Writing Exercise 2

Katrina Cokain

"These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" by Nancy Sinatra

The song, “These Boots Are Made for Walkin’”, was recorded by Nancy Sinatra. This had a big impact and was a big hit when it was released in 1965. The song has many different instruments included and had a purpose behind it, which can be heard throughout the song. This paper will dive deeper into the musical elements and lyrical meaning of “These Boots Are Made for Walkin”.

Nancy Sinatra recorded “These Boots Are Made for Walkin”, but it was written by Lee Hazelwood. It was released in December of 1965 and reached number one on the *Billboard* Hot 100 and UK singles charts on January 22, 1966. The song was originally not going to be sung by a woman, as it was intended to be sung by a man, but Nancy Sinatra convinced Lee Hazelwood to let her perform and record the song.

The lyrics of “These Boots Are Made for Walkin”, explain the sneaking around that a man does when he is cheating on a girl. Nancy Sinatra sings the lyrics with a powerful tone, which puts emphasis on the meaning behind the lyrics. The lyrics also express that the man believes he will not get caught by this girl he is cheating on. The sneaky aspect of the lyrics can be heard in the sound of the song as well, which creates the image of a man sneaking in and out of each girls’ place. When Nancy Sinatra sings, “These boots are made for walking”, this expresses that the girl that is being cheated on, has caught the man sneaking around and is going to make him pay.

The musical sound of “These Boots Are Made for Walkin” can be heard through the many different instruments being played. The instruments that are in the song are trumpets, guitars, drums, and a tambourine. The tambourine and drums are the main instruments that keep the rhythm and beat of the song. The rhythm is in four four time, meaning four beats per measure, and the steady rhythmic accents by the tambourine and drums sound like a person who is stomping or walking with purpose. After each verse, there is downward scale played by the guitar, emphasizing the urgency and the importance of the lyrics. The trumpets create a heavy rhythmic accent, creating a nightclub vibe. Nancy Sinatra’s vocal style in “These Boots Are Made for Walkin” is taunting, sassy and scolding towards the man referenced in the lyrics. In the song, she doesn’t have many dynamic changes and stays at the same octave. There are no backup singers, making Nancy Sinatra the only singer. Some of the instruments act as backup when Nancy Sinatra sings her verses. The structure of the song is like a typical form of songs during the 1960s with two or three verses and the chorus repeated in between the different verses. The song structure is an escalation between the girl and the man, where it begins with the girl confronting the man about cheating on her with another woman. In the second verse, it escalates even further to the girl telling the man that he’s been sneaky and lying about being with the other woman. Finally, the song gets to the girl’s power move, where she gets rid of the man who has been cheating and walks away from him and the relationship. The musical sound and structure of “These Boots Are Made for Walkin” supports the message of the song because the message of the song is that no woman should tolerate a man cheating on her, and that she should move on to better things in her life. The sound and structure of the song supports this because the sound has a “walking with purpose” vibe and can feel the “boots walking” throughout the song. The structure of the song supports the song by having different stages of the encounter between the man and woman in the song. Each verse gets more powerful as the song goes on.

“These Boots Are Made for Walkin” impacted American popular culture during its time of release. The song was recorded to be a music video, which featured Nancy Sinatra wearing her famous red, leather boots. Today, there have been multiple cover versions of the song by different artists. Some of the artists include Billy Ray Cyrus, Jessica Simpson, and Megadeth. Each version takes on their own envision of Nancy Sinatra’s original. The original song has also been in several movies, from around the time of the release of the song and in today’s time. Today, this song impacts many young females, as the song has a very powerful message for women.

Works Cited

“These Boots Are Made for Walkin'.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 3 Apr. 2020, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/These\_Boots\_Are\_Made\_for\_Walkin'. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/These_Boots_Are_Made_for_Walkin%27>