Song of the American Frontier

By Kenneth A. Kuhn

For Piano

Performance time: ~10 minutes

Song of the American Frontier

Music description:

The music is an arrangement for solo piano of several themes and fragments of a folk nature associated with the American frontier. Much of the music seems familiar even if the listener cannot identify any particular theme. The music can be thought of as a tone painting where music conjures grand mental images. The first theme describes a grandeur scene of hills and valleys with a subordinate second theme representing a river flowing through. The third theme brings to mind the majestic image of a thousand head of cattle grazing peacefully on a broad plain. The fourth theme opens with the innocence of a young girl growing up on a farm and becomes broader as she matures. The music builds to a grand cadenza leading to a recapitulation of abbreviated triumphal versions of the first two themes bringing the work to a proud close.

The music was composed between 1973 and 1978. The opening theme began life as a contrasting theme to Prelude No. 4 for piano but that did not work out and another theme took its place. I liked that theme and it reminded me of music associated with the American frontier. That concept drove the development of this and the other themes of this piece. Although the piece is comprised of a number of "songs" the use of the word, song, in the title is singular because I consider the piece taken as a whole to be a single song.

The music was first written on manuscript paper in 1978 and entered into the program, Cakewalk™ in 2003. In 2014 the music was entered into the program Finale™ to make this performer friendly printout.

Performance Notes:

The music is in four parts and is intended to be performed with great feeling with appropriate tempo and dynamic variations.

In part 1 it is important for the left hand to be very fluid and interact with the right hand part sometimes taking a dominant role and at other times taking a background role. The *morendo* marking near the end of this part should be intently followed leading to the soft *larghissimo* transition to part 2.

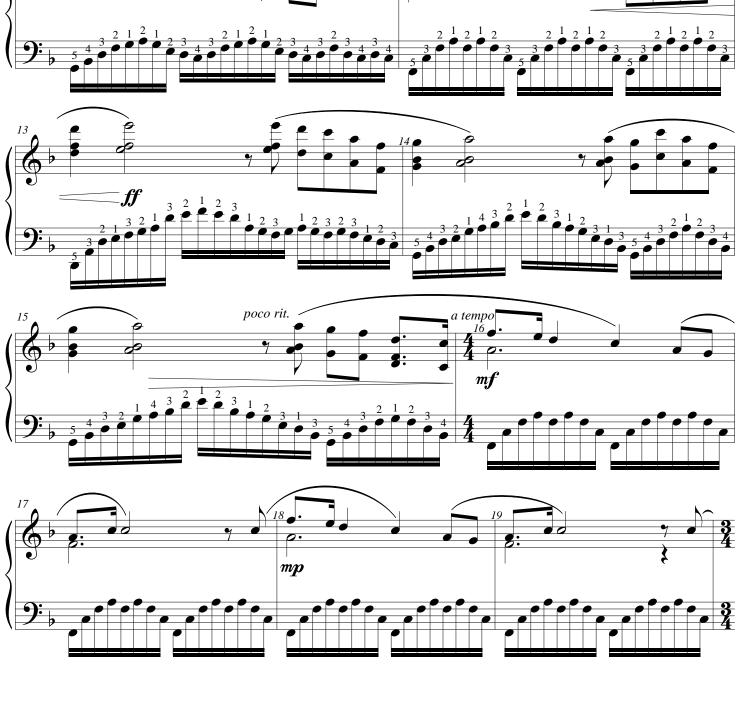
Be sure to observe the *l'istesso* continuing the *larhissimo* in the first measure of part 2 marked *adagio maestoso*. The rolls should be played a bit slowly – each note should ring.

Part 3 marked *Andante con tenerezza* should be played delicately and with a faster tempo than part 2. The notes marked tenuto should be held extra-long perhaps with a brief pause in the tempo.

Part 4 opens with the main theme from part 2 now played loudly with a return to the tempo of part 2. The music should slow and soften a bit just prior to the cadenza. The cadenza should be played with some *accellerando* but not too much and near its end should slow to the tempo of the main theme. The closing section should be played very loud and majestically. The *alargando* in the last measures should be quite pronounced.

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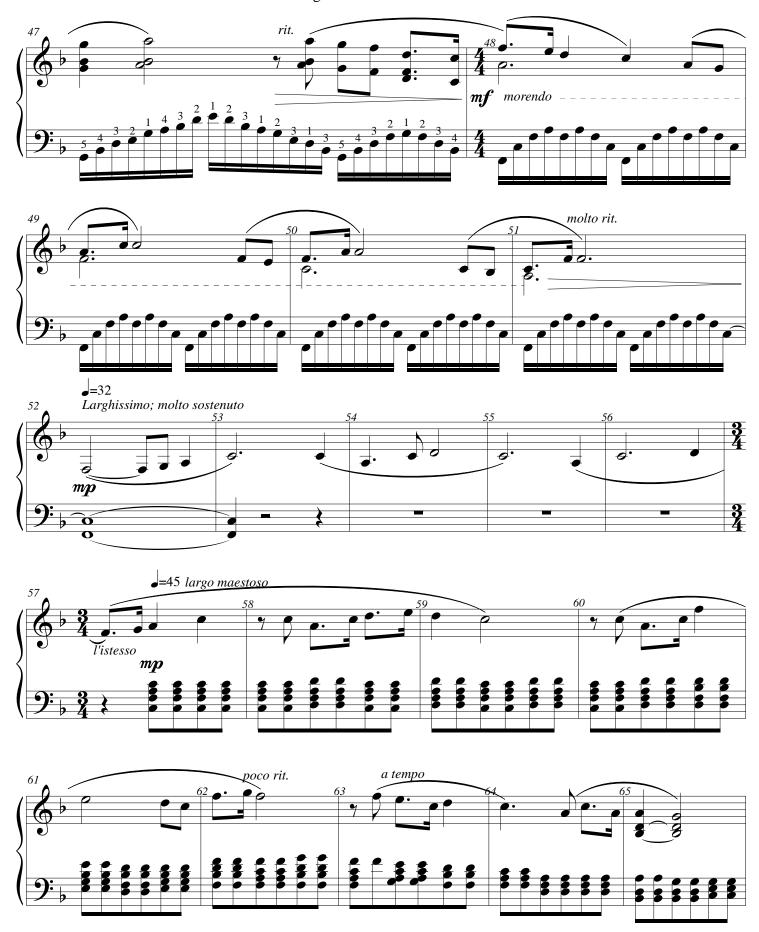


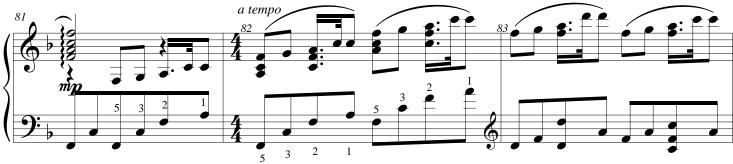


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