

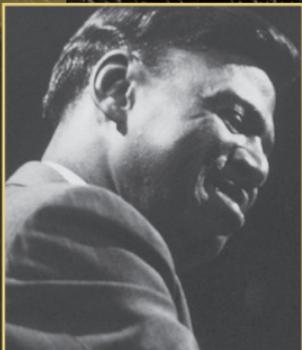
A circular logo with a gold border containing the text "2x HD" in blue and white.

2^xHD

A black and white photograph of an old, weathered upright piano with a wooden bench. The piano is the central focus of the image, showing its keys, hammers, and wooden frame.

EARL
HINES

THE BLUES



There is no more challenging role in music than that of the solo performer. To succeed in this field of creative endeavour requires a high level of confidence, prodigious technical expertise and, where jazz is concerned, a rare continuity of inspiration.

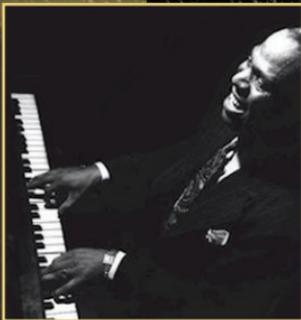
Earl Hines had all of these qualities, and more. As in the case of the other jazz masters, when you listen to the extemporisations of "Fatha" Hines, you are not simply hearing music of a most elevated order – you are listening to a virtuoso who shaped the course of jazz history, a man who single-handedly (a highly inappropriate metaphor in one sense) changed the role of the piano in jazz and brought his unique influence to bear on a multitude of musicians.

When Stanley Dance produced these sides in New York, Hines was in his 69th year and had more than half a century of music-making behind him. He was in ebullient form, attacking the music with all the weapons in his pianistic armoury. As the basis for his free-ranging, sometimes quixotic, improvisations, he chose six songs whose music was composed by Harold Arlen, a most gifted writer who was responsible for some of the more sophisticated popular songs of the thirties and forties.

But, in truth, the real composer here is Hines himself. Where Teddy Wilson or a Tommy Flanagan would play songs like this and tailor their improvisations according to the cloth of the original composition, Hines takes up the Arlen jacket, turns it inside out, and gives it a brilliantly patterned lining, brass buttons, a velvet collar, gold braid and a florid buttonhole.

I've Got the World on a String is the earliest of the Arlen compositions here, co-written with Ted Koehler in 1932. Hines's restless imagination is soon at work. Listen to the way he breaks up the time in the first bridge, the contrast of the right hand glissandi and arpeggios against the staccato exclamation marks of the left and the two-handed slide down the keyboard in the third chorus.

He plays rippling runs à la Tatum, strides like Fats and finishes up with an ostentatious coda that Errol Garner would surely have saluted. As on all the tracks of this session, Hines's creative mind is relentlessly whirring away, sometimes even speeding ahead of this technique, prodigious though it is. And he regularly takes



liberties with the time, exploiting the prerogative of the solo performer who finds himself unleashed from the metric discipline of the rhythm section.

Hines starts *Over the Rainbow* with an intro fashioned from the bridge of the tune and then outlines the melody, staying pretty close to the written line. In the second chorus his left hand takes care of time and root notes while his right flutters free. Then, in the bridge, his right hand formally produces the melody while the left skates up and down the bottom half of the keyboard. This independence and all-purpose function of each hand is a characteristic of the Hines keyboard style.

So, too, is the third chorus in which Hines suddenly bursts into highly adventurous free time and then contrasts it with a clipped four-to-the-bar in the middle eight.

Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea is another Arlen-Koehler collaboration, this one dating from 1936. Hines plays it relatively straight to start with but in the second chorus produces a wildly fragmented bridge and contrives some agreeable chord variations in the last eight.

He takes outrageous liberties with the time in the first half of the fourth chorus but, again exploiting the power of contrast, then plays the middle in more or less conventional style.

The final chorus starts with some bars of stride piano and you'll hear the Hines left hand stumble a little at the start. His execution was never entirely flawless but then, far better to have minimally flawed genius (aren't geniuses, in any case, flawed by definition?) than immaculate boredom.

In the bridge of the final chorus Hines generates a $\frac{3}{4}$ feel and then plays the last eight with a four-in-the-bar left hand finishing with a rippling coda.

Hines's interpretation of *Come Rain or Come Shine*, an Arlen-Johnny Mercer collaboration from 1946 is quite idiosyncratic. He plays the piece in C, but instead of using the written chords for the first four bars (C/E7/A mi/A mi) he plays /C C + A mi C+ C/D7 G7/C/.

In bar 12 he plays a very square C major chord, when it should be a G7 with a flattened fifth. Then in the 14th bar he plays a B natural where the melody clearly has a B flat (because it is a B flat minor chord).

And in bar 29 he plays A major instead of A minor and finishes the chorus in a chirpy A major, resolving back to the key of C by jumping straight to G7. The standard sequence, however, goes from the A minor in bar 29 to D minor 7 and G7 in order to return to C major.

These are not subtle variations on the part of Hines. They are, quite simply, wrong changes. But of course, geniuses don't have to follow rules and these variations simply reaffirm the fact that these are really Earl Hines pastiches based on Arlen compositions.

My Shining Hour another Arlen-Mercer creation, is taken at a more leisurely tempo than is the custom and the theme is expounded with grace and restraint. But then the excitement starts to build up and throughout the next ten choruses Hines treats the listener to a full panoply of pianistic ingenuity – tenths, stride, rhapsodic rubato passages, tempo changes, time warps, locked hands, Tatumesque runs and four-in-the-bar Freddie Green-style left hand comping.

As *Long As I Live* is played at a fairly brisk walking pace and once again Hines has the occasional nod in the direction of his fellow Pennsylvanian, Erroll Garner. A fourth chorus key change from F to A flat refreshes the tune and Hines repeats the change in the long coda, after reverting to F for the out chorus.

And that concludes this remarkable solo recital by the man who was described by that most discerning British writer, Alun Morgan as 'Possibly the greatest keyboard soloist jazz has ever known'.

Mike Hennessey

BIOGRAPHY OF EARL HINES

One of the greatest keyboard innovators in jazz, Earl Kenneth "Fatha" Hines was almost solely responsible for the evolution of jazz piano from the ragtime and stride era to the modern, trumpet-style, single note idiom. Although Hines's bravura playing embraced all pianistic styles and devices, his principal claim to jazz celebrity was that he separated the functions of the right and left hands and really developed the full jazz resources of the piano.

The son of a trumpet player in the famous Eureka Brass Band, Hines was born in Duquesne, Pennsylvania on December 28th, 1905. He studied piano for six years in Pittsburgh (the native city of such great keyboard exponents as Ahmad Jamal, Erroll Garner, Dodo Marmarosa, Horace Parlan and Mary Lou Williams) and developed his abundant technique by diligent practice of Czerny exercises.

In the late 1920s Hines worked with Jimmie Noone at the Apex Club and was made musical director of Carroll Dickerson's band. In 1928 he recorded a score of sides with the Louis Armstrong Hot Five and also made the celebrated Weatherbird duo session with Satchmo which was to become one of the classic jazz recordings of all time. Hines drew a good deal of his inspiration from Armstrong.

In 1928 Hines formed his own big band and, in December of that year, opened at the Grand Terrace in Chicago. Hines led his big band for two decades and achieved wide acclaim for his brilliant, adventurous, two handed piano style.

In the forties, the Hines band became an "incubator" for some of the great bebop innovators. Among the major talents who cut their musical teeth with Earl's orchestra were Walter Fuller, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Bennie Green, Benny Harris and Wardell Gray.

Hines, who in his later years sported one of the most aggressive toupees in jazz, suffered a period of obscurity in the early 1960s, but he re-emerged in 1964 and his career enjoyed a tremendous revival after he played three concerts in New York which drew excellent reviews.

In 1965 Hines made appearances at the Newport and Monterey Festivals where the revival in his professional fortunes was consolidated and thereafter he worked steadily, making regular trips to Europe for festival engagements. He visited the Soviet Union in 1966 and Japan, Australia and South America in the late sixties and early seventies.

In addition to being a brilliantly original pianist, Hines was also a composer of merit whose most celebrated compositions were *Rosette*, *You Can Depend On Me* and *My Monday Date*. He died in hospital at Oakland California on April 22nd, 1983.

Mike Hennessey

EARL HINES THE BLUES



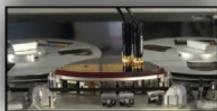
- 1 **I've Got the World on a String** 7:05
Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler
- 2 **Over the Rainbow** 8:26
Harold Arlen/E.Y. "Yip" Harburg
- 3 **Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea** 4:37
Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler
- 4 **Come Rain or Come Shine** 6:43
Harold Arlen/Johnny Mercer
- 5 **My Shining Hour** 11:49
Harold Arlen/Johnny Mercer
- 6 **As Long as I Live** 5:58
Harold Arlen/Ted Koehler

Recorded March 23-24, 1974
at Warp Studios, NYC

Piano: Earl Hines
Producer: Stanley Dance
Engineer: Fred Miller
Liner Notes: Mike Hennessey
2xHD Mastering: René Laflamme
2xHD Executive Producer: André Perry
Album cover & insert artwork: André Perry
Graphics: Sylvie Labelle



THE 2xHD MASTERING SYSTEM



2xHD is a record label which uses its proprietary system to process music masters originally recorded in analog to DSD in order to produce a unique listening experience.

The process uses a selection from a pool of high-end audiophile components and connectors. In some cases even using battery power, so as to benefit from the cleanest power source possible. This variable equipment combination custom tailored to each project, creates the most accurate reproduction of the original recording, unveiling information previously masked by the use of EQ, transformers, patch bays, extended cable length etc. The selection of components is critical, as many A/D and D/A converters are unable to pierce through these filters that create a ceiling effect to the sound. The 2xHD system preserves the dynamics of the original master and provides an open feeling to the sound.

2xHD was created by producer/studio owner André Perry and audiophile sound engineer René Laflamme, two dedicated music lovers determined to experience only the warmth and depth of the music without hearing the equipment.

2xHD Mastering by: René Laflamme
2xHD Executive Producer: André Perry

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