

**The**  
**TRUMPET**  
**and**  
**VOCAL**  
**of**  
**WALTER FULLER**

Born: Dyersburg, Tennessee, Feb. 15, 1910  
Died: San Diego, April 20, 2003

*Introduction:*

After hearing Walter Fuller playing trumpet on the Lionel Hampton recording session in 1938, we realized that here was another great swing trumpeter, and his many contributions with the Earl Hines orchestra strengthened our good impression. He certainly deserves a solography.

*History:*

His father was a mellophone player. Left home at 14 to tour with a medicine show, then worked with Ma Rainey on T.O.B.A. Circuit. With Sammy Stewart from ca.1927 until spring 1930, left the band at Savoy Balkoom, New York, returned to Chicago to join Irene Eadie and her Vogue Vagabonds. Joined Earl Hines in 1931, left to work with Horace Henderson from August 1937 until August 1938, then rejoined Earl Hines until September 1940. Led own band at new Grand Terrace, Chicago (1941) and other venues. Led own band at Radio Room, Los Angeles (late 1944), Downbeat, Chicago (spring 1945). Moved to California; from 1946 led own band in San Diego, including 12-year residency at Club Royal. Continued to undertake solo vocal engagements. (Ref. John Chilton). He was later active in pushing for civil rights in San Diego.

*Message:*

Maybe this solography is not that exciting, as all Earl Hines items can easily be found on the magnificent Mosaic album "Classic Earl Hines Sessions 1928 – 1945", and I really did not need do any personal excavating here. However Walter Fuller needs recognition, and Mosaic and I have done the best we can!

## WALTER FULLER SOLOGRAPHY

**EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA****NYC. June 28, 1932**

Charlie Allen (tp), George Dixon (tp, arr), Walter Fuller (tp, vo), Louis Taylor (tb, arr) William Franklin (tb, vo), Darnell Howard (cl, as, vln), Omer Simeon (cl, as, bar), Cecil Irwin (cl, ts, arr), Earl Hines (p), Lawrence Dixon (g, arr), Quinn Wilson (b, tu, arr), Wallace Bishop (dm), Henry Woode (arr).

Three titles were recorded for Brunswick, two issued, but no WF.

**NYC. July 14, 1932**

Same. Eight titles, four have WF:

|         |                               |   |
|---------|-------------------------------|---|
| 12074-A | Oh! You Sweet Thing           | Solo with orch 8 bars (open).<br>Break. (FM)                        |
| TO-1181 | I Love You Because I Love You | As below. (FM)  |
| 12076-A | I Love You Because I Love You | Vocal 32 bars. (FM)   |
| 12076-B | I Love You Because I Love You | As above. (FM)  |
| 12078-A | Sensational Mood              | Soli 8 and 8 bars (open).<br>Solo 16+6 bars, (as-OS) on bridge. (F) |
| 12078-B | Sensational Mood              | As above. (F)   |
| TO-1182 | My One Ambition Is You        | Vocal 32 bars. Solo with<br>orch 30 and 8 bars. (M)                 |

Walter Fuller was a fine vocalist with his own things, although he cannot have been without knowledge of Louis Armstrong. He also was an excellent trumpeter, in fact one of the hottest in his time, remember this is as early as 1932. He enters our jazz archeology with his sensational appearance on "... Mood", this is really hot trumpet!! Note also the differences between the two takes, one is that take B's main solo starts with one very long note, while take A has a few notes before a long one. "... Ambition ..." also have a long and noteworthy solo. WF appeared almost only on the Earl Hines bigband recording sessions, and he never got the recognition he might have got with small band sessions, so we have to be satisfied with what we have.

**EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA****NYC. Feb. 13, 1933**

Same plus Jimmy Mundy (ts, arr). Valaida Snow (vo) guesting.

Five titles were recorded for Brunswick, two have WF:

|         |           |  |
|---------|-----------|--|
| 13060-A | Rosetta   | Solo 8 bars (open). (M)                |
| 13060-C | Rosetta   | As above. (M)                          |
| 13060-B | Rosetta   | Solo 8 bars (open). Vocal 32 bars. (M) |
| 13060-D | Rosetta   | As above. (M)                          |
| 13063-A | Cavernism | Solo 34 bars (open). (FM)              |
| 13063-B | Cavernism | As above. (FM)                         |

**Chi. Oct. 27, 1933**

Same plus Trummy Young (tb).

Four titles, three have WF:

|       |                      |                                    |
|-------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 643-1 | Take It Easy         | With orch 24 bars. (F)             |
| 645-1 | Bubbling Over        | Solo with orch 32 bars (open). (F) |
| 646-1 | I Want A Lot Of Love | Solo with orch 8 bars (open). (F)  |

Fine and hot soloing on "Cavernism" but the two versions are almost identical. But that is not the case for "Rosetta", oh no!! The four brief soli are all quite different, showing that WF was a true improviser! You are encouraged to play them in sequence like I did, and you will be amazed!! Fine vocal on two takes also. Note also "Bubbling ...", a great bigband trumpet solo!

**EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA****NYC. March 26/27, 1934**

Personnel as above.

Eight titles were recorded for Brunswick, seven have WF:

|           |                        |                         |
|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 15000-A/C | Just To Be In Caroline | Solo 6 bars (open). (M) |
|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------|

|           |                             |  |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--|
| 15001-A/C | We Found Romance            | Vocal 32 bars. Solo 4 bars (open). (M)                   |
| 15003-A   | Madhouse                    | Intro/solo with orch 20 bars (open). (M)                 |
| 15006-A/C | Julia                       | Vocal 32 bars. Soli 8 and 8 bars. (FM)                   |
| 15007-A   | Darkness                    | Solo 4 bars (open).<br>Possibly solo 28 bars (mute). (M) |
| 15008-A   | You're The One Of My Dreams | Vocal 32 bars. Break. (FM)                               |
| 15009-A   | Swingin' Down               | Solo 8 bars. (F)   |

This session favours vocal over trumpet; the three items belong to his most charming performances, while trumpet soli are mostly very brief, though good, note particularly the first one on "Julia". Although WF does not use the mute so often, I seem to hear his style in "Darkness".

#### **EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. Sept. 12/13, 1934**

Personnel as above.

Ten titles were recorded for Decca, seven have WF:

|        |                 |   |
|--------|-----------------|---|
| 9461-A | That's A Plenty | Solo 16 bars (open). (F)                            |
| 9462-A | Fat Babes       | Soli 4 and 4 bars (open). (M)                       |
| 9465-A | Rosetta         | Vocal 32 bars. (FM)                                 |
| 9474-A | Copenhagen      | Solo 24 bars (open). (FM)                           |
| 9476-A | Wolverine Blues | Solo 24 bars (open). (FM)                           |
| 9477-A | Rock and Rye    | Solo 8 bars. Solo with orch<br>36 bars (open). (FM) |
| 9478-A | Cavernism       | Solo 16 bars (mute). (FM)                           |

#### **NYC. Feb. 12, 1935**

Same. Six titles, three have WF:

|         |                      |                          |
|---------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 39356-A | Disappointed In Love | Solo 4 bars (open). (SM) |
| 39359-A | Bubbling Over        | Solo 32 bars. (F)        |
| 39361-A | Julia                | Vocal 32 bars. (FM)      |

Strong and confident trumpet soli here! The heritage from Louis Armstrong is evident, as mentioned before, but WF has his own things, and if one is not familiar with his music before, one is bound to be astonished and wondering why he did not make greater success as an important soloist. The tempi are mostly up, and he has no problems with any titles, play "... Plenty", "Wolverine ...", "... Rye" or others and dig his accomplishments! And note his few bars in slow medium at the end of "... Love", great! And two fine vocal items for good measure! Note that Decca also wants its share of WF's vocal capabilities with new versions of "Rosetta" and "Julia".

#### **EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. Feb. 10, 1937**

Milton Fletcher, Charlie Allen, Walter Fuller (tp), Louis Taylor, Trummy Young, Ken Stewart (tb), Darnell Howard, Omer Simeon (cl, as), Willie Randall (cl, ts), Budd Johnson (ts), Earl Hines (p), Lawrence Dixon (g), Quinn Wilson (b, tu, arr), Wallace Bishop (dm), Cecil Irwin, Jimmy Mundy (arr).

Five titles were recorded for Vocalion, two have WF:

|        |                    |                                  |
|--------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1814-1 | Flany Doodle Swing | Soli 16 and 16 bars (mute). (FM) |
| 1815-2 | Pianology          | Solo 8 bars (open). (FM)         |

Two years of absence from the recording studio has not harmed WF's trumpet playing! Note his biting attack on his eight bars on "Pianology"! And "... Swing", particular the first solo, offers one of the best examples for learning to identify him and some of his personal tricks.

#### **JIMMY MUNDY & HIS 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:

|       |                  |   |
|-------|------------------|---|
| 159-1 | I Surrender Dear | Vocal 32 bars. Solo with ens<br>16 bars (open) to coda. (M) |
|-------|------------------|---|

160-1 Ain't Misbehavin' Vocal 32 bars.  
Solo 30 bars (mute). (FM)

A very small smallband session, but with two highly enjoyable items. Good soloing by everybody, but to me WF is the main personality. Singing on both items, and finishing "... Dear" nicely, the highlight is his very personal muted and staccato solo on "Ain't ...", leading up to a gigantic drum break!

**LIONEL HAMPTON & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. Oct. 11, 1938**

Walter Fuller (tp), Omer Simeon (cl, as), George Oldham (as), Budd Johnson, Robert Crowder (ts), Spencer Odun (p), Jesse Simpkins (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm), Lionel Hampton (vib-025866, p-025867, vo-025868).

Three titles were recorded for Victor:

25866-1 Down Home Jump Solo 32 bars (open). (FM)  
25867-1 Rock Hill Special Solo 24 bars (open). (M)  
25868-1 Fiddle Diddle In ens. Obligato 32 bars to solo 16 bars (mute). (M)

Oh, I remember the first time I heard this swinging Hampton 78s, and what great impression they made on me and my friends! With a solid basis in Burroughs' dynamic, forceful and magnificent drumming, the guys made a great session, only highly disappointing that they only made three sides. Everybody is having a ball here, and WF offers us some highly individual trumpet, firmly placing him the top category of the swing trumpeters of the golden thirties. Whether he plays the blues on "Rock ...", listen to how he opens the second chorus, or a standard tune like "... Jump", he swings!! And he is the main personality on "... Diddle" with his muted trumpet, active accompanying Lionel's vocal and taking a first class solo. The birth of his solography was just here!

**EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. July 12, 1939**

Earl Hines (p, dir), Walter Fuller (tp, vo), Milton Fletcher, Edward Sims (tp), George Dixon (tp, as), Edward Burke, John Ewing, Joe McLewis (tb), Omer Simeon (cl, bar), Leroy Harris (as, vo), Budd Johnson (cl, as, ts, arr), Robert Crowder (ts), Claude Roberts (g), Quinn Wilson (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Bluebird, four have WF:

38255-1 Indiana Solo 8 bars (open). (F)  
38256-1 G. T. Stomp Solo 16 bars (open). (F)  
38256-2 G. T. Stomp As above. (F)  
38257-1 Ridin' And Jivin' Solo 16+8 bars (mute), orch on bridge.  
Solo 8 bars (mute) to coda. (M)  
38259-1 Father Steps In Solo with orch 32 bars (open)  
(2<sup>nd</sup> (tp)-solo). (FM)

**Chi. Oct. 6, 1939**

Same. Laura Rucker (vo). Six titles:

40474-1 Riff Medley Solo with orch 16 bars (open). (M)  
40475-1 Me And Columbus Intro. Break (open). (M)  
40476-1 XYZ Solo with orch 16 bars (open). (F)  
40477-1 'Gator Swing Solo with orch 32 bars (open). (FM)  
40478-1 After All I've Been To You Vocal 32 bars. Solo with orch 8 bars (open) to coda. (S)  
40479-1 Lightly And Politely Solo with orch 24 bars (open). (FM)

WF is back to Earl Hines after two years of absence, now with the orchestra recording for Bluebird, resulting in many notable contributions. Unusual is maybe his fine muted soli on "... Jivin'" and his strong 8 bars on "After All ...", dig this. Most items go in upper tempi with WF wailing with the orchestra as "Father ...", "Riff ...", "XYZ", "... Swing" and "... Politely" as typical examples, only 'Little Jazz' played hot style like that. No problems with "G. T. ..." but the two takes are quite similar. Note also the pleasant vocal on "After All ...", WF was one of the better male vocalists of the vintage era.

**EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Feb. 13, 1940**

Personnel as above except Jimmy Mundy (ts) replaces Johnson. Billy Eckstine (vo).

Four titles, one has WF:

47058-1/2 Number 19 Solo with orch 8 bars (open). (FM)

**NYC. June 19, 1940**

Same as July 12, 1939 except Shirley Clay (tp) replaces Fletcher.  
Seven titles, three have WF:

51522-1 Call Me Happy Soli with orch 16 and  
8 bars (open). (FM)

51524-1 Topsy Turvy Intro 6 bars (open). Vocal 32 bars.  
Soli 32 and 8 bars to coda (open). (M)

51526-1 You Can Depend On Me Vocal 32 bars. Solo 16 bars  
and long coda (open). (FM)

51526-2 You Can Depend On Me As above. (FM)

Although WF's recording career seems to come to an end, he continued to play for many years, and we can only regret that he disappeared from us. A rather untypical solo on "... 19", but "... Happy" is again a typical example of WF's hot style as is his intro to "Topsy ...". This title was recorded by Cab Calloway a few weeks earlier as "Hard Time" and here it is almost a feature number for WF with fine vocal followed by much fine trumpet soloing, dig the bridge! He also takes large parts of "... Depend ...", although the arrangement makes the two alternates rather similar. Fine sessions to say goodbye to Walter Fuller, one of the finest swing trumpeters of the swing era!!

**CLUB ROYAL QUINTET**

**probably ca. 1947**

Walter Fuller (tp), Gene Porter (ts) and others.  
Two titles were recorded for Miltone 5259, not available:

M-495 After All I've Been To You

M-496 Saxology

**WALTER FULLER's CLUB ROYALE BAND**

**San Diego, Aug. 1948**

Walter Fuller (tp?, vo), Gene Porter (ts), Adam Cato (p), Preston Coleman (b), Charlie Blackwell (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Kicks:

18762 Closer To My Heart Vocal 28 and 12 bars. (S)

18763 Pecan Mambo No (tp)/(vo). (FM)

Nice to hear WF final swan song "... Heart" on an otherwise highly commercial side. The "... Mambo" has tenorsax soloing only, possibly his trumpet is present in the badly recorded ensemble.

No further recording sessions.

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