

Analysis of Copland's Hoe-Down

In Hoe-Down, Copland creates the effect of a barn dance. He captures the sounds of the American west in his melody, harmony, rhythm, and instrumentation:

I. Melody

- A. The melody uses a major pentatonic scale in measures 5-13 because the seventh scale degree is lowered.
 - 1. This gives the melody a folk sound. Country and Western music use the major pentatonic scale.
- B. Chromatic walking bass line in the cello at measures 24-25 sounds like a western or blues cadential figure.
- C. The melody in the strings in measures 32-39 uses a major pentatonic scale (lowered 7th in the grace notes).
- D. There is a "Turkey In The Straw" hoedown melody at rehearsal 8 and direct quotation of "Turkey In The Straw" at rehearsal 16 in the strings.

II. Harmony

- A. The keyboard uses a root to fifth bass line that sounds like a Country and Western accompaniment pattern.
- B. The tonic, subdominant, tonic, dominant progression in measures 18-25 sounds like a condensed version of a 12 bar blues progression

III. Rhythm

- A. The triplet sixteenth notes at the beginning of the piece imitate a galloping horse.
- B. The rhythm in the piano accompaniment in measures 18-31 imitates guitar accompaniment patterns in Country and Western music.
- C. The general rhythmic drive and syncopation, especially at rehearsal 12, captures the spirit and energy of a western hoe-down.

IV. Instrumentation

- A. The use of piano accompaniment gives it a dance hall sound.

- B. The wood blocks in measures 18-31 sound like horse's hooves.
- C. There is something very barn dance like in the xylophone melodic doubling.
- D. The strings give this piece a immense sound like the landscape of the west.

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