

Pulcinella (Suite)

By: Igor Stravinsky

Igor Stravinsky was born on June 17, 1882 in Russia. He mostly lived during the twentieth century which had many different styles of music in it. Stravinsky died on April 5, 1971. This piece is a ballet written during his "neoclassical" period. This piece was based on the works of Giovanni Battista Perolesi.

This piece begins with all of the strings in the group playing together. Then some of violins start playing a melody that expresses excitement until the melody quickly gets slower and begins to sound sad with string and woodwind instruments playing. The melody then quickly goes back to having all the instruments play. After that, Stravinsky adds more to that melody to make it interesting. Next, the woodwinds start playing their own melody and the French horn joins later. This leads into all of the musicians playing together. The woodwinds then start playing with some string instruments' accompaniment. After that, it goes back to the strings playing with some French horn accompaniment. Next, the strings play alone until the woodwinds serve as accompaniment. Then, all the instruments begin to play together again. Then, the woodwinds begin to play a calming melody. They are later accompanied by more instruments. After that, the woodwinds start playing a slow melody, and the French horn accompanies them later. A trombone then starts playing with a trumpet and a bass string instrument, which leads into all the instruments playing. It then goes back to the trumpet. In the

end, the French horn plays, then violins accompany the French horn. The trumpet and trombone then play for a little bit until all the instruments begin to play again.

This piece is written in rondo form. Stravinsky used many different instruments to play different parts of the piece, but he kept going back to a melody that was similar to the melody played in the beginning of the piece.

This piece wasn't too bad to listen to. I liked most the things that Stravinsky did to this piece. If I had to do another listening report I would consider doing it on one of his other pieces.

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"Rodeo" by Aaron Copland
Movement #5 - "Hoedown"

Aaron Copland was an American composer born in Brooklyn, NY on November 14, 1900. He died on December 2, 1990. His works were varied, including chamber music, film scores, jazz, opera, and ballet. One of his ballets, "Rodeo", is a story of American cowboys. The fifth part, called "Hoedown", is the concluding movement of the ballet.

"Hoedown" starts out fast and strong. The brass section dominates the opening section. After the brass section states part of the theme, the strings begin a new section, imitating the sound of horses running. This idea is furthered by the percussion section, making a sound very much like the hooves of a horse striking the ground. Without pause, the strings take up the theme again. This statement of the theme is emphasized by the percussion section.

After the strings state the theme a couple of times, there is an abrupt switch to a part started by the brass, then picked up by the strings. After this part is restated softly by the brass, the entire orchestra seems to take it up in a significantly louder tone. This builds to a celebratory sound, which in my recording including hollering cowboys! This part ended with such triumphant finality that one might think that the piece was over. However, after a very brief pause, we hear the strings and percussion once again imitating the sound of running horses. This time, though, it's much softer and winds down as it is joined by the bass notes of a brass instrument, possibly a tuba.

Very quickly after the sound of horses winds down, the entire orchestra joins in for a final statement of the theme. The theme is stated just as it was in the beginning, but then it is restated loudly and fully, sounding very celebratory and triumphant. This final statement leads to a few concluding blasts by the tuba heard earlier, accompanied by the timpani, signaling a triumphant end to the movement.

I have never seen the ballet, nor have I listened to it in its entirety. However, I can imagine that the conclusion of this piece brings the entire story to an ending that is quite clear and pleasing to the audience.

Based on what we have studied in this class, I think that this piece most closely identifies with Rondo form. The main theme is stated up front (A), followed by the sound of horses (B), followed again by the main theme (A), followed by the celebration in the middle (C), followed again by the horses (B), and finally, closing with a triumphant statement of the main theme (A).

I chose a piece by Aaron Copland because of the fond memories that I associate with his work. My father, who loves music, introduced me to Copland many years ago. "Hoedown", along with many of his other pieces, brings a modern sound to my young ears and encourages me, and the rest of my generation, not to be so quick to write off "classical" music. I would highly recommend this piece, especially to someone who might think that classical music just isn't for them.

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Well done!