

Literary and Musical Reception of Irving's Fantastic "Sleepy Hollow"

Plot summary: Outsider Ichabod Crane moves to the rural town of Sleepy Hollow, NY to work as an itinerant teacher. He has trouble fitting in, but falls in love (presumably unrequited) with local Kate van Tassel. One night, Ichabod attends a party at which he, to the chagrin of another of Kate's suitors, Brom Bones, dances with Kate and hears once again the local folktale of the "Galloping Hessian," or Headless Horseman. On his way home, Ichabod is chased out of town by the demonic-seeming, pumpkin-headed Horseman. At the story's end, it is unclear whether Ichabod's attacker was a supernatural figure that whisked him into the realm of the "other," or if it was Brom Bones in disguise, competing for Kate's attention.

Character Summary:

- Protagonist: Ichabod Crane
- Antagonist: Brom Bones
- Love interest: Kate van Tassel
- Demonic "other"?: Headless Horseman

Ex. 1. Charles Kinkel, *Sleepy Hollow Polka da Salon* (1872), mm. 5-12. Kinkel's functional harmonies and dance rhythms do not overtly engage with the fantastic of Irving's "Sleepy Hollow."

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Sleepy Hollow Polka da Salon" by Charles Kinkel, specifically measures 5 through 12. The score is written for piano and is in 2/4 time. It features a treble and bass clef for the right and left hands, respectively. The music is characterized by a steady, rhythmic pattern with frequent triplets and sixteenth-note runs. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present at the beginning. There are several instances of triplets and sixteenth-note patterns, some marked with 'x' and 'Sea...'. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Ex. 2. Clarence Woods, *Sleepy Hollow Rag* (1918), mm. 1-16. Similarly to Kinkel's polka, the blues notes and dance rhythms of Woods' *Sleepy Hollow Rag* do not overtly relate to Irving's story.



Ex. 3. Max Maretzek, *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1879), "A Witch, a Witch," Act I. Maretzek's writing features balanced, periodic phrasing and generally functional harmonies.



Ex. 4. Edgar Kelley, *The Headless Horseman*, op. 2, no. 3 (1891), mm. 1-22, A section, the first statement of the “Ichabod” theme. Kelley’s writing in this case is generally grounded in E minor, but features imbalanced phrases and no singable melody.

The musical score is for a piano piece in E minor, 6/8 time, consisting of 22 measures. It is divided into five systems. The first system (measures 1-4) begins with a piano (*Piano.*) and mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second system (measures 5-8) includes a crescendo (*cresc.*) marking. The third system (measures 9-12) features a fortissimo (*sf*) dynamic and a repeat sign with a first ending asterisk (*). The fourth system (measures 13-16) includes a *poco a poco cresc.* marking. The fifth system (measures 17-22) concludes with a fortissimo (*sf*) dynamic and a repeat sign with a first ending asterisk (*). The score is characterized by imbalanced phrases and a lack of a singable melody, with complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic contrasts.

Ex. 5. Edgar Kelley, *The Headless Horseman*, op. 2, no. 3 (1891), mm. 90-97, B section, first statement of the “Headless Horseman” theme. Kelly ‘voices’ the Horseman using a soft melody, periodic phrasing, and chromatic sequences.

The image displays a musical score for the B section of 'The Headless Horseman' theme, measures 90-97. The score is written for piano and includes the following elements:

- Tempo and Meter:** The piece is marked *Allegretto* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 152$. The time signature is common time (C).
- Performance Instructions:** The score includes *sotto voce* (measures 90-92), *pp* (pianissimo, measure 90), *a tempo* (measure 94), and *poco rit.* (measure 95).
- Chromatic Sequences:** The melody in the right hand features several chromatic sequences, such as the descending line in measure 90 (5-4-3-2-1) and the ascending line in measure 91 (1-2-3-4-5).
- Periodic Phrasing:** The music is characterized by periodic phrasing, with melodic motifs that repeat or vary slightly across measures.
- Handedness:** The score is marked *R. H.* (Right Hand) in measure 94.
- Articulation:** The score includes various articulation marks, such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *pp* and *ppc.* (pianissimo con sordina).

Ex. 6. Edgar Kelley, *The Headless Horseman*, op. 2, no. 3 (1891), mm. 1-22, A”, the final statement of the “Ichabod” theme. In this case, “Ichabod’s” typical motives appear in a transformed harmonic setting comprised entirely of the “Headless Horseman’s” chromatic sequences.

Tempo I.

p

poco a poco cresc.

simile.

ed accelerando.

etc...