Studies in Song

New *Standards* for Piano

Ned Gerhart

standard edition
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MP3 audio for each piece in this book can downloaded without charge at http://www.nedgerhart.com.

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Preface

A "standard" song is not so just because it is well-known and often-performed. This label also implies a certain common form as well. Standards are usually thirty-two bars long. These thirty-two bars typically have an "AABA" organization, containing four eight-bar phrases where the third section, or "bridge", is a contrasting interlude between repetitions of the main melody. Of course, much variation on this principle exists, and many books have been written about these structures within songs. The "AABA" form has been the predominant organizational device used for Broadway musical songs and jazz (other than the "blues" form) since the beginning of the twentieth century. Most of the pieces in this book have an "AABA" structure.

This book is the result of a hobby I stumbled on in 1990. The nice thing about creating something as a hobbyist is that you don't have to please anyone's taste besides your own. When one's own satisfaction with the result is all that matters, artistic development becomes like the evolution of life in the Galapagos Islands. Without exposure to the homogenizing effect which regular criticism or concerns for merchantability might produce, an artist who is an independent hobbyist, remote from cares beyond his own happiness, is arguably more inclined to develop an individual, eccentric style, at least if he continues to stay with it long enough. I have been doing my piano music thing alone in obscurity for sixteen years. Now that you have come upon my island, I hope you will be able to enjoy whatever special uniqueness I have managed to evolve.

I have tried to use as few instructions or dynamic markings as possible in the music. You are an artist too, and I know you have good taste. If you have not previously played jazz or popular music, the indication *swing-style 8th notes* means that 8ths should not be played with the usual 50/50 division per beat, they should be played more like 60/40 per beat. Can you dig it?

N.G.
July, 2006

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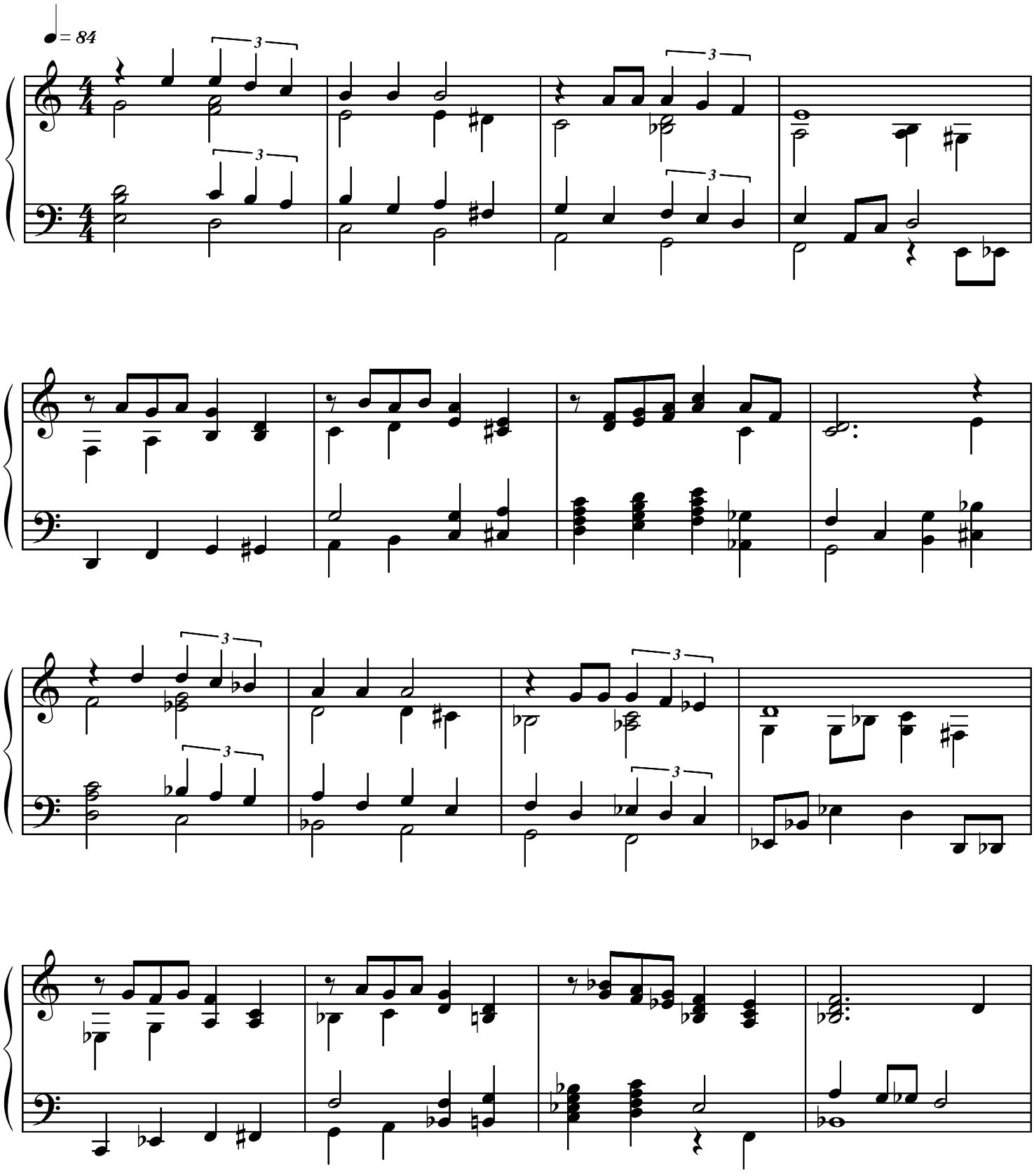
Candles in the Moonlight

This tune has been statistically the most popular item downloaded at www.nedgerhart.com. I think it is one of my best melodies too! It features an ordinary "AABA" form, but I am rather pleased with the way the first two sections are actually in different keys. Of course you will see that right off, but the shift is so subtle that I believe listeners hardly notice anything unusual happening.



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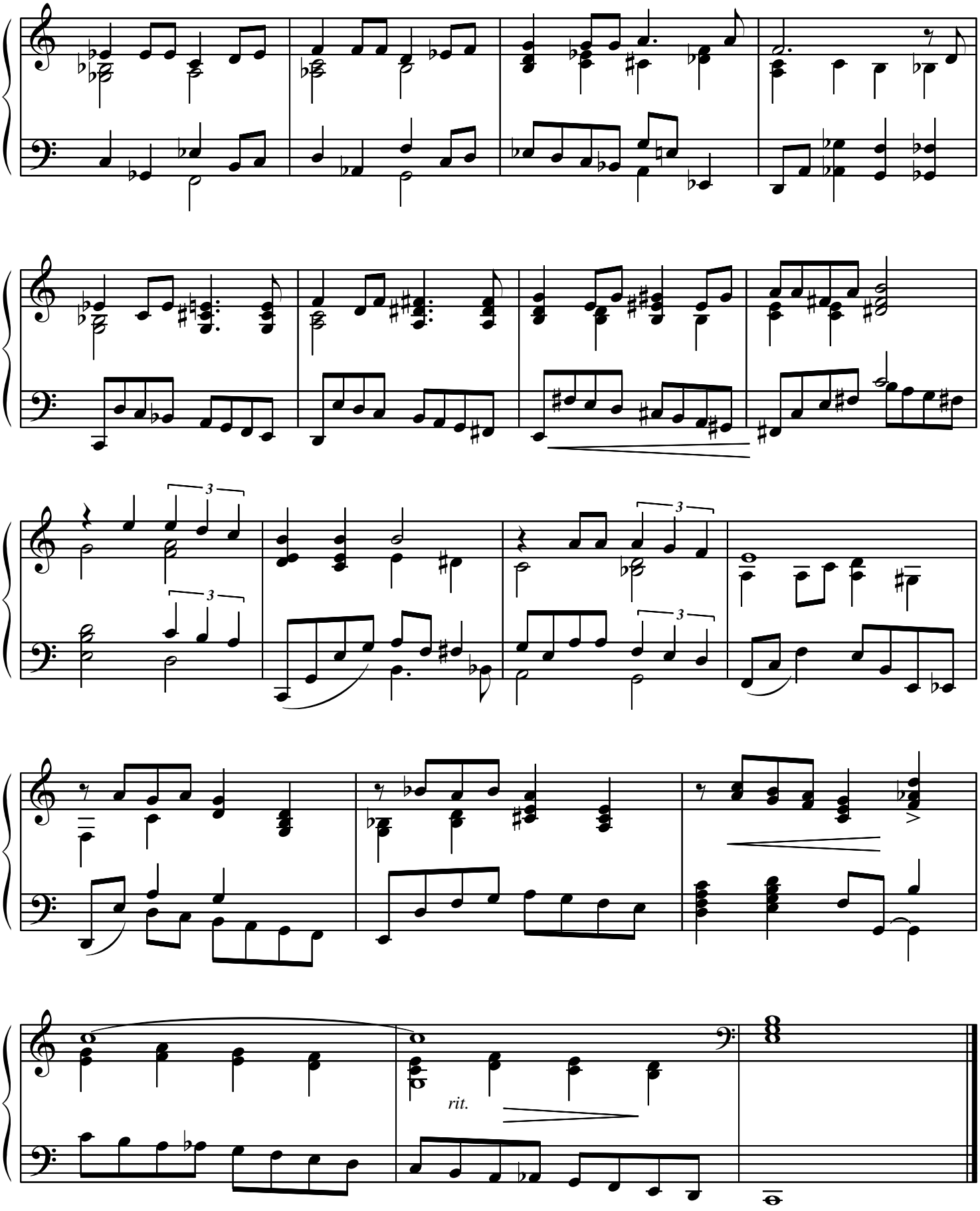
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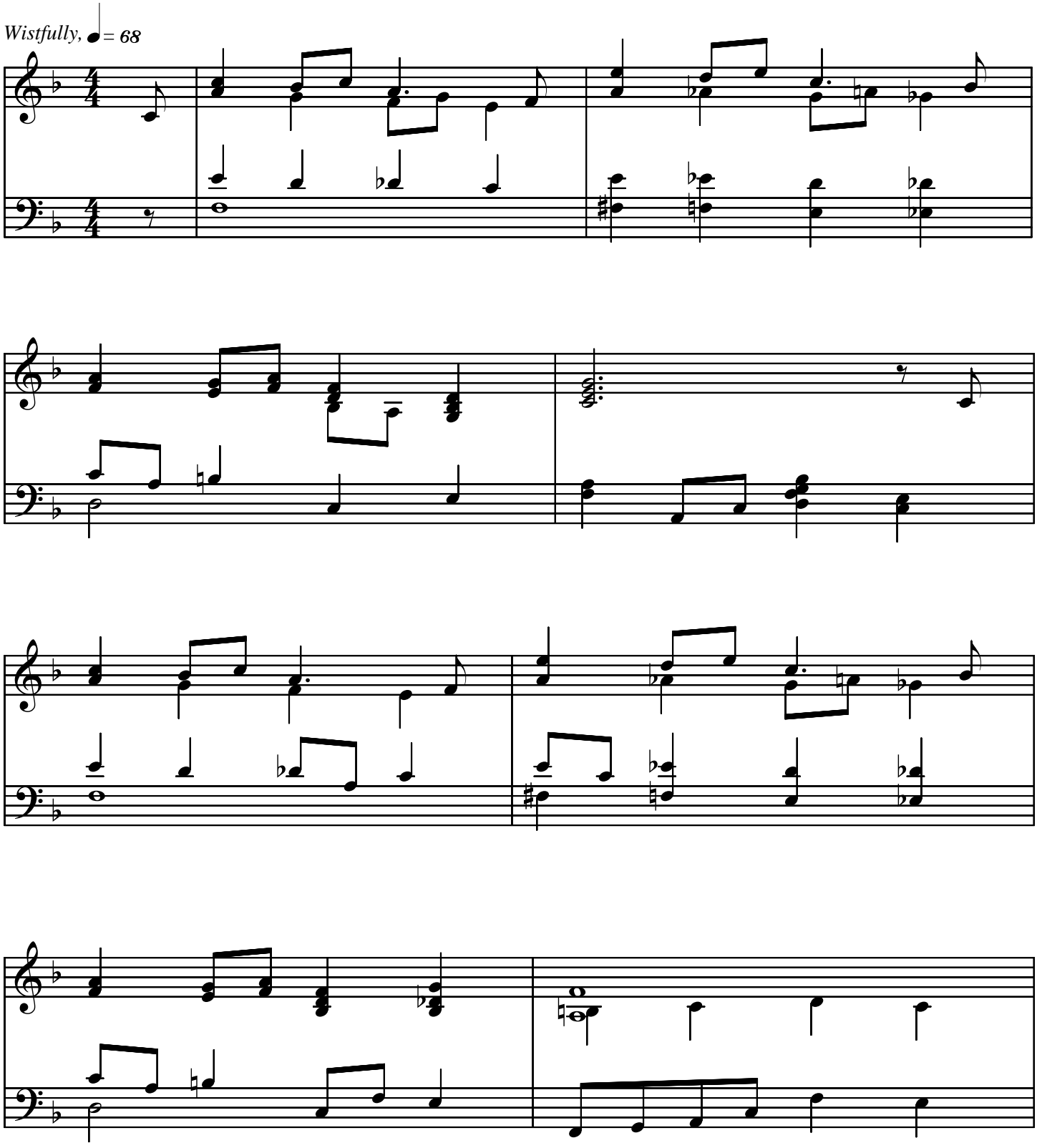
October in Paris

Ah, October in Paris, chestnut leaves falling... This AABA-form tune is only 16 bars long because I chose to use 4/4 time rather than 2/2, which would have been the traditional choice. Before continuing after the sustained chord three measures from the end, I like to take a long, deep breath and feel the hair on my neck stand up a moment.



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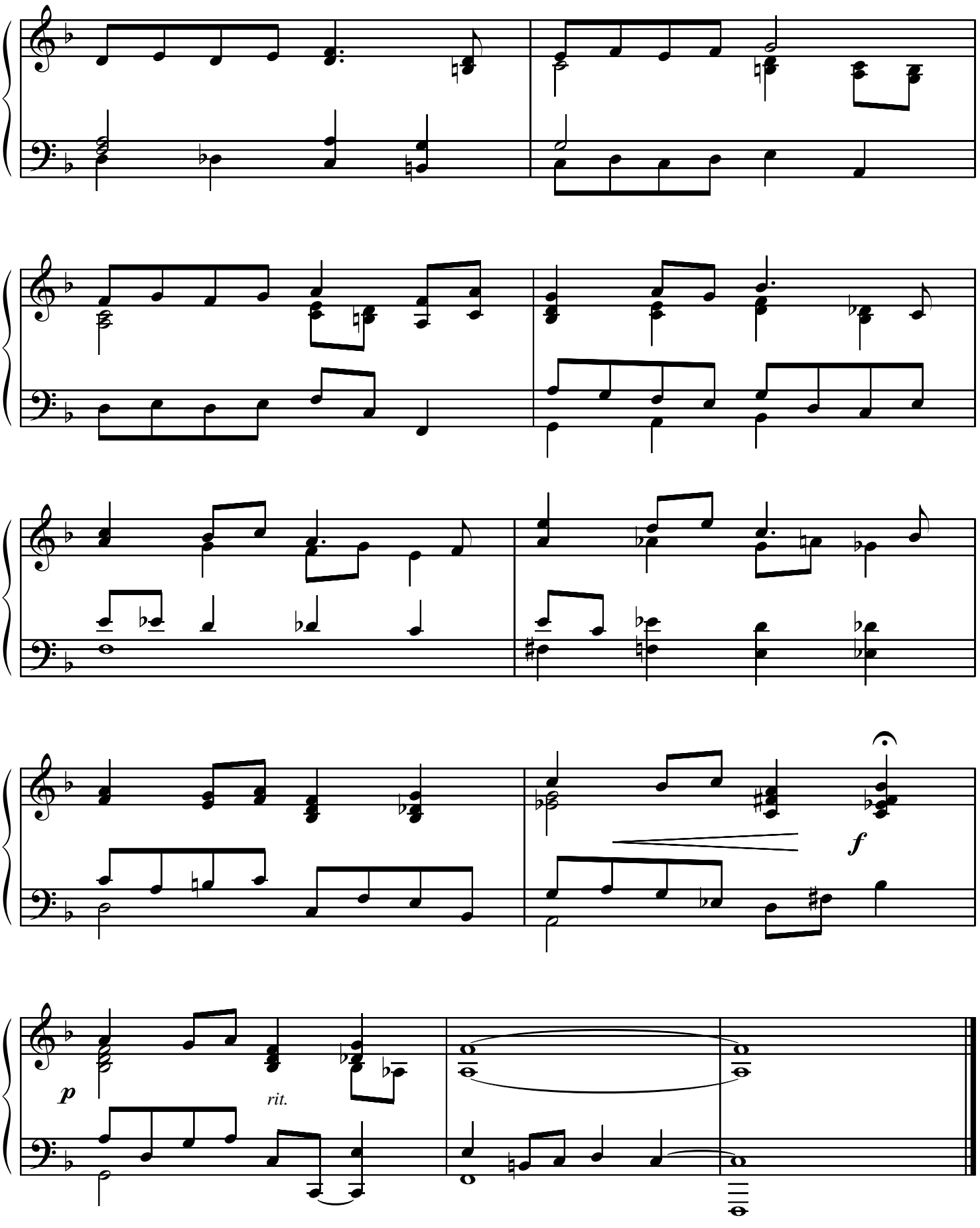
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