

The Horse Called Rover

The image shows the musical notation for "The Horse Called Rover" in G Major, 2/4 time. The piece is in ABB form. Part A consists of 8 measures with chords G, C, G, D7, G, G, and C. Part B consists of 8 measures with chords G, D7, G, G, D7, G, D7, and G. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature.

"The Horse Called Rover", also known as "Rooster in the Strawpile" or "Cotton Eyed Joe" is an old-time breakdown known in southwestern Pa. in G Major. The parts are played ABB. This is a composite tune, perhaps fashioned in America. Bayard believed the A part to be quite old, going back to the 16th century and appearing as "Malt's Come Down" (included in the **Fitzwilliam Virginal Book** arranged by William Byrd).

The 'B' part is a common strain which can be found in collections from European countries and in the chorus of the American minstrel ditty "Jim Along Josey" (1840).

A version of the tune is found in Ira Ford's **Traditional Music of America** (1940) as "Cotton Eyed Joe", while the oldest set Bayard found was in Aird's **Selections, vol. 1**, (1782) as "The Virginian".

The tune was collected in Pennsylvania with these words:

Had a little horse and I called him Rover,
When he lived, he lived in clover,
And when he died, he died all over.

The notated version was collected from Hiram White (an elderly fiddler from Greene County, Pa., 1930's) by Samuel Bayard. The banjo arrangement is by John Letscher. He doubles the B part.

It was recorded by Tamsula and Withers on **Up in the Batten House** (2011).

It was printed in Bayard's **Dance to the Fiddle** (1981).