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# O Sanctissima : Fantaisie - Transcription

Fritz Spindler  
*Composer*

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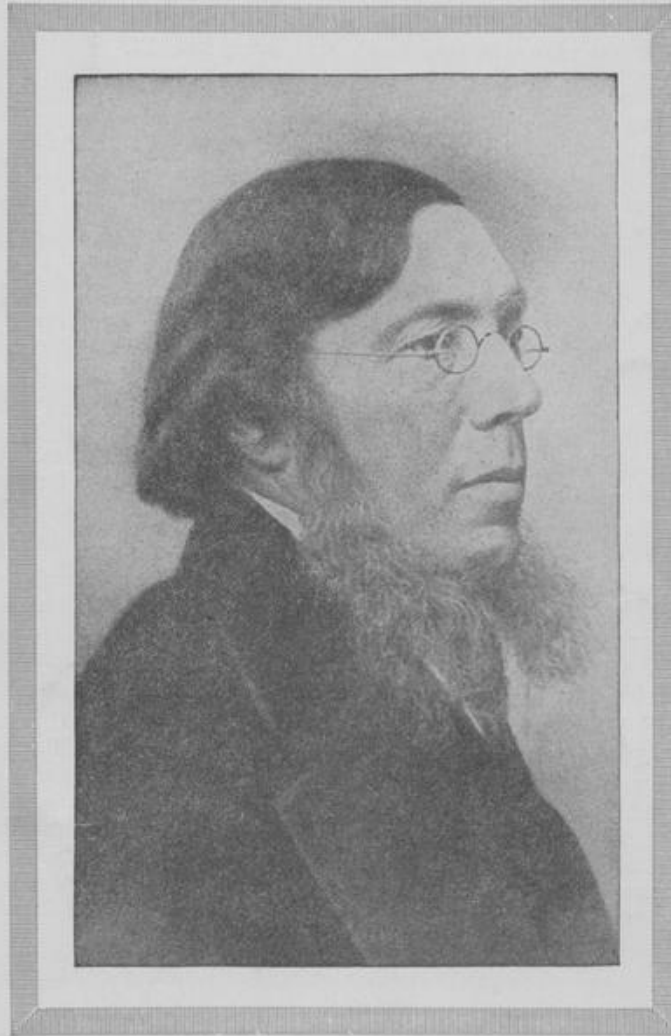
*Judy Gawley*

# O S A N C T I S S I M A

Op. 302, No. 2

*By*

FRITZ SPINDLER



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FINGERING, PHRASING, PEDALING, AND INSTRUCTIVE  
ANNOTATIONS ON POETIC IDEA, FORM AND  
STRUCTURE, AND METHOD OF STUDY

By W. S. B. MATHEWS

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No. 607

# PROGRESSIVE SERIES COMPOSITIONS


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## "O SANCTISSIMA"

EVENING HYMN TO THE VIRGIN  
Transcribed in Fantasia Form for Piano

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—FRITZ SPINDLER.

Born at Wurzbach, Germany, in 1817.  
Died at Dresden, Germany, in 1906.

HO composed the melody is perhaps no longer certain. It is a very old Sicilian melody, which has been sung as the evening hymn to the Virgin, in all Catholic countries, but most of all in Sicily and southern Italy; from which it has spread into all the world. It is a melody of rare beauty; so reposeful, so sweet, so simply devotional. And, like all really good melodies, it is equally charming when well played as when well sung; except that when the words are sung with it, the melody makes a stronger appeal to the listener.

Fritz Spindler, the composer of this arrangement, was born in the village of Lobenstein, a part of Wurzbach, in 1817, he died in Niederlossnitz, a suburb of Dresden, in 1906, at the very advanced age of eighty-nine.

The father of the composer was a watchmaker, and a very notable practical musician, of the amateur order. He delighted to play dances for the family upon his violin; and the little Fritz began very soon to try and accompany his father upon his violin; but later upon the piano. In this way his musical talent was awakened while very young. Yet his father was far from wishing him to be a musician. Still he gave his ambitious son early instruction from the best local masters in violin, piano and organ. The latter, especially, because he hoped his son would become a clergyman, in which capacity he would have to select his organist and exercise a censorship over the music.

While a willing and very capable student of the old knowledges considered a suitable equipment for a clergyman, the young student found besetment for music becoming ever stronger and stronger. In time his father sent him to Dessau for the technical instruction best calculated to make him a musician and teacher. So he studied with the celebrated Friedrich Schneider, in piano, organ and theory, including composition. So rapid was his mastery of this part of his study, that in two years, he was back again in his native town, but not for long.

In 1841 he removed to Dresden, where he very soon secured an organ position, and attained great local popularity as a teacher of the piano. In this field he found a deficiency of pleasing and melodious material suitable for the young. And here he set to work. In this department of effort he composed in the course of his long life upwards of 300 opus numbers, containing, very likely some twelve-hundred separate pieces of piano music, of moderate difficulty. Naturally among so very many, Homer sometimes nodded; but the world has sifted out of the whole, a large number of excellent pieces, easy to play and fit to love. They range all the way from the easiest pieces for a very young player up to drawing room pieces suitable for players of considerable distinction.

He went farther. He composed several symphonies, and other compositions for orchestra, quite a deal of chamber music and one concerto for piano and orchestra.

He is entitled to the credit of having made the student world a brighter place for his having lived in it, and working so wisely for its developing powers.

**FORM AND STRUCTURE.**—The melody in its plainest form consists of two strains. We have the first strain in measures 1 to 8; then this strain is repeated an octave higher in measures 9 to 16. In measures 17 to 24 we have the second strain, which is itself repeated an octave higher, measures 25 to 32. This completes the melody.

Division B, in measures 32 to 40, carries the first strain, playing the melody with the thumb of the right hand and accompanying it in 8th notes; in measures 41 to 48 the second strain is repeated, with 8th notes in the bass.

Division C, has the melody of strain 1 in the soprano voice (played with 5th finger) accompanied by 16th notes, measures 49 to 56; then measures 57 to 64 the melody again with the thumb, but with accompaniment of 16th notes.

Division D, is an interlude, modulating to the key of D Flat, measures 65 to 68.

Division E, measures 69 to 76, has the melody of strain 1 played by the right hand thumb, and accompanied by triplets of 8ths in chords. In measures 77 to 84 the second strain is treated in 16ths, the melody lying in the upper voice but not much accented.

Division G is a modulating interlude to bring us back to the original key of F.

Division H, measures 88 to 106, has the entire melody most of the time in octaves, and an accompaniment of arpeggios running two octaves.

Division I the melody again returns to its original form to bring us back to repose.

Thus in the entire piece we have had the original hymn some six times through, in different combinations of accompaniment and one change of key.

**HOW TO STUDY.**—Begin by trying to decide upon the proper speed. The easiest way of doing this will be to take a tape measure and swing it as a pendulum 21 or 22 inches long. Each swing is the time of a quarter note.

In Division A there are two very important points:

(ONE) Be sure to play the left hand chords *precisely with those of the right hand*, and not in the way some describe as "cross-eyed"—that is, the left hand playing first. This fault is extremely common; avoid it.

(TWO) Be sure to give the chords a singing effect, and let the melody stand out a trifle fuller than the other tones of the chord, so that it will sound like singing.

In Melody B, the thumb has to accent strongly enough to give the melody this sustained and singing effect. This whole division is rather quiet and not too loud.

In Melody C the right hand 5th finger must accent strongly enough to bring out the soprano melody; it must also hold its key the full time of the half note, except the momentary shortening while the 5th finger is placing itself for the next note. This break must be covered up by using the pedal as marked in the brackets below the notes. The pedal is expected to prolong the melody until the very instant its next note is to sound. It is optional whether to take it immediately after the melody tone is sounded, or to wait until just before the bass finger leaves its low key. It is desirable to prolong the low bass however. In measures 57 to 64 the accent changes and the melody is brought out by the thumb. Here it is best to take the pedal just after sounding each melody quarter or half, and holding it until the next melody tone is on the point of sounding, as shown by the pedal brackets in measures 57. The pedal will greatly improve the blending of melody and accompaniment.

In the interlude (D) use pedal after each chord.

In Melody E, play rather softly, yet be sure to accent the melody with the thumb so that it sings as long as it is timed to do. The chords very light, and be sure to keep up to the time, so that each half note occupies no more than two beats of the pendulum 22 inches long. In this strain you can, if you like, use the soft pedal (with the left foot, holding it entirely through from say measures 69 to 76.) In the measures 77 to 84 the melody lies in the upper right hand note, as you will find out by experimenting. Give the first new note in this place a slight accent, just enough to locate the melody but do not make it stand out.

Properly speaking, the Melody of Division F closes with the D Flats in measure 84. Then begin measure 85 forte, and be careful to bring out the melody which the left hand plays when it crosses over the right, in measure 85, and again when it answers the right, in measures 85, 86, 87.

Division H begins brilliantly, the melody strong and the arpeggio figure also played forte. This whole division must have quite a triumphant effect. It is the climax of the song.

Division I is to be subdued, but the strange harmonies clear and certain; and the arpeggios in measures 115 and 116, lightly and well blended, by using the pedal quite through the two measures. Also be careful to use the pedal to connect the last chord in measure 117 with the chord in measure 118. Prolong this last chord.

This lovely transcription affords most productive practice in expressive playing and carrying a melody. It is as useful as it is delightful.

# O SANCTISSIMA. FANTAISIE-TRANSCRIPTION.

Revised and annotated by  
W. S. B. Mathews.

FRITZ SPINDLER, Op 302, No. 2.

Lento e festoso.  $\text{♩} = 21''$

A.

0 Sane - tis - si - ma 3 pur - tis - si - ma Dul - cis Vir - go Ma -  
1 2 3 4 5 6  
7 ri - - 8  
9 10 11 12 13  
14 15 16 Ma - ter a - ma - ta in - tem - e  
17 18 19  
20 ra - ta 21 O - ra 22 O - ra pro no - bis. 25 26  
27 28 29 30 31 32

B.

mf 33 34 35 36 37 *cresc.*

38 39 *dim.* 40 41 *p* 42

43 44 45 46 47

C.

48 49 *f* 50

51 52 53 *cresc.*

54 55 56

57 58 59

60 61 62

63 64 65 66

67 68 69 70

71 72

8

73 74

*Ca* \* *Ca* \* *Ca* \* *Ca* \* *Ca* \*

8

75 76 77

*dim.*

*F.*

*p*

*Ca* \* *Ca* \* *Ca* \* *Ca* \*

78 79 80

*Ca* \* *Ca* \* *Ca* \*

*dimin.*

81 82 83

*Ca* \* *Ca* \* *Ca* \* *Ca* \* *Ca* \*

*rit. e molto cresc.*

**G.**

84 85 86 87

*f*

*Ca* \*



H. *ff* 88 89 90

91 92

93 94

95 96

97 98 99

100 101

102 103

104 105 *dim.*

106 107 108 109 110 111 112

*p* *pp* *mf*

113 114 115 116 117 118

*f* *p* *rall.*

RECITATION QUESTIONS UPON "O SANCTISSIMA."

- 1.—What is the Key in which this piece begins?  
Ans.
- 2.—About how fast should the half notes of the Melody be played?  
Ans.
- 3.—How long is the Melody, how many measures in all?  
Ans.
- 4.—What is the difference between the Melody as given in measures 1-8 and in measures 9-16?  
Ans.
- 5.—With what Finger is the Melody principally played in measures 33-40?  
Ans.
- 6.—With what Finger in measures 49 to 56?  
Ans.
- 7.—Is the pedal used at all in these parts of the piece?  
Ans.
- 8.—What Finger principally plays Melody in measures 57 to 64?  
Ans.
- 9.—What is the Key in measures 69 to 84?  
Ans.
- 10.—What is the Key in measure 88 to the end?  
Ans.
- 11.—Is the Melody played in Octaves anywhere in this piece? If so where?  
Ans.
- 12.—What parts of this Piece made you the most trouble?  
Ans.
- 13.—Which parts did you like best?  
Ans.
- 14.—What was the original use of this melody?  
Ans.
- 15.—Who was Fritz Spindler, and for what was he celebrated?  
Ans.

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