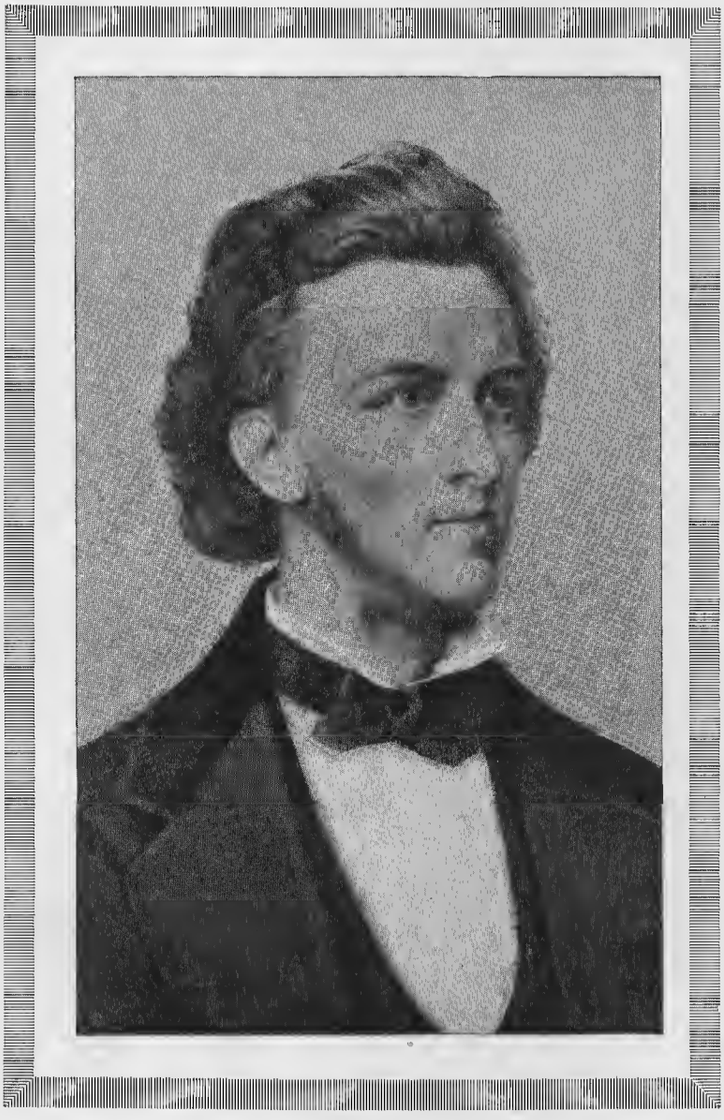
# CHANT POLONAIS No. 2

## SPRING

By

## CHOPIN—LISZT



REVISED EDITION WITH FINGERING, PHRASING, PEDALING AND INSTRUCTIVE ANNOTATIONS ON INTERPRETATION AND METHOD OF STUDY

By LEOPOLD GODOWSKY

FORM AND STRUCTURE, AND HARMONIC ANALYSIS

By EDGAR STILLMAN KELLEY

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, GENERAL INFORMATION AND GLOSSARY

By EMERSON WHITHORNE

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# CHANT POLONAIS No. II.

# SPRING

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN.

*Born at Zelazowa-Wola, near Warsaw, February* 22, 1810.
*Died in Paris, France, October* 17, 1849.

CHOPIN said of his life that 'it was without a beginning and with a sad end'; in referring to the sad ending he must have considered the cloud cast upon his latter years by George Sand—Madame Dudevant—and yet in spite of this episode and the troubles of his native Poland which weighed heavily upon him, in spite of his knowledge of his affection of the lungs, and the ever-present spectre of death, there were periods of his life which must have been bathed in radiant sunshine.

When only eighteen years of age he met Constance Gladkowska, a singer and pupil of the Warsaw Conservatoire. In his youthful enthusiasm he felt that in her he had found his ideal, and we may assume that she was directly responsible for the seventeen *Chants Polonais*, or Polish songs, which were published after his death as opus 74. They are the only songs that he ever wrote and without doubt they were composed before his twenty-first year. Constance Gladkowska sang at the last of his farewell concerts in Warsaw before he journeyed forth into the world as a piano virtuoso.

We know that his career as a concert pianist was short-lived, for his style of playing was only really effective in the interpretation of his own works. The tour across Germany brought him to Paris, and in that world centre he lived the rest of his days, honored and beloved as a teacher and composer. There he was received as an equal by the most celebrated musicians and artists of the day; there the homes of the aristocracy were always open to him.

Indeed from his boyhood he had never lacked the admiration of the cultured, not alone for his charming and picturesque personality, but also for his undeniable genius. He possessed the fire and *esprit* of his French father and the warmth of temperament of his Polish mother. These inherited traits constitute much of the peculiar fascination of his music.

Frédéric Chopin will long remain in the memory of man as the greatest poet of pianoforte literature. His expansion of the technical possibilities of the instrument was enormous, while in his honest expression of the contrasting moods of his complex nature, he left to the world a legacy of wonderful and exquisite beauty.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—FRANZ LISZT.

*Born at Raiding, Hungary, October* 22, 1811
*Died at Bayreuth, Bavaria, July* 31, 1886.

THE pre-eminence of Franz Liszt did not rest entirely upon his fame as one of the most astounding piano virtuosos who ever lived. He was a composer who discovered a new world in the literature and technic of the pianoforte. As a producer of the works of rising and unacclaimed composers, he acted as a fairy god-father to many of the young creative musicians of the romantic school. Moreover, his transcriptions and arrangements of songs of Schubert and Chopin, as well as his operatic paraphrases, greatly broadened the scope of the average pianist's knowledge.

As a friend who was ready to give material aid and advice, he was almost over-generous, often neglecting his own interests for the welfare of others.



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Born in the little town of Raiding, Hungary, Franz Liszt rose to eminence by the combined force of his personality and his musical genius. All Europe was at his feet—the success of that master violinist, Paganini, was not greater than that of the marvelous Hungarian pianist. And yet at the age of forty, Liszt withdrew from the glare of the concert-room and the world's resounding plaudits, and made his home in Weimar where he was appointed conductor of the Court Theatre Orchestra. There he taught and composed in the little art centre made famous by Goethe and Schiller; there he brought out the operas of Wagner, the orchestral works of Schumann and Berlioz—and finally of Liszt.

Later in life the religious side of his nature manifested itself, and in Rome he was admitted to the Order of St. Francis, receiving the title of Abbé. It is a strange coincidence that his death was caused by exposure in attending a performance of Wagner's *Parsifal* at Bayreuth. The venerable Abbé Liszt departed this world, a believer in the Church as the true salvation, a sincere lover of his fellow-man.

FORM, STRUCTURE, AND HARMONIC ANALYSIS: KEY, G MINOR.

A significant feature of this piece is the constant reiteration of a four-measure phrase wrought into a two-part song-form, with variations or diversifications. After the introduction of two measures the phrase (measures 3-6) in the tonic is repeated in measures 7-10, forming a period (part 1). This period is then transferred to the relative (B flat) major in measures 11-18 forming part 2. From here on to the end these two parts or members continually alternate with ever changing treatment, closing with part 1 in measures 51-58.

The element of reiteration is characteristic of the Slavic music as may be found in many Russian, Polish and kindred folk songs and dances. (See the Mazurkas of Chopin.)

Another phase peculiar to the Slavic folk music is the frequent employment of the church modes. In measure 11 and again at measures 15, 27, 31, 43 and 47, E natural is used instead of E flat in the key of B flat major, thus suggesting the Lydian mode (corresponding to our F major scale with B natural). This trait is imitated in the tonic (G minor) at measures 51 and 55, lending an oriental color to the conclusion. This Saracenic quality is found frequently in Chopin's work.

POETIC IDEA: This transcription retains all the pensiveness of the original song—a song of Spring as mirrored in the soul of the melancholy Polish genius. The melody is naïvely simple in its contour, but already the sad autumn landscape is anticipated; as in the innocent child one often catches glimpses of the sadness of later years, so has Chopin suggested, or rather foreshadowed, the more sombre seasons of the year in this beautiful Polish Song. Then there is the strong personal element as expressed in the following translation from the Polish text:

Through the dew-drenched meadows little brooks meander,
The bells of the cattle are sounding, the larks soar.
The golden sun glows, green are wood and meadow,
Everywhere is the lovely, joyous Spring.

I am lonely and mourn under the blossoming lilac-bush,
The old, sweet days again pass across my vision,
The old, tender songs I sing to the winds,
From my cheeks tears drop slowly!——

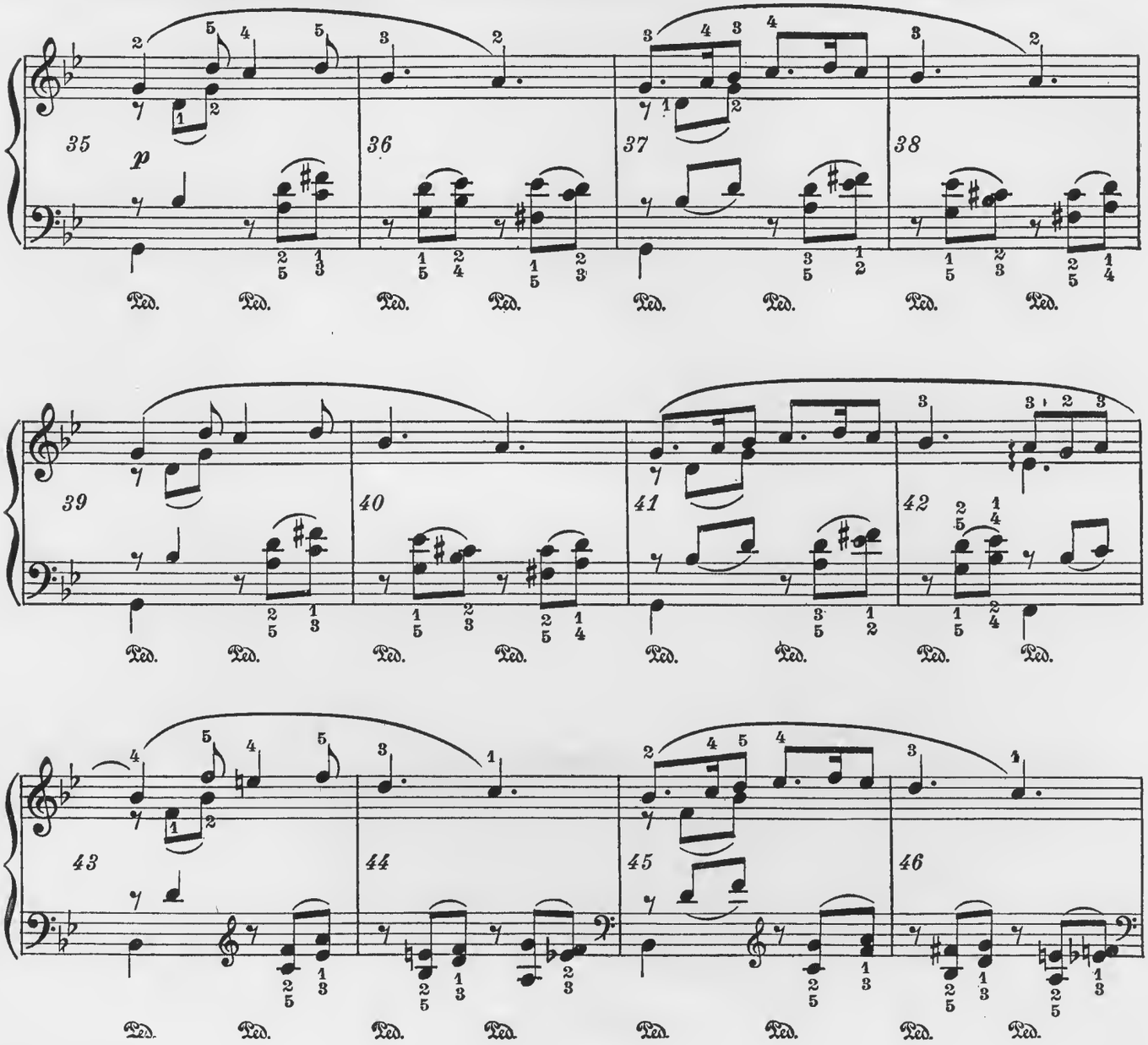
Cease your joyous singing, little lark in the sky,
Carry my song with you, heavenwards upwinging;
Fly ever higher to those heights where the angel-choir abides.
To the dear one bring messages, to her who was taken from me,—
Tell her how my song mourns for her in this dark valley.

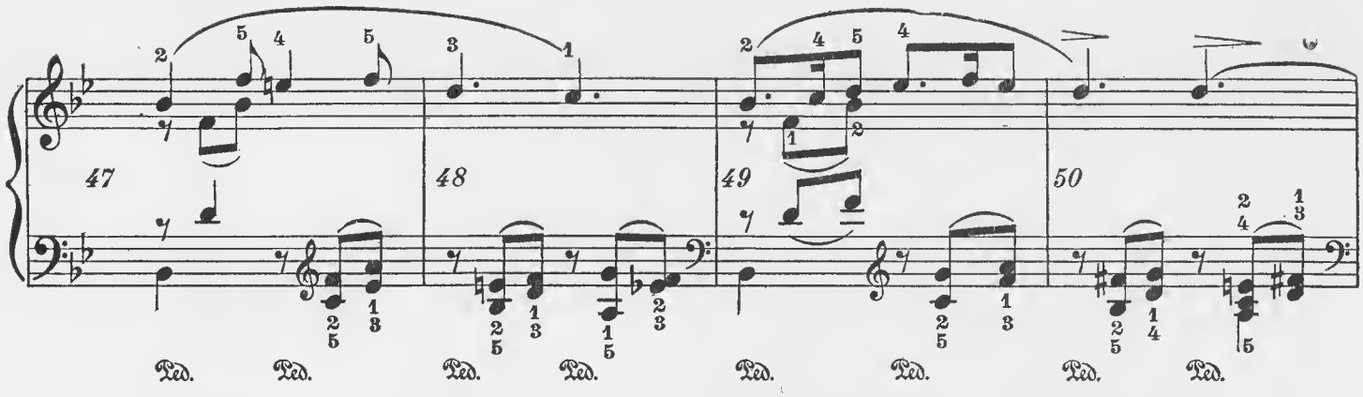
METHOD OF STUDY: The third and fourth notes of measures 1 and 2 (B flat-A) prepare us for the same notes in the melody (measures 4-6-8-10, etc.) The bass should be played expressively throughout the composition—smoothly and softly yet with just a touch of ponderance. The slight *crescendo* in m. 1 and similar instances should be observed. Then the tender melody must enter almost secretly, becoming more prominent as the phrase proceeds to its repetition in measures 7-8. Like a small voice singing sweetly, this rural melody floats forth; for the scene is one of gently sloping meadow-lands, of slim birches, sighing grasses and melancholy peasants.

In the bass a second voice is heard answering the right-hand melody; by observing the notes with downward stems the student will easily give this voice due prominence without letting it disturb the principal melody in the treble. The E natural in measures 11-15-27-31, etc., lends a curious native quality to these measures, for E natural is as unexpected in B flat major—the key of these measures—as in G minor, the key of the composition. The B flat-A occurring in the lower voice of the left-hand part in m. 18 is an exact imitation of the second measure of the voice phrase. (See measures 4, 6, 8, etc.)

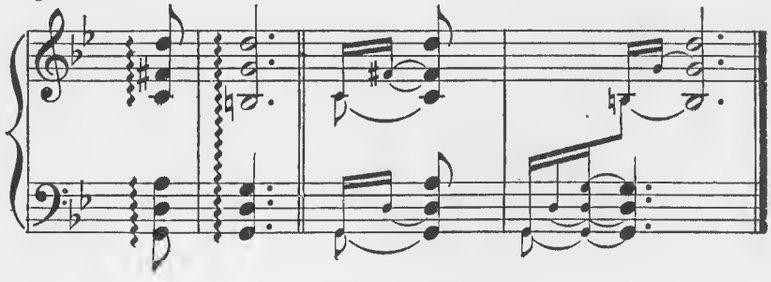
Where the octaves are introduced, beginning m. 18, the thumb should be held as long as possible, while the top voice is to be brought out very slightly. The fingering given makes a perfect *legato* possible. The upper voice of measures 35-50 should likewise be given sufficient prominence so that the moving harmonic notes, played in the lower voice of the treble, shall not interfere with the smooth flow of the melody. The *coda* (measures 51—58) is exquisite in its harmonization, the last notes dying in the distance as though wafted away over the rolling meadow-lands.

**a) The following distribution of the voices between the hands is more convenient.**






**b)** Attention is drawn to the different interpretation of the following arpeggio marks at the end of this composition.



GLOSSARY

***NAMES***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Weimar, | pronounced, | Vī-mär. |
| Chopin, | " | Shō-pan (nasalized). |
| Zelazowa-Wola, | " | Zĕ-lä-zō-vä Vō-lä. |
| Dudevant, | " | Dooē-dĕ-vänt (nasalized). |
| Chant Polonais, | " | Shän Pŏl-ō-nā. |
| Gladkowska, | " | Gläd-kȯf-skä. |
| Franz Liszt, | " | Fränts Lĭst. |
| Schumann, | " | Shoo-män. |
| Berlioz, | " | Bĕr-lĭ-ōz. |
| Raiding, | " | Rīd-ing. |

***TERMS***

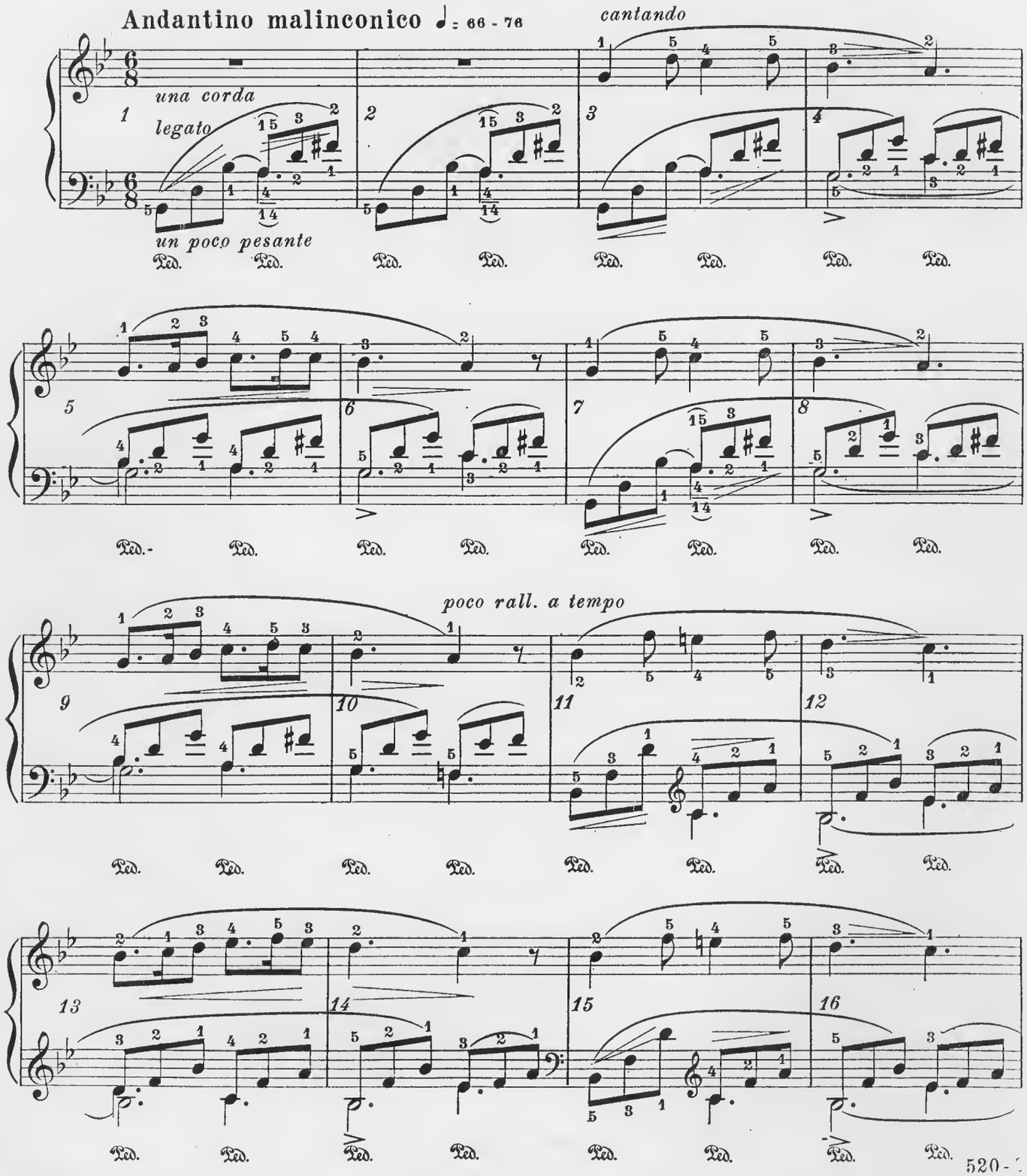
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| andantino malinconico, | pronounced, | än-dän-tē-nō mä-lēn-cō-nē-cō, a little andante in melancholy style. |
| una corda, | " | oo-nä cŏr-dä, one string (soft pedal). |
| legato, | " | lĕ-gä-tō, smooth, connected. |
| un poco pesante, | " | oon pō-cō pĕ-zän-tĕ, a little heavily. |
| cantando, | " | cän-tän-dō, singing. |
| poco rall. (rallentando), | " | pō-cō räl-lĕn-tän-dō, gradually a little slower. |
| a tempo, | " | äh tĕm-pō, in time. |
| espress. (espressivo), | " | ĕs-prĕs-sē-vō, expressively. |
| sempre, | " | sĕm-prĕ, always. |
| più, | " | pē-oo, more. |
| poco a poco riten. (ritenuto), | " | pō-cō äh pō-cō rē-tĕ-noo-tō, retarding little by little. |
| morendo, | " | mō-rĕn-dō, dying away. |
| crescendo, | " | crĕ-shĕn-dō, increasing in tone. |
| coda, | " | cō-dä, a short section at the close of a composition to make an effective termination. |

# Chant Polonais No. II

## SPRING

Song by
Frédéric Chopin, Op. 74, No. 2
Transcribed for the Pianoforte
by Franz Liszt

*Revised and edited by Leopold Godowsky*

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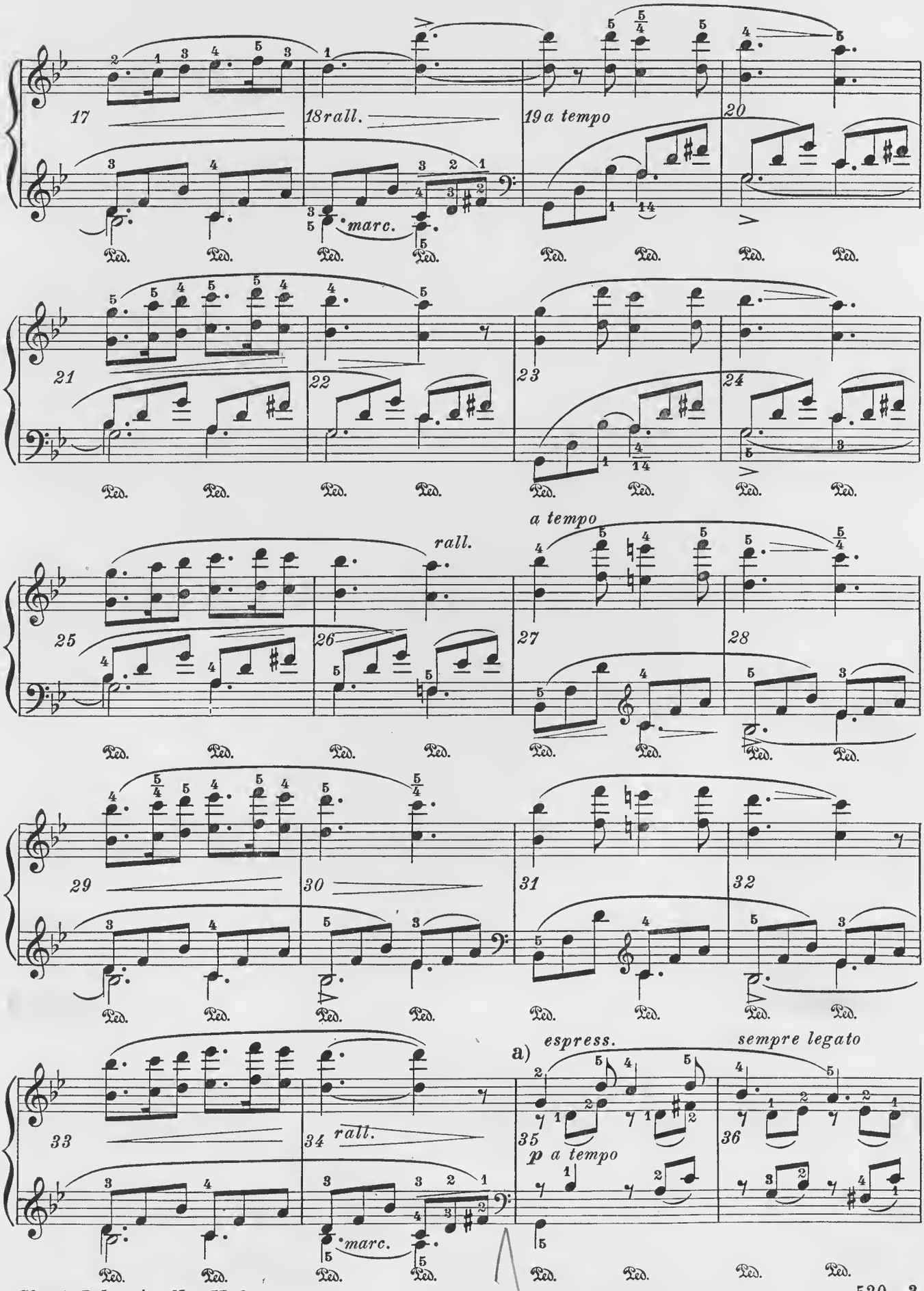
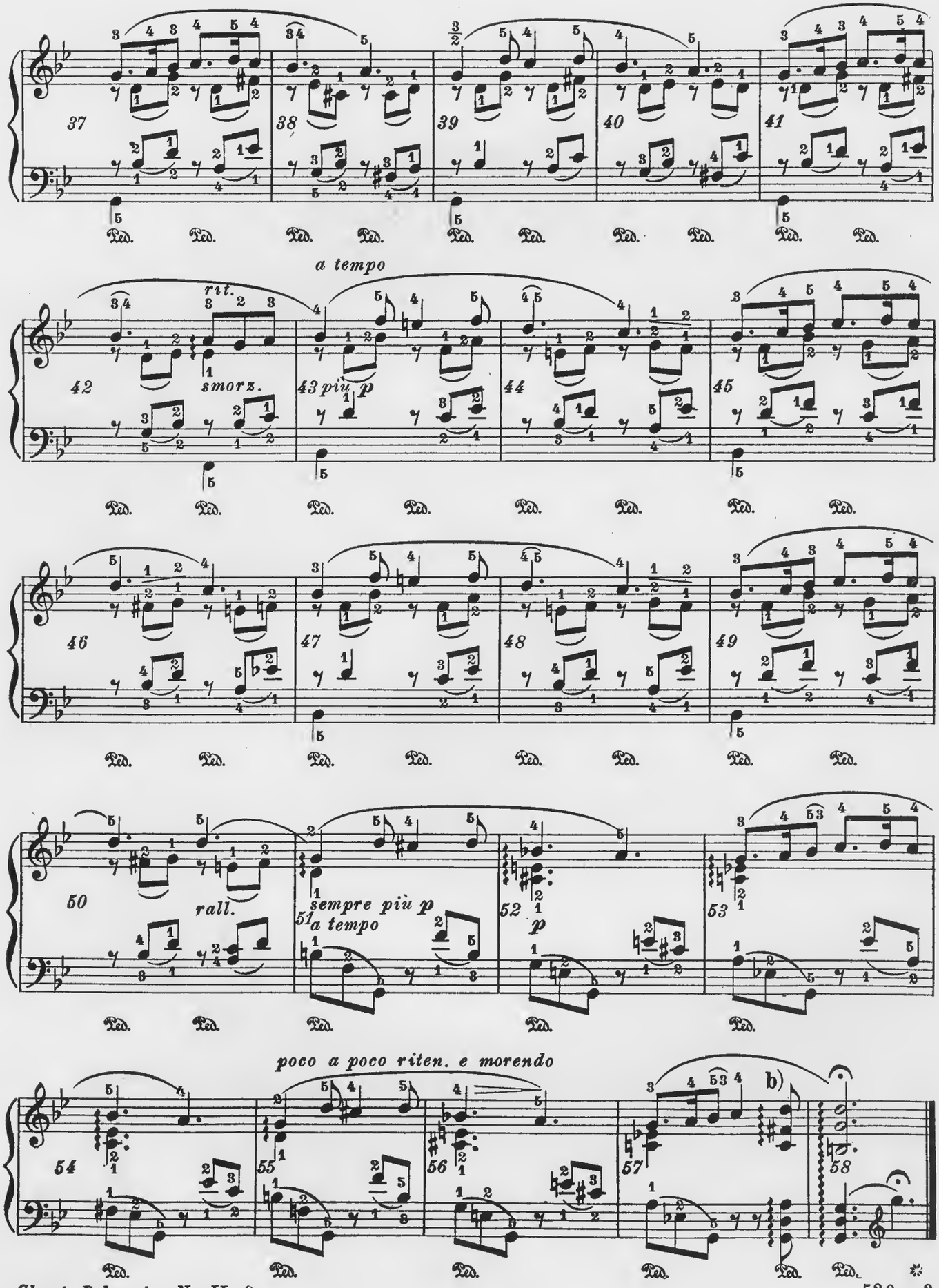

17
18 rall.
marc.
19 a tempo
20
21
22
23
24
a tempo
rall.
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
a)
espress.
sempre legato
33
34 rall.
marc.
35
p a tempo
36


37
38
39
40
41
a tempo
rit.
42
smorz.
43 più p
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
rall.
sempre più p
51 a tempo
52
p
53
poco a poco riten. e morendo
54
55
56
57
58
Ped.

## RECITATION QUESTIONS.

1. Whom did Chopin admire at the time he wrote his Polish Songs?
   Ans.

2. Give the dates of Chopin's birth and death.
   Ans.

3. What position does Liszt occupy in the history of music?
   Ans.

4. Name a significant feature of this piece.
   Ans.

5. Where does the first statement of the period end?
   Ans.

6. What church mode is suggested by the use of E natural in the melody?
   Ans.

7. Give the poetic idea.
   Ans.

8. How is the voice in the bass to be played?
   Ans.

9. Describe how the octaves in the right hand are to be played.
   Ans.

10. Where does the *coda* enter?
    Ans.

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