburn, Dick Leith (tb), Gabe Baltazar (as), Curtis Amy (ts), Jay Migliore (bar), Onzy Matthews (p), Al Viola, Julian Matlock (g), Jim Crutcher (b), Jerry MacKenzie (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Capitol:

39160-5	A Second Chance (Song from Two for the Seesaw)	Solo/straight with orch 72 bars. (M)
39161-4	Little Boat (O Barquinho)	No solo. (M)
39162-4	Bossa Nova Blue	Solo 64 bars. (M)
39163-5	A New Samba For Margo	No solo. (M)

One item of less than three minutes duration, and DB doesn’t need to be legendary anymore, he has proved himself to be on of thre greatest trumpet players!! A magnificent piece of music, hot as hell, with a swinging guitar accompaniment ala Freddie Green, and towards the end the orchestra enters while he goes up, towards trumpet heaven to take his place among his brothers. Take then “... Chance”, another masterpiece of trumpet playing in a quite different mood but with the same utter confidence. And finally, the two remaining items are equally great as compositions and carriers of excellent saxophone contributions, “almost” as we forget DB is not soloing here. Wow, I am losing my breath while I am repeatedly listening to this wonderful sessions!!!

**EARL ANDERZA****LA. June 30, 1963**

Dupree Bolton (tp), Earl Anderza (as), Hadley Caliman (ts), Roosevelt Wardell (p), Clarence Jones (b), Chuck Carter (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Capitol:

Joe And I	Break to solo 24 bars. (FM)
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## Midnite Lament

Soli/straight 18 and 14  
bars with ens to coda. (S)

Again some brilliant performances by DB. His playing on “Joe ...”, a tricky blues, is highly original, and it is just a shame he only gets two choruses, this could have been something equally memorable as the “Bossa ...” above. And “... Lament” is something of the most beautiful you can imagine in a very slow tempo, does not matter at all that it is mostly straight played. Yes, DB deserves his reputation based upon the four sessions of Harold Land, Curtis Amy, Onzy Matthews and Earl Anderza alone, no doubt!!!

**OKLAHOMA PRISON BAND****Tulsa, Oklahoma, July 1980**

Dupree Bolton (tp), Monty Boyd (tp, fl), Paul Brewer (tb, dir), Gene Smith (as, ts), Maurice Stokes (g), Fender Rhodes, Elisha Martin (b), Jarone Nelson (dm), Calvin Borders, Michael Lartique (cga, latin perc), all inmates at Joseph Harp Correctional Center except Paul Brewer and Elisha Martin. The group also titled “Joseph Harp Correctional Center Jazz Fusion Band”.

Four titles were recorded, issued on Uptown CD as “Fireball”:

Monk’s Tunnel	Solo 16 bars. (SM)
John’s Tune	Solo 1:22. (M)
Shackle Blues	Solo 24 bars. (M)
Chano	Solo 36 bars. (M)

What is really amazing is that DB still has his chops intact after being away from the public stage for 17 years! One might be inclined to think that this is a pathetic appearance, some old wreck put on CD to capitalize on his legendary status. But not at all!! These is a prison band alright, but of high quality, fine tunes (of which DB has written the last two) and trumpet playing better than most you have around!! He still has this brilliant sound and sovereign charisma from his earlier recording sessions, and he certainly still could outplay anybody. Note how he really lives up to be a “fireball” on “... Tunnel”, what a colourful solo! Then cooling down on the beautiful “... Tune”, taking it slow and relaxed on faster moving el-bass and drums. Coming up on the charming waltzing blues of “Shackle ...” with a blend of quietness and lightning. And leaving us forever with a “Chano” which really bites you with its daring notes thrown carelessly into the air, yet with such artistic selfsureness, so perfect. Tell me about a trumpeter in 1980 who played better trumpet than this?! Dupree Bolton, what a terribly waste of talent!

No further recording sessions.

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