

Earl Hines and “Rosetta”

By Jeffrey Taylor

One of the proudest moments of Earl “Fatha” Hines’s career took place in 1976, when he was invited to perform at a White House dinner in honor of the President of France. After an evening chatting with Betty Ford and Clint Eastwood, Hines sat down at the piano in the East Room and launched into “Rosetta.”

“Rosetta” had been composed by Hines and his arranger Henri Woode over forty years earlier. That the pianist chose this tune for such an occasion, and at this late stage of his career, says much about its prominence in his life. Only “Boogie Woogie on the St. Louis Blues” held the same pride of place in Hines’s performances. He revisited “Rosetta” hundreds of times, in solo performances, with vocalists, and with groups of varying sizes. But though the association of a jazz musician with a “signature” tune is not unusual, Hines’s relationship with “Rosetta” was complex and unique.

On October 6, 1939, at the end of a lengthy band session for the Bluebird label, Hines recorded four solo versions of “Rosetta.”¹ Only the third take was issued at the time, coupled with Hines’s solo version of “Glad Rag Doll,” recorded ten years earlier. The first two (rejected) takes are presumed lost, but the fourth was included many years later on an LP reissue by RCA-France.² The two available performances, placed side by side, capture Hines’s relentless virtuosity and innovative musical mind, and provide a fascinating example of how a jazz musician can revisit the same melody and chord structure from two perspectives. But the recordings also raise larger issues of context, for they are closely linked both to the tune’s creation and subsequent performance history and to Hines’s working life as one of the most gifted band pianists of his generation. In addition, Hines’s 1939 versions of the tune dramatically capture the ways in which he had, in less than a dozen years, revolutionized the very genre of the piano solo.

The nature of the two solos also raises intriguing issues about the place of transcription in jazz research. Much of my discussion here is rooted in a study of my own complete transcriptions of these recordings.³ The incorporation of such scores into the study of jazz is now widely accepted in the scholarly community. Yet, though the use of notated excerpts to illustrate specific analytical points is a familiar aspect of academic discourse, study of *complete* transcriptions raises additional issues. When one is confronted with the entire “text” of an improvised performance fixed neatly on the

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page, it is difficult not to evaluate the score through the aesthetic lens of Western art music. The issue is particularly conspicuous in piano transcriptions, for they can appear deceptively clean. Although the transcriber must wrestle with rhythms, chord voicings, and other issues, the notes on the keyboard are invariable; unlike other solo or ensemble transcriptions, the reader is not continually reminded of the inadequacies of Western notation to capture bends, growls, scoops, and other jazz techniques related to pitch and timbre. A complete piano transcription easily lends itself to structuralist interpretation, for it is tempting to evaluate the performance based on the integrity of its overall form: the use of effective contrast between strains or choruses, facility of modulation, pacing of important events, motivic development, and so on. Yet, though Western aesthetic standards are not wholly inappropriate for a pianist so steeped in the classical tradition as was Hines, his artistry as a soloist must also be evaluated by different criteria.

As I have written elsewhere (J. Taylor 1992, 1998, 2000), Hines was a pianist who relished testing himself and his audience, a feature vividly captured by Gunther Schuller in his observation that "listening to Hines is always like standing at the edge of a precipice in a heavy wind" (Schuller 1989:284). Though his solos seem at times to teeter near structural incoherence, this feature is not a symptom of an erratic musical mind nor an inexperienced performer but is rather the very essence of his improvisational style. Hines's brinkmanship posed substantial challenges for my role as transcriber, for rarely have I encountered a musical art more resistant to being captured in notation. Yet, the more time I spend with the highly artificial musical "texts" I have created, the more I am struck that the scholarly and ideological issues surrounding transcriptions may rest less with the process itself (the results of which, as most scholars agree, are highly subjective, pallid representations of the original recordings) and more, as both Ingrid Monson and Paul Berliner have suggested, with *how* the texts are used to make analytical and aesthetic observations about the improviser's art (Monson 1996:133–91; Berliner 1994:11–12). In this article, therefore, I am suggesting that the "Rosetta" transcriptions be used less as "complete works" for study and more as windows into the ways in which Hines engages with and signifies upon the tune, its performing history, and his own musical artistry.⁴ When his work is viewed this way, these two transcriptions provide a fascinating guide, however conjectural at times, to the moment-to-moment unfolding of a great musical imagination.

"Rosetta"'s story begins in 1932, when Hines (1903–1983) met pianist and composer Henri Woode while on tour in Kansas City. Hines hired Woode as an arranger, and he created several notable showpieces for

the pianist's band, including 1932's raucous "Sensational Mood." As Hines recalled, "Rosetta" was inspired by Woode's girlfriend:

He was crazy about a girl called Rosetta. Whenever I wanted him, or asked the guys where he was, they used to say, "He's with Rosetta." Finally I got a bit mad, and told him to have Rosetta come where we were playing, and she could eat and drink and I'd pay for it. Then he heard a little phrase I made one night on the piano, and he worked it into a tune we wrote together. We dedicated it to her and called it "Rosetta" and it became a big hit . . . (Dance 1977:76)

The passage suggests that the tune represents a kind of signifying on Hines's improvisational style. As for the nature of the phrase that caught Woode's ear, it may be the drooping fourth in mm. 2–3 and 4–5 of the tune's A section—one of the melody's most distinctive features (see example 1 for the complete melody line and accompanying harmony). This idea surfaces occasionally in other improvisations of the same time, where its "open" sound complements the horn-like conception of Hines's right hand. It is hinted at near the end of the second eight-bar phrase in Hines's solo on "Sensational Mood," and more overtly referenced in the third chorus of 1932's "Down Among The Sheltering Palms" (take 1) (ex. 2).⁵ (In this and other examples, where noted, I have transposed from the original key to F to facilitate comparison with "Rosetta"'s original melody line.) In addition to the descending fourth motive, the passage also suggests the repeated "A" in the fifth and sixth measures of Hines's tune. The gesture also plays a prominent role in other melodies that Hines wrote or co-wrote, including "A Monday Date" (1928), "You Can Depend On Me" (1932), "Straight to Love" (1941), and "Am I Too Late?" (1947), inviting speculation that these tunes also grew out of improvisations.

The tune was submitted for copyright on February 3, 1933. Ten days later, Hines's band made four takes of it for the Brunswick label, in an arrangement by saxophonist Cecil Irwin. Two of the takes featured an Armstrong-style vocal by trumpeter Walter Fuller, who was so delighted with the success of the number that he later named his daughter Rosetta (Dance 1977:168). Hines's group recorded the tune again in November of 1934, in a somewhat updated (and faster) arrangement by bassist Quinn Wilson. In 1935 the tune was formally published by Joe Davis, Inc. in a piano/vocal version, with an undistinguished verse that is rarely if ever played, and the tune began to enter the country's band repertory. By 1942, it had been featured on twenty-two recordings by other performers (Crawford and Magee 1992:60–61). All but six of these are instrumentals, a result, perhaps, of rather clumsy lyrics. Most likely because of the tune's

Example 1: "Rosetta." Words and Music by Earl Hines and Henri Woode © 1933, 1935 (Renewed) MORLEY MUSIC CO. This arrangement © 2002 MORLEY MUSIC CO. All Rights Reserved.

Example 2: Earl Hines, "Down Among the Sheltering Palms" (July 14, 1932), A3 (i.e., third chorus), mm. 13–16. Transposed from A \flat .

association with Hines, thirteen of these recordings feature pianists in prominent roles. And, significantly, six feature the artists most responsible for shaping the art of the piano solo during the 1930s—Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson. Indeed, besides Gershwin's "Liza," "Rosetta" is the only tune both Tatum and Wilson recorded as soloists prior to 1942.

By the time he made his first solo recordings of "Rosetta" in 1939, the tune was a cherished friend. Trombonist Trummy Young, who joined the Hines group not long after the first band recording was made, once remarked that "Earl liked that tune so much we used to play it two or three times a night sometimes. He just fell in love with the tune" (Dance 1980:40). But though Hines clearly had emotional attachments to the

piece, like other musicians he must have also been drawn to its wide range of possibilities. Beyond the distinctive sighing fourth figure in the melodic line, musical details of the tune show superb craftsmanship (ex. 1). Cast in the familiar 32-bar AABA form, harmony, melody, and rhythm work together to create drive to the end of each eight-bar phrase. The first four measures are made notable by the shifting of harmony under a single pitch: in measure 2, under a held C in the melody, the harmony shifts from tonic to dominant with a raised fifth. The inspiration for this effect may have come from Victor Herbert's "Indian Summer" (1919), a tune Hines returned to frequently in later years (Dance 1977). The first three bars enrich the F tonality with tension, rather than creating harmonic motion. In the last five bars of each A section, however, both harmonic and melodic rhythm increase in speed. The harmony, beginning with the D⁷ chord, moves through a series of secondary dominants until the tonic is again reached at measure 7. The idea of shifting harmonies under a single pitch (the A in mm. 5–6) is continued throughout this passage, with the melody line featuring diminutions in the rhythmic pattern. This tension between melody and harmony is underscored by Quinn Wilson in his 1934 arrangement, in which the brass punch out a new chord at the beginning of each measure.

The bridge modulates to the minor iii (A minor), a distinctive move, though not unheard of (a similar key change occurs in "I Never Knew" of 1925 and "More Than You Know" of 1929, among other examples). Recordings suggest that the melody of the bridge was less fixed from the outset. The Hines band versions present an instrumentally-conceived line that lacks a strong sense of melody, and even in Fuller's first vocal the trumpeter seems to be making up the tune as he goes along. Certainly, most performances avoid the trite phrasing of the melody as presented in the 1935 sheet music, but this may simply reflect the tendency of Swing Era soloists and arrangers to abandon a tune's melody at the bridge.

Hines's two 1939 takes of "Rosetta" are intriguing examples not only of his improvisational approach, but of his recasting of the piano solo, a process he had begun in his revolutionary 1928 solo recordings for the QRS label. Though much has been written about various stylistic trajectories in pre-1940s jazz piano (stride, boogie-woogie, swing, etc.), as well as their important practitioners, less has been made of the evolution of the jazz piano solo as a specific genre—one with its own rules and performance history. Because pianos can stand alone in performance, a uniquely varied literature and performance practice has developed around them in jazz. Since pianists could duplicate both the role of solo instruments (in the right hand) and the backing of a rhythm section (in the left) they were prized by club owners (or party hosts) with limited funds to spend on live

entertainment. But though their choice of instrument could be financially lucrative, piano soloists also faced the challenge of building a satisfying, swinging performance without help from other ensemble members, relying on their own ingenuity to achieve variety and their own internal sense of time to maintain tempo and momentum. Still, though these challenges were daunting (and not always adequately met by pianists of the 1920s and '30s), they also lent the piano solo genre its uniqueness as a self-contained expression of improvisational creativity. A jazz piano solo was (and is) the work of a single imagination, one with complete control over the shaping of the event.

The first generation of jazz solo pianists, born in the 1890s (Jelly Roll Morton and James P. Johnson, among others), came of age in the ragtime era, and their solos tended to remain strongly rooted in that tradition. Often, these musicians featured instrumental specialties, multi-strained set pieces in which certain key elements remained in place during performance. For example, if one compares Morton's seven solo versions of his own "King Porter Stomp," recorded over a seventeen-year period, it is clear that though the performances vary considerably, many features always stay the same—chiefly introductions, breaks, interludes, and endings, as well as specific melodic and harmonic material.⁶ In short, the performance approach in these solos held much in common with that of the pre-jazz piano rag. When these musicians turned to other repertory—most typically popular songs and blues—their renditions often also seemed "arranged" in the sense that the number of choruses, introductions, interludes and tags, key regions, and general stylistic approach were decided upon in advance. And, as Henry Martin has suggested, even when seemingly spontaneous invention occurred, it may not have been "improvisation" in the sense that the term was later used in jazz, but rather the employment of variational patterns that had been carefully worked out (Martin 2000).

When Earl Hines first turned to the piano solo genre he could not help drawing partly on this performance legacy. He had made contact with nearly all the important early jazz pianists during his formative years: as well as encountering James P. Johnson and Luckey Roberts in Pittsburgh, he met Willie "The Lion" Smith and Duke Ellington on a trip to New York with Lois Deppe in 1923, and Fats Waller and Jelly Roll Morton became close friends during his early years in Chicago. But unlike most jazz pianists active in the 1920s, Hines had established a prominent career before he made any solo recordings. Johnson, Morton, and Waller had all made piano rolls near the beginning of their professional lives, and solos loom large in their early discographies. Hines's first recordings, however, were made with an ensemble, Deppe's Serenaders, and these were followed by band recordings led by Johnny Dodds, Louis Armstrong, and

others. Most of these recordings featured Hines's unaccompanied work, in introductions, breaks, and occasional choruses. But before 1928, he had never been called upon to record an entire solo performance on either piano roll or disk. The reason, however, was apparently not lack of opportunity but simple disinterest on Hines's part. In fact, Hines often maintained that audience demand had made him a soloist:

I was always known as a band pianist and a band leader. I never did want to play no solos. I wanted to be the band leader and just play piano and choruses now and then. But the public kept pushing me out there until I finally had to go in the woodshed and learn how to play piano by myself. (Hines 1980)

Hines put his feelings even more strongly when recalling a 1928 session with Armstrong:

Now I was just accompanying Louis and the next time the guys say "Oh, why don't you make a piano solo?" I say, "I don't want to make no piano solo." . . . I said, "Man, I don't want to be sitting up here playing by myself." (Miller and Rusch 1976:4)

Just two years before his death, when asked whether he often played the beautiful 1904 Steinway he kept in his apartment (a gift from *San Francisco Chronicle* editor Scott Newhall) Hines responded, "No, not really. I never got much pleasure out of playing alone" (B. Taylor 1981). Though the comment may reflect Hines's reliance on audience response, it also suggests a craving for the interaction of the bandstand, for the joys of communal music-making that initially draw many artists into the jazz tradition.

Perhaps no part of Hines's background and training is more crucial to understanding the entire sweep of his solo artistry than his early development as an ensemble pianist, for it informs both improvisational method and overall conception. Because of his early experiences, Hines came to solo playing relatively unencumbered by the structural and formal conventions established by his contemporaries. When he did reluctantly turn to the solo genre, it became simply a chance to explore musical territory beyond the limitations imposed by ensemble performance. For example, while discussing with Stanley Dance another 1939 solo performance, "The Father's Getaway," Hines noted that he was "enjoying being away from the band and, as the song says, 'free to do the things I might'" (Dance 1980:44). Hines's solos on band recordings seem eager to burst the confines of thirty-two bar form, and the piano solo provided that freedom, giving greater reign to his imagination so he could explore ideas without

worrying whether his compatriots would follow his train of thought. For that reason, Hines's solos are not conceived "compositionally," as were many solos by Morton, Johnson, and their contemporaries, who often shaped their performances into works that lent themselves to publication in simplified sheet-music versions. It is impossible to imagine a notated version of either the "Rosetta" solos or any of the solos that precede them, beyond a transcription. Neither are Hines's solos "arranged" in the sense that he developed a specific approach to frequently-played pieces (as did Art Tatum for many of his favorite tunes). In fact, Hines suggested that such a process would be incongruous with his aims as a musician:

I always felt that to be a "soloist" you should have piano arrangements and that's something I didn't want. Because I play strictly from the heart . . . never the same. Whatever feeling I have at the time, that's what comes out. (B. Taylor 1981:3)

This claim is fully borne out by the two "Rosetta" performances. By 1939, the tune was one of his most requested numbers, yet, remarkably, neither recording hints of rote. A comparison of the overall procedure followed by Hines in the two solos illustrates the looseness of his conception (fig. 1). Though they share key regions, the shape of the two solos shows marked contrast: the first offers three choruses in F and one in E \flat , whereas the second presents two in each key, and the placement and length of the interludes is also substantially changed. One senses that Hines simply lodged the melody and chord progression in his mind and took off, using the structure of the tune as a springboard for a flight of musical discovery. In the truest sense, these solos are music of the moment—glimpses of Hines's creativity that, were it not for recording technology, would live on only in the memories of those fortunate enough to be present when they were played.

Hines's lack of experience playing and recording piano solos may also explain why, unlike the work of Morton, Johnson, and other masters of what Martin Williams has called "three-minute form," these performances often show little awareness of the time limit demanded by 78-rpm records. In a famous example, "Fifty-Seven Varieties" of 1928, Hines claimed he was unaware of even being recorded until a recording engineer whispered in his ear to "put in an ending, put in an ending" (Miller and Rusch 1976:4). The result is remarkable in that it does not sound appreciably different than many of Hines's other solos, many of which seem prematurely aborted—as if he could have continued in a similar vein for several more choruses had not the recording engineer signaled him to stop. In "I Ain't Got Nobody" (1928), this makes for a serious miscalculation (and a

Figure 1: Earl Hines, “Rosetta” (October 6, 1939), Takes 3 and 4, formal schemes (number of measures in parentheses).

Key	Take 3	Take 4
F	Intro ₍₈₎ A1 ₍₃₂₎	Intro ₍₁₀₎ A1 ₍₃₂₎ A2 ₍₃₂₎
F to E \flat E \flat	Interlude 1 ₍₄₎ A2 ₍₃₂₎ A3 ₍₃₂₎ Interlude 2 ₍₈₎ A4 ₍₃₂₎ Tag ₍₄₎	Interlude 1 ₍₈₎ A3 ₍₃₂₎ Interlude 2 ₍₁₀₎ A4 ₍₃₂₎ Tag ₍₈₎

miraculous save): apparently unaware time is running out, Hines launches into a third chorus, then deftly twists the first eight bars of the tune so that they sound like the last eight. By 1939 Hines had grown more adept at accommodating the time limit, but one still often senses a delight in crossing the finish line at the last possible moment. Particularly in the tag of Take 4, the listener is given few indications the performance is drawing to a close until the final bar.

Hines’s development as primarily a band pianist not only influenced his improvisatory process and general conception of the piano solo but also played an important role in the development of his stylistic language. As he pointed out in many interviews, his famous “trumpet style,” in which right-hand octaves approximate the timbre and phraseology of brass players, took shape initially during his playing with ensembles during the 1920s:

We didn’t have amplification then and the piano could hardly be heard, cause they didn’t take the front out or the top off. So when a guy gets finished playing those loud instruments over there and here I am tinkling, I said, “Oh man, I got to do better than this.” So I started playing my trumpet style and people began to hear me. A lot of guys started using that same particular style because it cut through the band then. I was playing octaves and they could hear me and I was pretty fast with it too. (Rock 1978:28)

Though this aggressive octave technique had become somewhat more restrained by 1939—Hines seemed to absorb some of the subtleness of touch that Wilson and Tatum brought to the jazz piano idiom—it remained an instantly recognizable feature of both his band and solo style. In the

climactic final chorus of Take 3 of "Rosetta," for example, he uses the technique to create a powerful melodic line that drives the performance inexorably into the tag.

Still, though Hines's distinctive sound grew partly out of a desire to be heard in the ensemble, he also learned ways to integrate his piano work skillfully into an arrangement without overpowering his fellow musicians. Indeed, Hines's band experience may have influenced the remarkable sense of space in much of his solo playing. Perhaps even more important, the rhythmic disruptions, beat displacements, and occasionally wayward turns in the harmonic progression that are so crucial to Hines's edgy, perplexing style seem to have evolved in the ensemble context. One notices, for example, in an early performance such as 1928's "Savoyagers' Stomp" (recorded with Carroll Dickerson's Savoyagers), how much Hines plays off of the admirably secure rhythmic foundation of Zutty Singleton's drumming as he continually tugs at the time and inflects the harmony with colorful twists. Significantly, when Hines recalled his fascination with playing "close to the edge" (and occasionally tumbling over), he usually described its occurrence in an ensemble context:

I was always exploring and trying to find something else. Sometimes I was lost and didn't know where I was but I'd keep going around until I caught up. I'd do it purposely. I'd have a rhythm section and they never did know where I was half the time. Bass player's talking to the guitar player saying "where's he at now?" I used to have fun like that. (Hines 1980)

It may be that Hines's remarkable internal "clock," whereby he could achieve shocking feats of rhythmic audacity and never lose the beat, were first developed while working with a rhythm section. Both "Rosetta" performances are permeated by the shifted accents, rhythmic displacements and suspensions, and other perversions of the basic meter that are so essential to Hines's approach.

The point is that, even though Hines's solo work was created in musical isolation, the idiom he developed betrays a highly *interactive* sensibility, both in style and conception. In her insightful book *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction*, Ingrid Monson sees musical interaction in a jazz performance—defined at a variety of musical, social, and cultural levels—as (among other things) a key to a revised aesthetic method for evaluating the art of jazz. For perhaps obvious reasons, piano solos do not figure prominently in her discussion. Yet, I would suggest that such a concept of interaction in several broad senses informs Hines's "Rosetta" recordings, though they are ostensibly the work of a single musician. After noting the presence in these recordings of an improvisatory art shaped

largely in an interactive context (as well as the ramifications of that art's removal from its context), I will now focus on a complex of specific and interrelated features: the ways Hines converses "across time" with (and signifies on) both earlier band versions of "Rosetta" and his ensemble's arrangements in general; the ways he engages the melody and chord structure of his own tune in each performance; and, in the case of the fourth take, how he comments and builds on ideas presented in a performance that took place moments earlier.

For a musician who saw himself first and foremost as a band pianist, it is not surprising that Hines's work in the solo piano idiom should reflect the context in which he was working night after night. Occasionally, his ensemble work was carried over to the piano solo idiom. The syncopated introduction to his band's 1932 recording of "I Love You Because I Love You" (Take 1), for example, contains the seed of the introduction he uses for his solo performance of "Down Among The Sheltering Palms" (Take 1), recorded later in the same session. And certain gestures explored in the solos make their first appearance in Hines's solo choruses on ensemble recordings. The whirling tangle of notes that Hines plays in bars 21–24 of his solo chorus in "A Monday Date" (on the 1928 recording with Jimmie Noone's group) reappears in both solo versions of the same song, and in precisely the same place in the tune.⁷

The ways in which earlier band versions of "Rosetta" played into Hines's 1939 solos on the tune can be seen graphically in Take 3. Throughout both solo versions, Hines saves his most capricious flights of fancy for the minor bridge, perhaps relishing the distinctive harmony of these eight bars or sensing an opportunity to deviate from the melody. In the last two bars of the bridge in the second chorus of Take 3, he executes a descending, largely whole-tone idea in straight eighth-notes (ex. 3), a passage that elicits special comment in a popular jazz history text (see Porter and Ullman 1993:127). Though it is a startling moment, a similar idea appears in Hines's solo chorus on the 1934 band recording of the tune, in precisely the same place in the chord structure, and is suggested as well in a series of descending ninth chords that he plays behind the sax solo in the final chorus—again at the same place in the original tune. Apparently this lick was connected in Hines's mind not just to earlier band performances of "Rosetta" but to a specific place in the harmonic outline.

Another striking connection may be seen between the 1934 band recording and the first four measures of the bridge in A3 of Take 3 and A2 of Take 4 (exx. 4a and 4b). In the first example, an extended trill on Eb is accompanied by punchy, syncopated right-hand octaves—an effect not

Example 3: Earl Hines, "Rosetta" (October 6, 1939), Take 3, A2, mm. 23–24.

straight eighths

mp

Example 4a: Earl Hines, "Rosetta" (October 6, 1939), Take 3, A3, mm. 16–20.

tr (h)

tr (h)

Example 4b: Earl Hines, "Rosetta" (October 6, 1939), Take 4, A3, mm. 17–20.

unlike the device Art Tatum enjoyed using on the third strain of "Tiger Rag."⁸ In Take 4, Hines seems to refer back to the sense of stasis provided by this trill, but instead of this gesture he creates a whirling chromatic figure in the *right* hand that is accompanied by sustained chords in the bass.

These passages hint at the intriguing ways Hines might recall an idea from a previous take and expand on its basic premise. However, the ideas go back even further: both the trill and the whirling right-hand figure are first hinted at during Hines's solo on the 1934 band performance, as well as behind Fuller's vocal on the same recording—the latter instance suggested that Hines did not consider the gesture purely a soloistic device. And, as in the previous example, they occur in precisely the same place in the tune.

Previous band performances of "Rosetta" are not the only sources Hines interacts with on these solos. Other aspects of his band's arrangements occasionally bleed into the recordings. The fact that the band's performances were on his mind at the time of the two "Rosetta" solos is shown by his reference, in the second Interlude of Take 4, to part of the melody of "Lightly and Politely," which had been recorded directly before the solos. And earlier in the same solo, Hines employs another device that had appeared in several of his band's arrangements: a reiterated dominant pedal. The device appears briefly in "XYZ," recorded earlier in the same session, where arranger Budd Johnson uses it as a transition between the third and fourth choruses. But the idea is placed much more prominently in the final section of "G. T. Stomp," recorded three months before the "Rosetta" solos, with a gradual piling-up of B \flat s that leads to the climactic entry of Walter Fuller on a high E \flat tonic. Hines had also used the device extensively in "The Father's Getaway" from late July 1939, where he built an entire chorus out of the idea. In Take 4 of "Rosetta," however, use of the dominant pedal is noteworthy not just because it shows how Hines mined his big band performances for ideas but also because he characteristically twists it to his own innovative ends. His placement of the gesture effectively blurs the dividing line between the first and second choruses, presenting what seems at first like an interlude but ends up being part of the next chorus (ex. 5).

Hines's two "Rosetta" solos are rather different than his earlier improvisations on tunes by other composers, and it is interesting to speculate how much of this contrast is due to the fact that Hines uses his *own tune* as a basis for the performances. In the days of ragtime and early jazz, at least, pianists viewed certain pieces as their own special property, even if they eventually made their way into the mainstream repertory (Eubie Blake's "Charleston Rag" and James P. Johnson's "Carolina Shout" would be good examples). Certainly, Hines must have felt pride in his tune, in addition to

Example 5: Earl Hines, "Rosetta" (October 6, 1939), Take 4, A1, mm. 31-32 and A2, mm. 1-2.



maintaining a deep sense of its inherent possibilities. But I think the familiarity both Hines and his audiences had with the tune, as well as the pianist's "ownership" of the piece (both legally and figuratively) may explain his unusual treatment. Several of the earlier solos for which multiple takes exist—"Glad Rag Doll" of 1929 or "Love Me Tonight" of 1932, for example—show broad similarities in outline (number of choruses, modulations, etc.) even while the musical material itself differs widely between takes. Yet, the two renditions of "Rosetta" stand somewhat apart in the looseness of their conception, showing, besides contrasting structures, particularly striking liberties in the use of melodic and harmonic material.

As I have already suggested in my discussion of various ideas that Hines develops on "Rosetta"'s bridge, a particularly useful feature of transcriptions is the possibility they open up for comparing the improvisatory process in successive choruses and in parallel sections of the underlying tune. Typical for the period, Hines opens each solo with a fairly straight rendition of the tune, yet while doing so he shows some humorous takes on the original piece. Example 6 reproduces the beginning of the opening chorus in each performance, along with the original melodic line. The first take presents the tune in fairly unadorned fashion, though the smoothness of the line created by tied notes in the original is eliminated by Hines's sparse and syncopated right hand line. In the second take, however, at the end of measure 2, Hines abruptly telescopes the corresponding notes of the melodic line into an ironically truncated phrase. It is almost as if he were poking fun at the languorous motion of the original melody.

In example 7, I have provided, from both takes, several examples of Hines's treatment of the opening four bars of "Rosetta" in interior choruses, along with the relevant phrase from the original tune. If space allowed, one could, of course, extend the comparisons to include all choruses and all statements of the "A" section of the tune. But these excerpts

Example 6: Earl Hines, "Rosetta" (October 6, 1939), Takes 3 and 4, A1, mm. 1-4, with original melody line.

The image displays a musical score for Earl Hines' "Rosetta". It consists of three systems of music, all in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The first system, labeled "Melody", shows the original melody line with four measures. Above the staff are the chord symbols: F, C+7, F, and D7. The second system, labeled "Take 3", shows a piano accompaniment for the first three measures, with a fifth finger fingering (5) indicated in the fourth measure. The third system, labeled "Take 4", shows an alternative piano accompaniment for the first three measures, with a melodic line in the right hand in the fourth measure.

show some of the imaginative ways Hines interacts with the original melody and harmony of the piece.

One notices first that, in the left hand, Hines erases one of the most distinctive features of the original tune's harmonic structure, an element maintained by most other musicians when they perform the piece: the augmented chord in the second bar (the same may be said of the passages in ex. 6, above). In examples 7a and 7b he uses the G \sharp of the augmented chord (respelled here as an A \flat) as a blue note in the right hand, its effect intensified by clashes against Gs in the bass. The effect is to draw focus to the melodic line. Hines also seems intrigued by the parallelism suggested in the original tune by the repeated rhythmic motive in measures 1 and 3. As a result, each of these four-bar excerpts is divided into two closely-related sections—a type of antecedent/consequent phraseology. And Hines emphasizes this structure by returning to the dominant note (C) each time in measure 3, rather than moving to the third (A), as does the original melodic line.

The excerpts also show other ways in which Hines engaged with his own improvisations. Example 7d is clearly based on the idea Hines was working with in example 7c, and both these excerpts occur in similar places in the performance—right after a modulation to E \flat . In example 7d, however, Hines not only adds rhythmic complexity to the left-hand part, but partially obscures the phrasing by subtle shifts in the melodic line. The effect is radically different: whereas example 7c had driven aggressively forward, example 7d ruminates. Yet the final example clearly seems to arise from Hines's memory of what he had done at the same spot in the previous take.

Hines's two "Rosetta" performances are different from most of his earlier recorded solos in the function and character of their introductions. In prior performances, such as "Glad Rag Doll," "Love Me Tonight," and "Down Among the Sheltering Palms," Hines used introductions, as did most musicians and arrangers, mainly to set mood, tempo, and key. Yet, perhaps because "Rosetta" was such a familiar property for both Hines and his audience, he clearly felt the tune called for different treatment. Both introductions (exx. 8a and 8b) give little sense of how the tune is going to proceed. In fact, they seem specifically designed to disorient—perhaps to make the entry of Hines's familiar tune all the more dramatic. In the third take, the chords of the left hand, placed in a low range on the keyboard and so tightly knit as to approximate tone clusters, completely obscure the harmony, though the right hand subtly suggests the A minor of "Rosetta"'s bridge. The slowly descending glissando of Take 4 (perhaps a signifying reversal of the upward sweep with which Hines usually announced his band's theme song, "Deep Forest") obscures both harmony

Example 7: Earl Hines, “Rosetta” (October 6, 1939), Takes 3 and 4, compared versions of mm. 1–4 of original tune.

Melody F C+7 F D7

Ex. 7a. Take 3, A2, mm. 1–4.

Ex. 7b. Take 3, A3, mm. 1–4.

Ex. 7c. Take 3, A4, mm. 1–4. Transposed from Eb.

Ex. 7d. Take 4, A3, mm. 1–4. Transposed from Eb.

Example 8a: Earl Hines, "Rosetta" (October 6, 1939), Take 3, Introduction.

Example 8b: Earl Hines, "Rosetta" (October 6, 1939), Take 4, Introduction.

and rhythm; it is only by counting in reverse that one notes the gesture fits neatly over two bars.

As different as the two passages sound at first hearing, however, the transcriptions show subtle ways in which the introduction of the fourth take "interacts across time" with that of the third. In the earlier version, Hines maintains a chromatically descending outline in the harmony (from the A minor suggested by the right hand in mm. 1-4, to the A \flat of m. 5, to the G of m. 6). Then, by deftly sliding a single note upward in the bass (from D to E) he moves from the G-minor chord in the second half of measure 7 to the dominant (C 7) in measure 8. As perplexing as this introduction is at times, it maintains a certain logic, making the entry of the tonic key at the beginning of the first chorus seem inevitable. In the introduction to Take 4, Hines seems to build on ideas from the earlier passage, recreating in measure 3 the figuration of measure 5 of Take 3 (a fifth in the bass, with the right hand arpeggiating the chord). He extends this figuration through measures 7 and 8 while echoing the chromatic motion of the first take with a sequence of ninth chords. In measure 8, however, there is a sudden change of direction, with Hines abruptly interrupting the descending chords by pouncing on an A \flat fifth (a reminiscence, perhaps, of measure 5 in the earlier introduction). Even though he could easily have moved from the D 9 in measure 8 to G, and from there to the dominant of F, he chooses, typically, not to take the easy route. As a result, the entry of the tonic at the beginning of A1 is not nearly so neatly prepared as in Take 3.

The interludes that Hines uses to modulate from F to E \flat in both performances inspire similar observations (exx. 9a and 9b). Like its introduction, the harmony of Take 3's first interlude is sophisticated but logical; by manipulating just a few choice notes in the left hand, Hines elegantly anticipates the key change, guiding the listener gracefully between fairly remote tonal regions. The second interlude has much less sense of direction. It meanders through a variety of keys, and does not arrive at the dominant chord until the final beat. Compared to the first interlude, right and left hands seem out of sync at the end of the passage; though Hines begins the chorus following the interlude with a right-hand B \flat octave, just as he does in Take 3, the attack is made slightly early, with the left hand not moving from dominant to tonic until the second eighth note of the chorus's first measure. In other words, the beginning of the chorus becomes elided with the end of the introduction. It is a surprising moment, but typical for Hines.

A comparison of these introductions and interludes, and, indeed, of both performances in their entirety, raises important issues about aesthetic

Example 9a: Earl Hines, "Rosetta" (October 6, 1939), Take 3, modulating interlude before A4.

Example 9b: Earl Hines, "Rosetta" (October 6, 1939), Take 4, modulating interlude before A3.

stance. Ingrid Monson brings up the same questions when she takes traditional jazz historiography (particularly as represented by the work of Gunther Schuller) to task for its Western bias:

When it comes to critical evaluation, [Schuller] looks first to the supposedly universal standards of Western musical analysis and cites them as evidence of the value of jazz music. As an outside observer, he feels entitled to evaluate the musical production of jazz musicians

by these standards without asking whether these indeed are the sole—or even the most important—criteria to musicians and their audiences. (Monson 1996:136)

I do not wish to engage the complexities of these issues here, though I hope this essay has shown my interest in bringing a variety of perspectives to bear on these solos. But Monson's passage speaks to a personal and scholarly dilemma I have encountered while listening to, transcribing, and studying these performances. When initially planning a collection of Earl Hines transcriptions, I was drawn to the third take of "Rosetta" because it exhibited the very features I had been trained to celebrate in a musical work. In particular, it seemed a piece that would be ideally suited to recreation in live concert performance (a process that, however, continues to raise troubling ideological issues for me, despite my personal experience that audiences find such performances satisfying). Early lists of pieces to include in my Hines edition were, in fact, all made up of performances that adhered fairly closely to standards I had learned to appreciate in my training as a musicologist and a performer, and which I imagined could, in score form, be reinterpreted by present-day pianists. I consciously rejected solos where Hines played himself into blind alleys, garbled passagework, lost his way in a chord progression, or had to suddenly truncate his improvisations to adhere to the recording time limit. Yet, I soon realized that the proposed volume would give a highly misleading idea of Hines's talent. As I have already stressed, these "mistakes" are not aberrations but a fundamental part of Hines's genius, and to suggest otherwise is to do him a vast injustice.

The two "Rosetta" takes bring this into relief. As I mentioned earlier, only the third take was released at the time, most likely for the very reasons that initially drew me to it. The "logic" of the issued take—as shown, for example, in the introduction and interludes—is in fact rather unusual for Hines; it makes the listening experience a little *too* comfortable, the unfolding of the improvisation a little *too* easy to follow. With its interrupted momentum, "messy" modulations, and occasionally blurred formal structure, the unissued fourth take is far more characteristic. Yet the descriptive tools with which I am most familiar fail me when addressing this paradox, and I am aware that much of the foregoing discussion resorts to the very aesthetic assumptions and modes of analysis I have sought to transcend. Still, exploring questions of interaction and context, as well as other intriguing modes of inquiry that are being introduced into the field, will, I hope, continue to enrich my appreciation of a musician who, even after many years of study, never fails to surprise. However these aesthetic

issues may be resolved in my own work and jazz scholarship at large, they raise a dilemma essential for jazz scholars to confront if they are to do justice to jazz's variety and power.

Notes

1. Brian Rust (1982) lists October 21 as the recording date for the third take, but judging from the matrix number sequence this is probably an error. Rust does not list the fourth take at all. The Collector's Classics CD reissue of *Earl Hines: Complete Piano Solos* lists both third and fourth takes as occurring on October 6.

2. Both are now available on the Collector's Classics reissue.

3. The two transcriptions are included in *Earl "Fatha" Hines: Selected Piano Solos, 1928–1941* (J. Taylor, forthcoming).

4. My ideas here are partly inspired by those discussed by Ingrid Monson (1996). I will, however, be using her concept of "interaction" in somewhat more general terms, without engaging the more specific theoretical (particularly post-structuralist) frameworks that Monson both employs and critiques in her study.

5. In these transcriptions I have followed the notational procedures used in the MUSA edition (J. Taylor, forthcoming). Except where noted, all passages are swung. Brackets indicate clear technical errors (usually mis-struck notes) that have been corrected. Parentheses around normal-sized pitches indicate notes or chords I suspect may be unintentional, but which have remained in the score since these moments, as I have pointed out in the article, are an inherent part of Hines's improvisational style. Parentheses around grace notes indicate "ghost notes" that are scarcely audible.

6. For a discussion of Morton's "King Porter Stomp" and its subsequent history, see Jeffrey Magee's article in this issue (pp. 22–53).

7. This phrase, however, recurs in different choruses in the two solo versions; in the QRS version it appears in the second chorus, in the Okeh, the third.

8. Tatum first recorded "Tiger Rag" in 1933, and Hines, who developed a friendship with Tatum during the 1930s, may have known the pianist's rendition through this recording or live performance.

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