

"Najdroższe życie moje"

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This imitative duo is a setting of text taken from the letters of Fryderyk Chopin to Tytus Woyciechowski from the years 1830-1831. Rather than setting an excerpt of a single letter, the text of each phrase has been taken from a different source and combined to form a new, cohesive letter, albeit a short one. Thus, the first phrase is a greeting, the second and third phrases are from the body of two letters and are the longest phrases of the piece, while the fourth phrase is the closing. The full text of the letters is available on the website of Narodowy Instytut Fryderyka Chopina (The Chopin Institute).

Musically, the piece was inspired by Chopin's Op. 17 No. 4 Mazurka in A Minor. The opening subject comes from the introduction of the mazurka (spliced with later material), and the order and type of cadences reference significant aspects of the mazurka. Although this piece is in the Dorian mode, there is significant emphasis on the pitches A and C. After the opening cadence to D, the second phrase prepares a cadence to A which is evaded when the bass voice moves to C. The third phrase builds on this evasion by cadencing to C, rather than A. In setting up an expectation of A that is denied, the piece alludes to the tonal processes of Op. 17 No. 4, which features a tonally ambiguous introduction and concludes melodically on the pitch C. Although the ending of this duo is not exactly the same as the opening, the use of the opening subject mimics the way the A minor mazurka ends with the same material with which it began. There are other references to Op. 17 No. 4 throughout this piece for those interested in looking; these are just some of the most salient ones.