

# Bach Fan Writes Pop Songs

Module 4 of *Music: Under the Hood*

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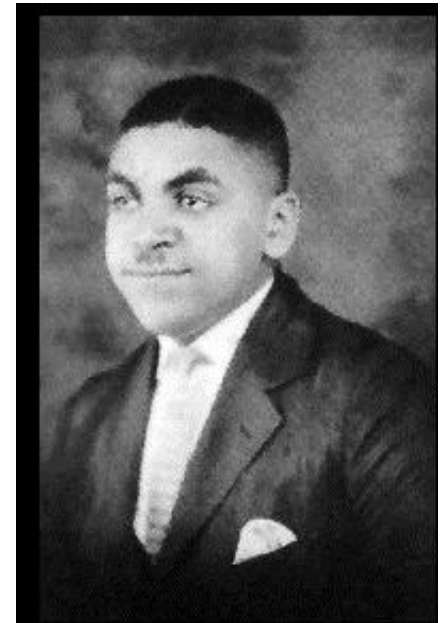
Osher Course  
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# Outline

- Biography of Thomas Wright “Fats” Waller
- Analysis of *Honeysuckle Rose*

# Biography

- Thomas Wright “Fats” Waller, 1904-1943
  - Born in NYC, youngest of 11 children.
  - Studied piano at age 6.
  - Organist at Lincoln Theater, Harlem, at age 14.
  - Studied with James P. Johnson, inventor of stride piano.
  - Published first compositions at age 18.
  - Early death due to pneumonia resulting from overwork.



# Biography

- Most famous songs
  - *Ain't Misbehavin'* (1929)
  - *Honeysuckle Rose* (1929)



# Biography

- Other...
  - Copyrights on over 400 songs.
    - Kidnapped to play at Al Capone's birthday party (1926).
    - Performed *Ain't Misbehavin'* in film *Stormy Weather* (1943)
  - Son Maurice wrote a [biography](#) (1977).



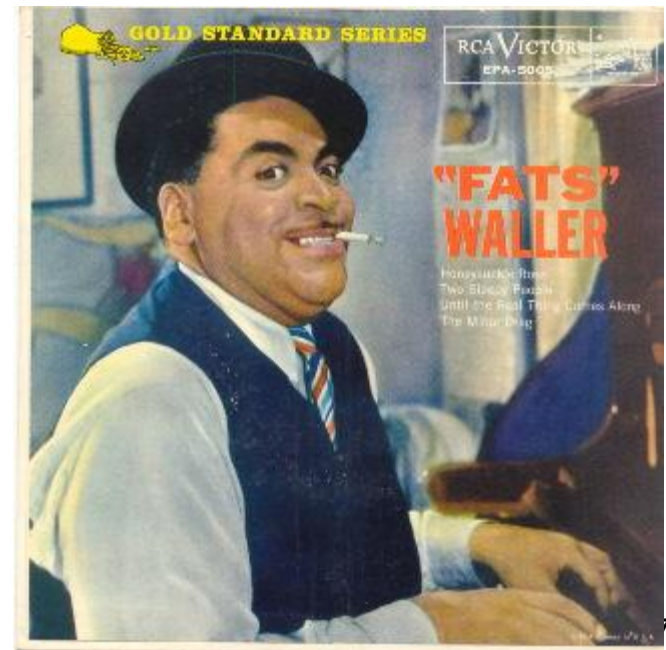
# Biography

- Musical interests
  - Known primarily as a formidable piano player
    - Especially stride style
  - Favorite composer was J. S. Bach
    - Played Bach fugues on church organ for his friends.
  - Wanted to write more “serious” music.
    - London Suite, performed in London 1938-39



# Honeysuckle Rose

- Illustrates Waller's compositional sophistication.
  - Begins with extended appoggiatura.
    - Same idea later used by George Gershwin.
  - Heavy use of chromaticism
    - Also favored by Bach, as in *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue*.
    - A standard feature of Wagner's music.



[Audio file – original recording \(1934\)](#)

[Audio file – original sheet music \(below\)](#)

## Honeysuckle Rose

(1929)

Thomas "Fats" Waller

Lyrics by Andy Razaf

$\text{♩} = 60$

Piano

5

Pno.

Ev' - ry hon - ey bee fills with jeal - ous - y when they see you out with

8

Pno.

me I don't blame them, good - ness knows Hon - ey suck - le Rose.

Detailed description: This image shows the piano accompaniment for the song 'Honeysuckle Rose'. It consists of three systems of musical notation. The first system is an introduction in G major, 4/4 time, with a tempo of 60 beats per minute. The second system begins at measure 5 and includes the lyrics: 'Ev' - ry hon - ey bee fills with jeal - ous - y when they see you out with'. The third system begins at measure 8 and includes the lyrics: 'me I don't blame them, good - ness knows Hon - ey suck - le Rose.'. The piano part features a mix of chords and melodic lines in both hands.



12

Pno.

When you're pass - in' by flow - ers droop and sigh,

15

Pno.

and I know the rea - son why, You're much sweet - er, good - ness knows,

18

Pno.

Hon - ey suck - le Rose. Don't buy

22

Pno.

sug - ar, You just - have to touch my cup You're my

26

Pno.

sug - ar, it's sweet when you stir it up. When I'm tak-in' sips

30

Pno.

from your tas - ty lips seems the hon - ey fair - ly dips, You're con - fec - tion

33

Pno.

good - ness knows Hon - ey suck - le Rose.

Audio file – original sheet music (below)

# Honeysuckle Rose

(1929)

Thomas "Fats" Waller

Lyrics by Andy Razaf

$\text{♩} = 60$

Piano



The piano introduction consists of four measures. The first measure has a treble clef with a G4 quarter note, an A4 quarter note, and a B4 quarter note, with a C4-E4-G4 triad in the bass. The second measure has a treble clef with a G4 quarter note, an A4 quarter note, and a B4 quarter note, with a C4-E4-G4 triad in the bass. The third measure has a treble clef with a G4 quarter note, an A4 quarter note, and a B4 quarter note, with a C4-E4-G4 triad in the bass. The fourth measure has a treble clef with a G4 quarter note, an A4 quarter note, and a B4 quarter note, with a C4-E4-G4 triad in the bass.

Series of dominant 7ths with suspended 3rds

Pno.

5

Ev' - ry hon - ey bee fills with jeal - ous - y when they see you out with

8

me I don't blame them, good - ness knows Hon - ey suck - le Rose.



The sheet music shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 5-7) is enclosed in a red box. The second system (measures 8-10) is also enclosed in a red box. Within the second system, three specific measures are highlighted with colored boxes: measure 9 is highlighted with a blue box, measure 10 is highlighted with a green box, and measure 11 is highlighted with a green box. The lyrics are: "Ev' - ry hon - ey bee fills with jeal - ous - y when they see you out with me I don't blame them, good - ness knows Hon - ey suck - le Rose."

Finally resolves to tonic Chromatic progression

# Repeat

12

Pno.

When you're pass - in' by flow - ers droop and sigh,

15

Pno.

and I know the rea - son why, You're much sweet - er, good - ness knows,

18

Pno.

Hon - ey suck - le Rose. Don't buy

## Chromatic progressions

22

Pno.

sug - ar, You just - have to touch my cup You're my

## Chromatic progression

Pno.

26

sug - ar, it's sweet when you stir it up. When I'm tak-in' sips

Detailed description: This block shows the first system of a piano accompaniment score. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 26 starts with a treble staff chord of F#m7 and a bass staff chord of Bb. The lyrics are "sug - ar, it's sweet when you stir it up. When I'm tak-in' sips". A green rectangular box highlights measures 28 and 29. In measure 28, the treble staff has a chord of F#m7 and the bass staff has a chord of Bb. In measure 29, the treble staff has a chord of Gm7 and the bass staff has a chord of Bb. This progression from F#m7 to Gm7 is the chromatic progression being highlighted.

Pno.

30

from your tas - ty lips seems the hon - ey fair - ly dips, You're con - fec - tion

Detailed description: This block shows the second system of the piano accompaniment score. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 30 starts with a treble staff chord of F#m7 and a bass staff chord of Bb. The lyrics are "from your tas - ty lips seems the hon - ey fair - ly dips, You're con - fec - tion".

## Signature chromatic progression

Pno.

33

good - ness knows Hon - ey suck - le Rose.

Detailed description: This block shows the third system of the piano accompaniment score. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 33 starts with a treble staff chord of F#m7 and a bass staff chord of Bb. The lyrics are "good - ness knows Hon - ey suck - le Rose.". A green rectangular box highlights measures 34 and 35. In measure 34, the treble staff has a chord of F#m7 and the bass staff has a chord of Bb. In measure 35, the treble staff has a chord of Gm7 and the bass staff has a chord of Bb. This progression from F#m7 to Gm7 is the signature chromatic progression being highlighted. Above the treble staff in measures 34 and 35, there are triplets of eighth notes.

# Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> with suspended 3<sup>rd</sup> Where it comes from

[Audio file](#)

The image shows a musical score for Piano in common time (C) with a tempo marking of ♩ = 60. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first measure is a cadence with a dominant 7th chord, highlighted by a red box. The second measure is a suspended 3rd chord, with the suspended 3rd note circled in red. The third measure is the resulting chord, also highlighted by a red box. The score ends with a double bar line.

Cadence  
with  
dominant 7th

Suspended  
3rd

Resulting  
chord