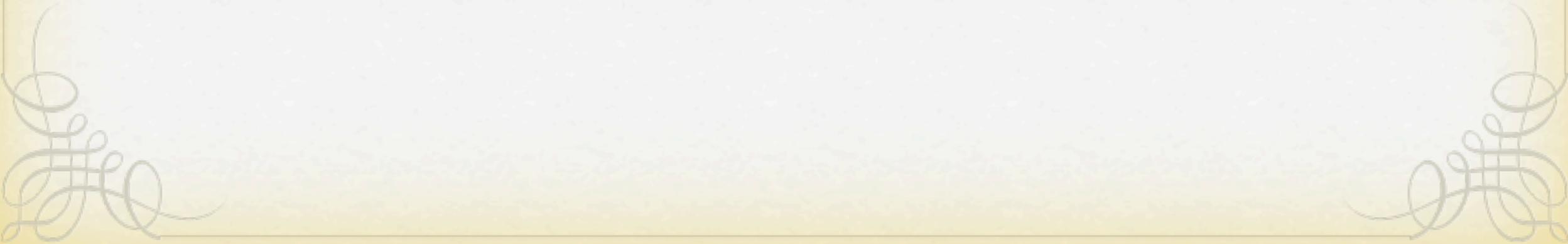


# THREE CENTURIES OF SONATAS

## 3 - The Late Classical Sonata

*Beethoven and Schubert*



SONATE  
für das Pianoforte  
von  
L. van BEETHOVEN.  
Op. 53.

SONATA  
for the Pianoforte  
by  
L. van BEETHOVEN.  
Op. 53.

Allegro con brio. M.M. ♩ = 168.

In the late Classical era (from about 1800 through the 1820s) the sonata completed its evolution into the genre we know today, which is to say:

- A work for a solo instrument or instrument with accompaniment
- In 3 or 4 movements
- Often beginning with a movement in *sonata-allegro form*
- Designed as the kingpin of a recital

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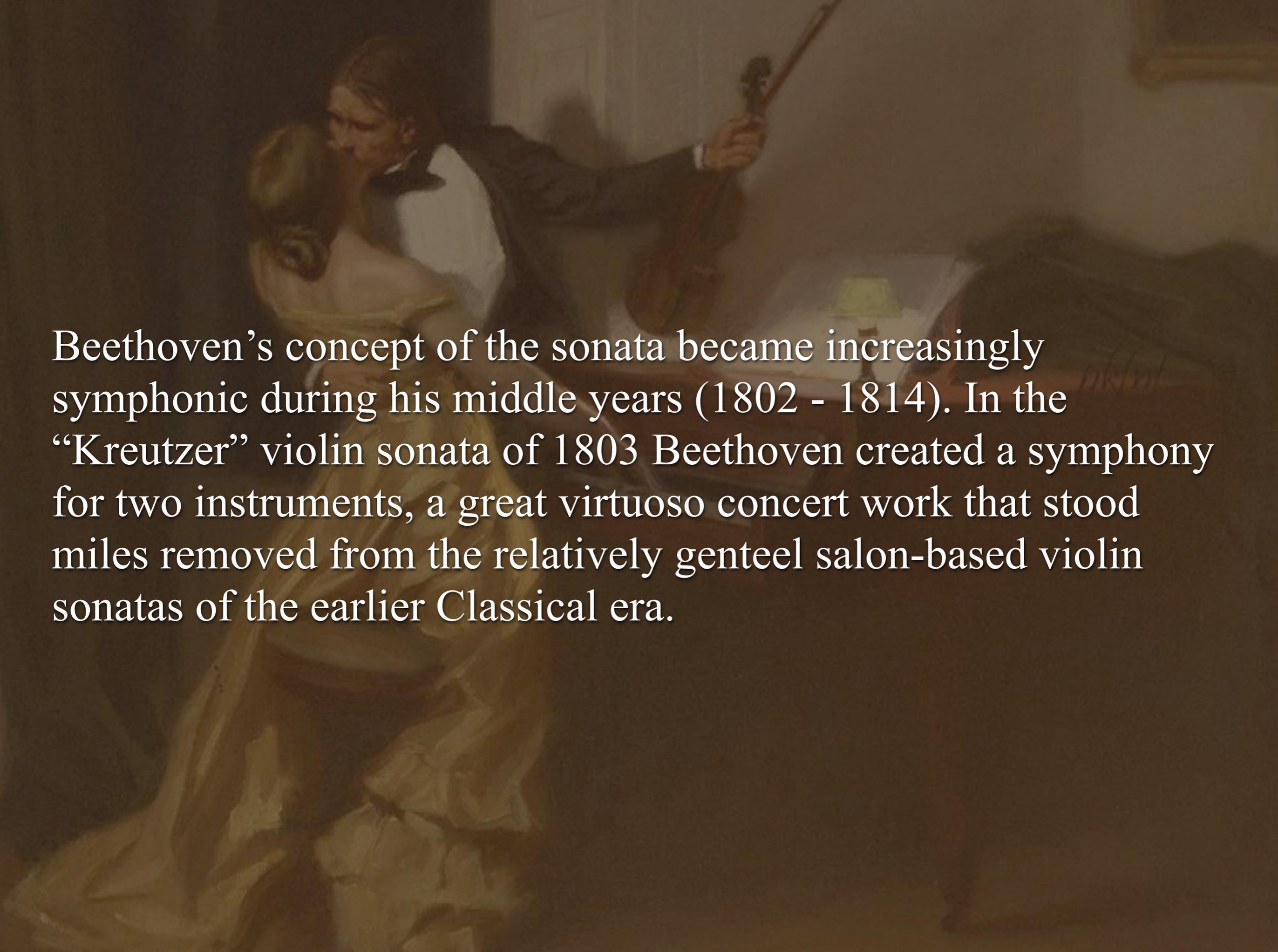
Allegro con brio. M.M. ♩ = 168.

It should come as no surprise that the composer most directly responsible for the final stage of the sonata's evolution was Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827).

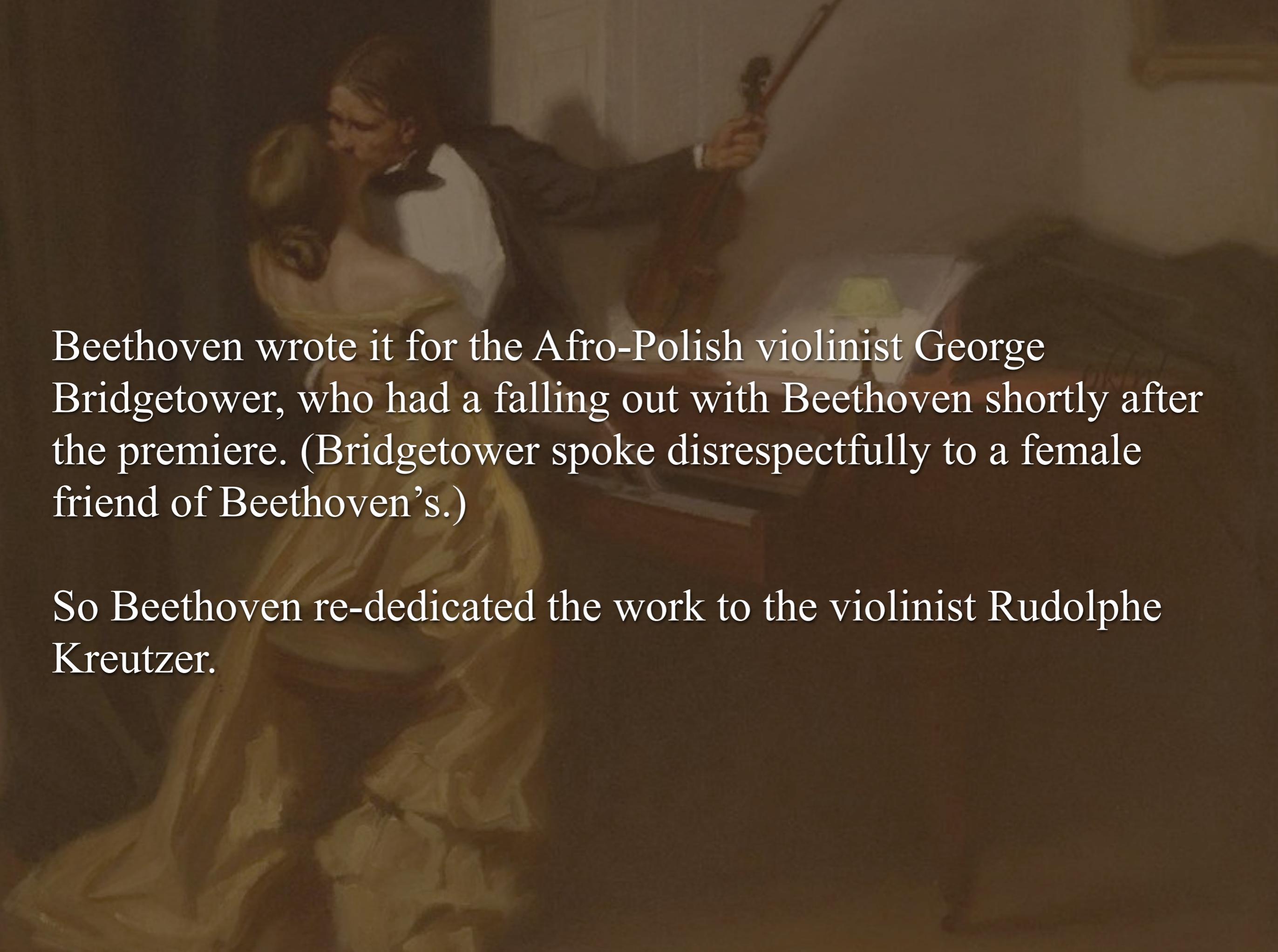
Beethoven wrote sonatas for solo piano, violin & piano, and cello & piano. All are bedrock repertory.



Ludwig van Beethoven:  
Violin Sonata in A, Op. 47 “Kreutzer” I - Adagio-Presto  
Henryk Szeryng, violin / Arthur Rubinstein, piano

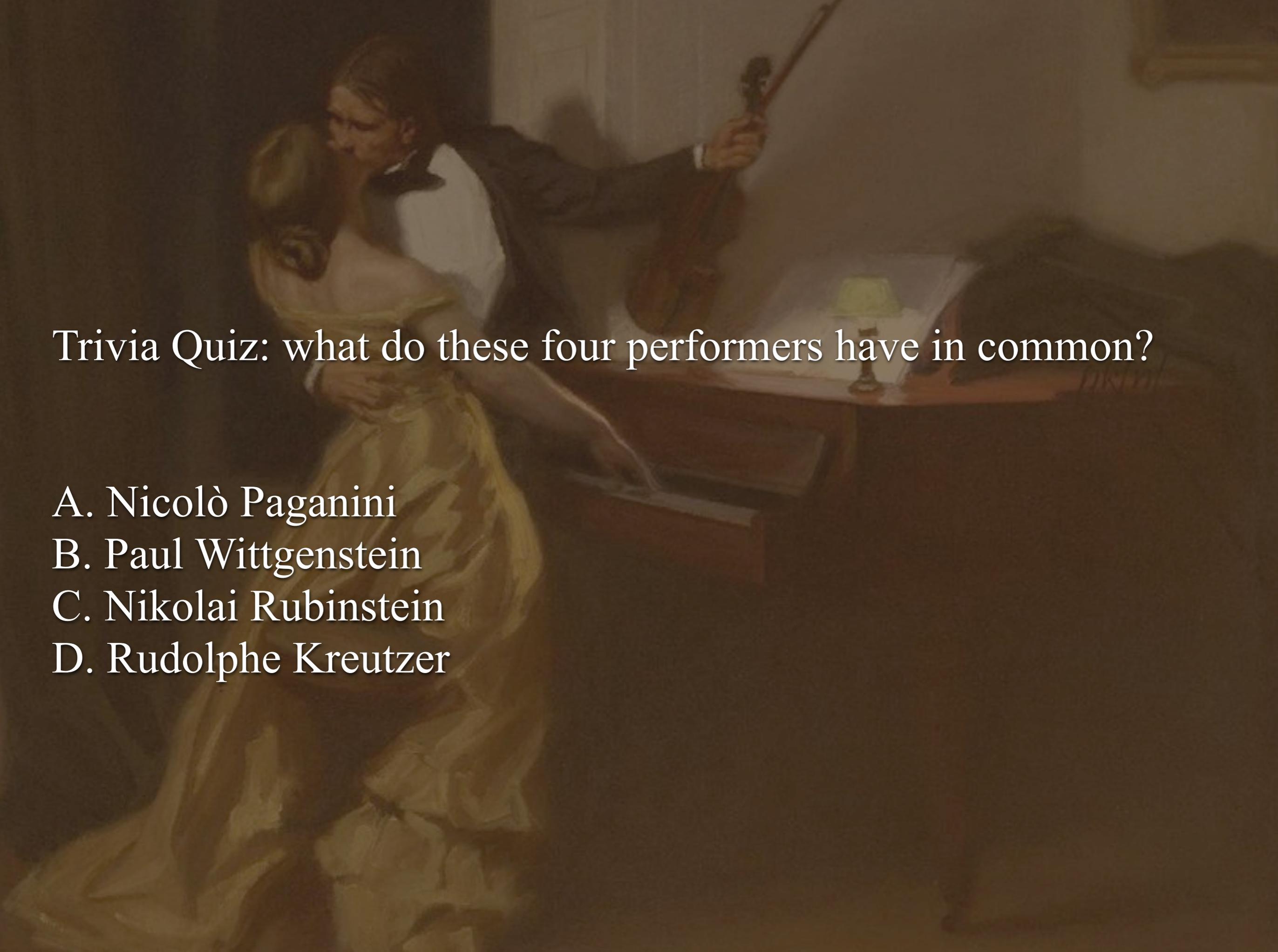
A painting of a man in a dark suit playing a violin. He is standing in a room with a lamp on a table in the background. The scene is dimly lit, with the light from the lamp illuminating the man and his instrument. The background shows a window and some furniture, suggesting an indoor setting.

Beethoven's concept of the sonata became increasingly symphonic during his middle years (1802 - 1814). In the "Kreutzer" violin sonata of 1803 Beethoven created a symphony for two instruments, a great virtuoso concert work that stood miles removed from the relatively genteel salon-based violin sonatas of the earlier Classical era.

A painting depicting a man in a dark suit and white shirt playing a violin. He is standing and looking down at the instrument. In the background, there is a desk with a lamp and some papers. The scene is dimly lit, with the lamp providing the main source of light.

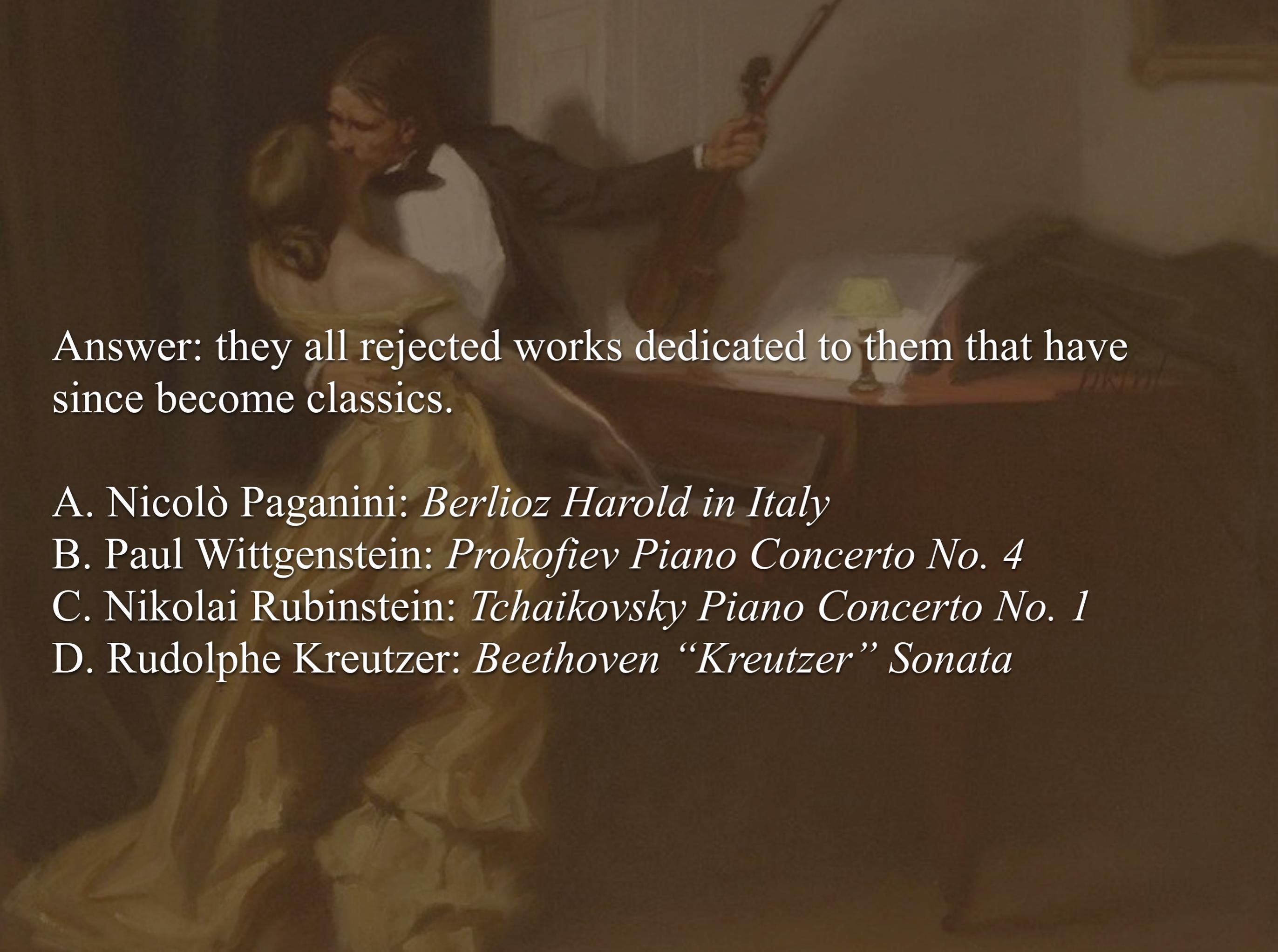
Beethoven wrote it for the Afro-Polish violinist George Bridgetower, who had a falling out with Beethoven shortly after the premiere. (Bridgetower spoke disrespectfully to a female friend of Beethoven's.)

So Beethoven re-dedicated the work to the violinist Rudolphe Kreutzer.

A painting depicting a man in a dark tuxedo playing a violin and a woman in a long, flowing yellow dress dancing in a room. In the background, there is a desk with a lamp and some papers. The scene is dimly lit, with the lamp providing a soft glow.

Trivia Quiz: what do these four performers have in common?

- A. Nicolò Paganini
- B. Paul Wittgenstein
- C. Nikolai Rubinstein
- D. Rudolphe Kreutzer



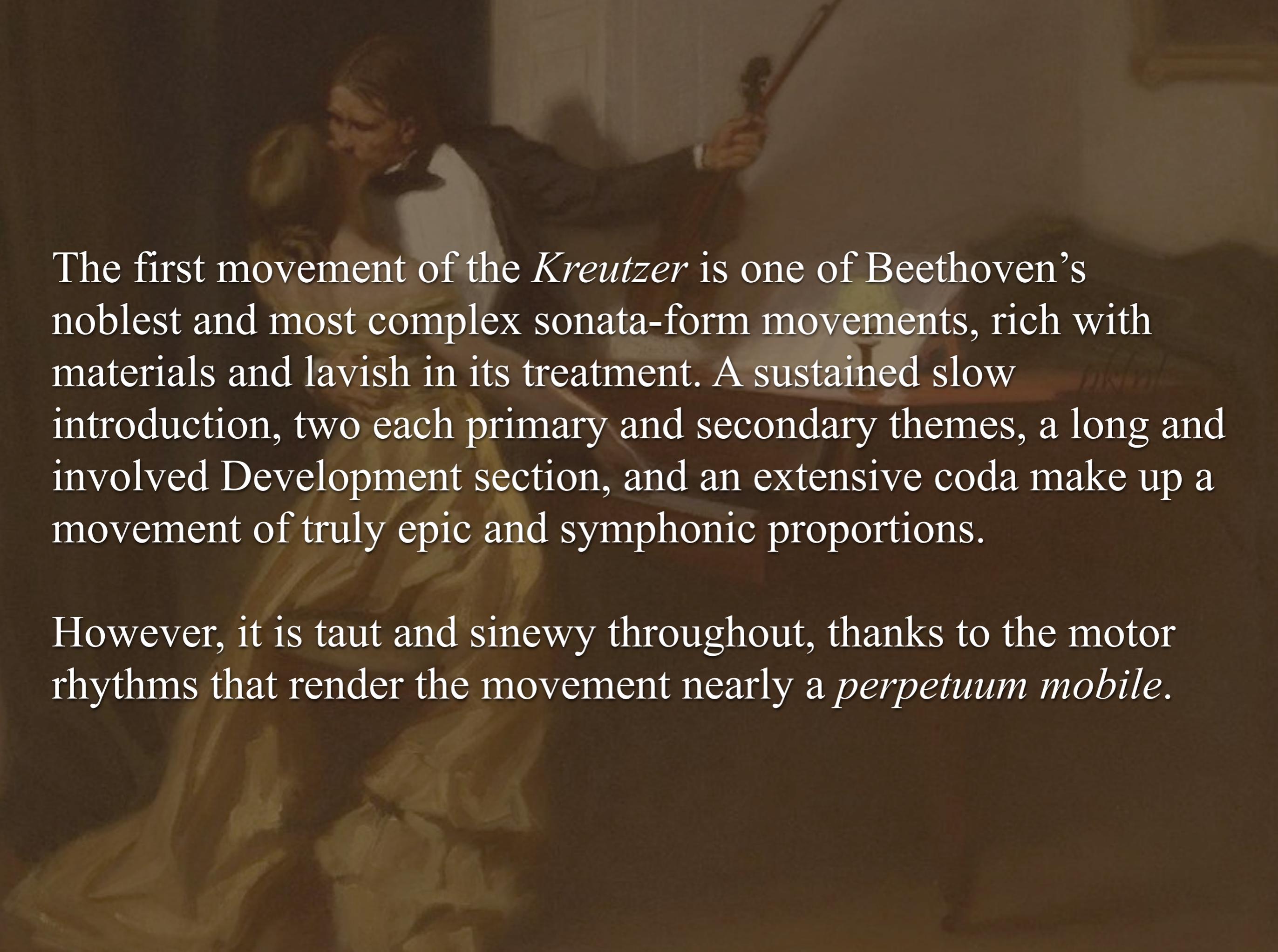
Answer: they all rejected works dedicated to them that have since become classics.

A. Nicolò Paganini: *Berlioz Harold in Italy*

B. Paul Wittgenstein: *Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 4*

C. Nikolai Rubinstein: *Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1*

D. Rudolphe Kreutzer: *Beethoven "Kreutzer" Sonata*

A painting depicting a violinist in a dark suit playing a violin. The violinist is shown in profile, looking down at the instrument. The background is a soft, warm-toned interior. The overall mood is one of intense concentration and artistic expression.

The first movement of the *Kreutzer* is one of Beethoven's noblest and most complex sonata-form movements, rich with materials and lavish in its treatment. A sustained slow introduction, two each primary and secondary themes, a long and involved Development section, and an extensive coda make up a movement of truly epic and symphonic proportions.

However, it is taut and sinewy throughout, thanks to the motor rhythms that render the movement nearly a *perpetuum mobile*.

## Introduction — *Adagio sostenuto* (slow and sustained)

*Oa*

Violin solo in double and triple stops

*Oa'*

Piano answers

*Ob*

Dialog between violin and piano

*Oc*

Recitative-like passage with soft interjections in the piano

## Exposition (Primary and Transition)

1Pa

Violin; has an anticipatory quality; ends in a pause

1Pa'

Piano; also anticipatory; ends with a cadenza-like flourish

1Pb

Violin; has a transitional quality, leading to ...

2Pa

Dialog between violin and piano; violin leads

2Pa'

Repeats with the piano taking the lead

2Pb

Flamboyant passagework in piano; violin punctuations

2Pb'

Repeated a bit higher

2Pc

Starts as a repeat but is extended

1Ta

Violin punctuates piano chords

1Tb

Piano and violin in passagework together, leading to ...

## Exposition (Secondary 1 and Transition)

1Sa Hymn-like melody (major mode) in violin

1Sb Melody continues in violin

1Sa' Piano takes the melody

O Sudden *adagio*, like the opening, pauses, then ...

2Ta Active passagework in piano; brusque violin entries

2Ta' Repeated a bit higher, now extended

2Tb *Brillante* piano passagework with violin punctuations

2Pb' Violin joins in the passagework, extended to ...

## Exposition (Secondary 2 and Closing)

2Sa

Strong, propulsive melody (minor mode) in piano

2Sb

Violin adds *pizzicato* (plucked) punctuations

2Sa'

Violin takes the melody with piano left hand

2Sb'

Melody continues in both instruments

2Sb''

Repeat and extension of the melody, to ...

Ka

Closing theme is clearly derived from 2P

Ka'

Repeated with extensions, to the close

## Development Part 1 (Based on 2S)

2Sa

In F Major, piano solo

2Sa

In G Minor, violin leads

2Sa

In E-flat Major, piano leads

2Saf

Fragments of 2Sa in multiple keys:

C Minor   F Minor   B<sup>b</sup> Minor   E<sup>b</sup> Major   A<sup>b</sup> Major

Then in numerous rapidly-changing keys, leading to ...

2Sa

In D<sup>b</sup> Major, a strong and near-complete statement, in violin

2Sb

Still in violin, a bit extended, leading to ...

## Development Part 2 (Based on 2P)

2P*a*

In F Minor, piano with violin continuation

2P*a*

In C Minor, also piano with violin continuation

2P*a*

In G Minor, piano throughout with violin punctuations

2P*a*

In D Minor, piano and violin together, leading to ...

## Retransition to Recapitulation

2Pb

Piano and violin, *fortissimo* (very loud), in near-unison

Violin in long melodic sweeps, slows to ...

Bridge passage; regains tempo, then again slows to ...

## Coda

Soft passagework begins in piano

1Pa

In both instruments, unison (almost like a recap!)

Calms down and descends to ...

2Pa

Reminiscent of 2P; calms down yet again to ...

*Adagio*; subdued and mysterious

Original tempo returns; brilliant passagework to close.

## Introduction — *Adagio sostenuto* (slow and sustained)

**Oa**

**Violin solo in double and triple stops**

Oa'

Piano answers

Ob

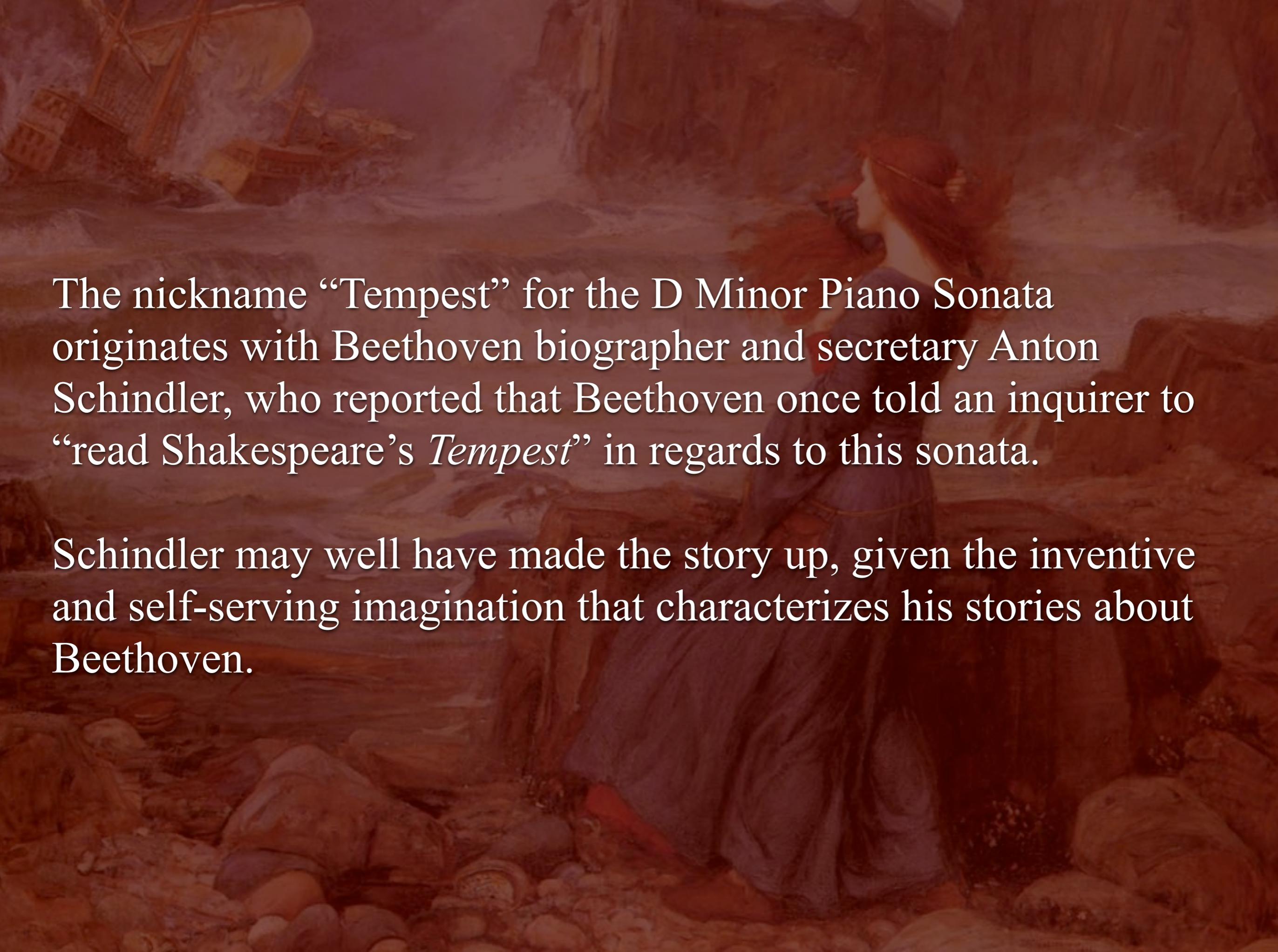
Dialog between violin and piano

Oc

Recitative-like passage with soft interjections in the piano



Ludwig van Beethoven  
Piano Sonata Op. 31 No. 2 "Tempest" III - Allegretto  
Wilhelm Kempff, piano

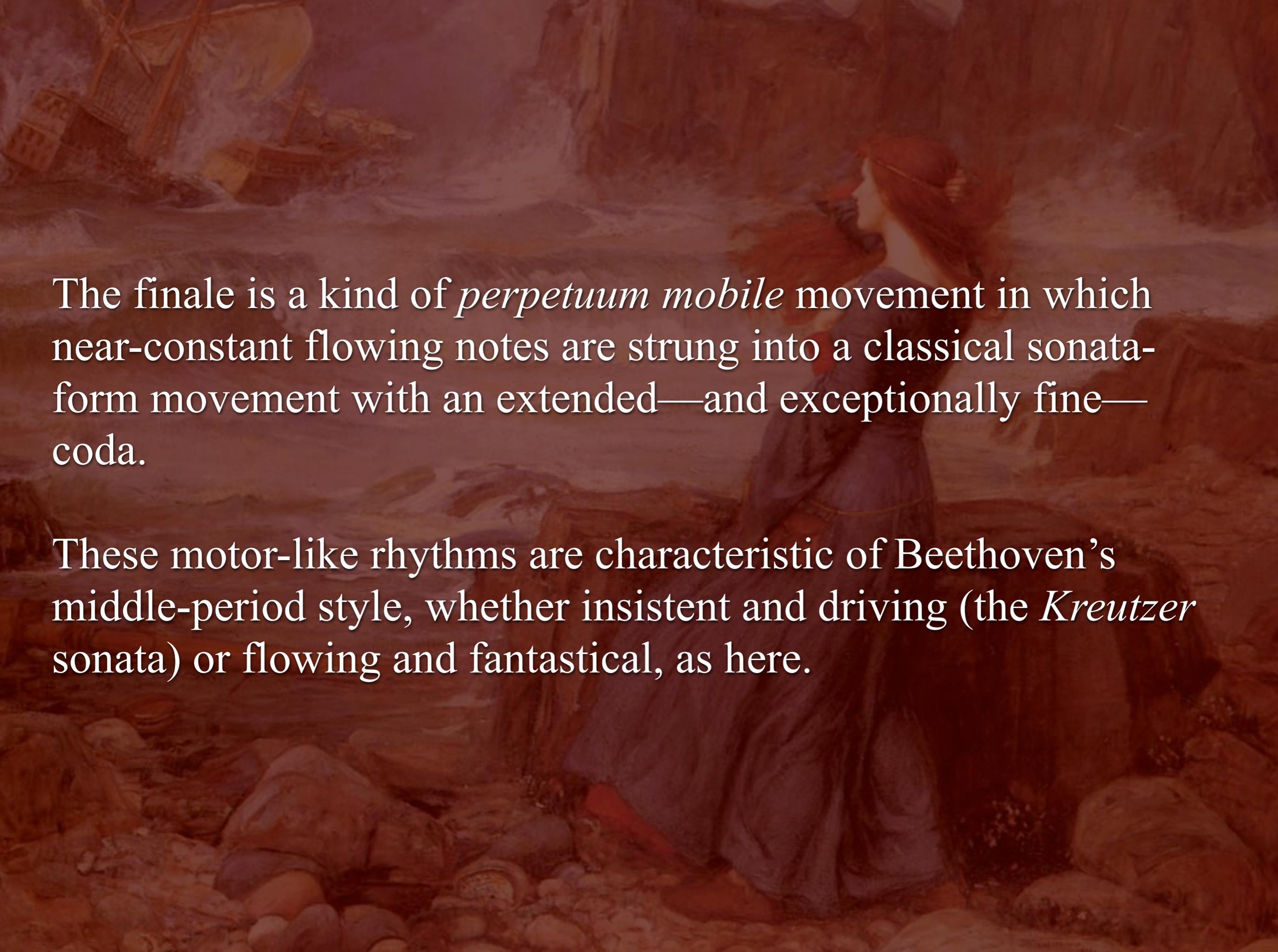
The background of the slide is a painting of a woman in a blue dress standing on a rocky shore, looking out at a stormy sea with a ship in the distance. The scene is dramatic and atmospheric, with a dark, stormy sky and turbulent waves. The woman is the central figure, her back to the viewer as she gazes across the water. In the distance, a ship is visible, struggling against the waves. The overall mood is one of isolation and contemplation.

The nickname “Tempest” for the D Minor Piano Sonata originates with Beethoven biographer and secretary Anton Schindler, who reported that Beethoven once told an inquirer to “read Shakespeare’s *Tempest*” in regards to this sonata.

Schindler may well have made the story up, given the inventive and self-serving imagination that characterizes his stories about Beethoven.

Beethoven would never have posed as a Shakespeare scholar; but neither would he have misled by the fairy-tale element in Shakespeare's last plays into regarding them as consisting only of mellow sunset and milk of human kindness. With all the tragic power of its first movement the D minor Sonata is, like Prospero, almost as far beyond tragedy as it is beyond mere foul weather. It will do you no harm to think of Miranda at bars 31–38 of the slow movement; but people who want to identify Ariel and Caliban and the castaways, good and villainous, may as well confine their attention to the exploits of the Scarlet Pimpernel when the *Eroica* or the C minor Symphony is being played.

—Donald Francis Tovey

The background is a painting of a woman in a blue dress standing on a rocky shore, looking out at a large sailing ship on the water. The scene is rendered in a soft, painterly style with a warm, reddish-brown color palette. The woman is in the foreground, her back to the viewer, looking towards the sea. The ship is in the middle ground, and the water is filled with gentle ripples. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

The finale is a kind of *perpetuum mobile* movement in which near-constant flowing notes are strung into a classical sonata-form movement with an extended—and exceptionally fine—coda.

These motor-like rhythms are characteristic of Beethoven's middle-period style, whether insistent and driving (the *Kreutzer* sonata) or flowing and fantastical, as here.

P

*a b b<sup>1</sup> c*

PT

*a a<sup>1</sup>*

T

*a a<sup>1</sup>*

S

*a a<sup>1</sup>*

K

*a b*

Exposition



Development

P

$a$   $b$   $b^1$

PT

$a$   $a^1$   $a^2$   $a^3$

T

$a$   $a^1$

S

$a$   $a^1$

K

$a$   $b$

Recapitulation

P

*a a a b b<sup>1</sup> c a*

Coda



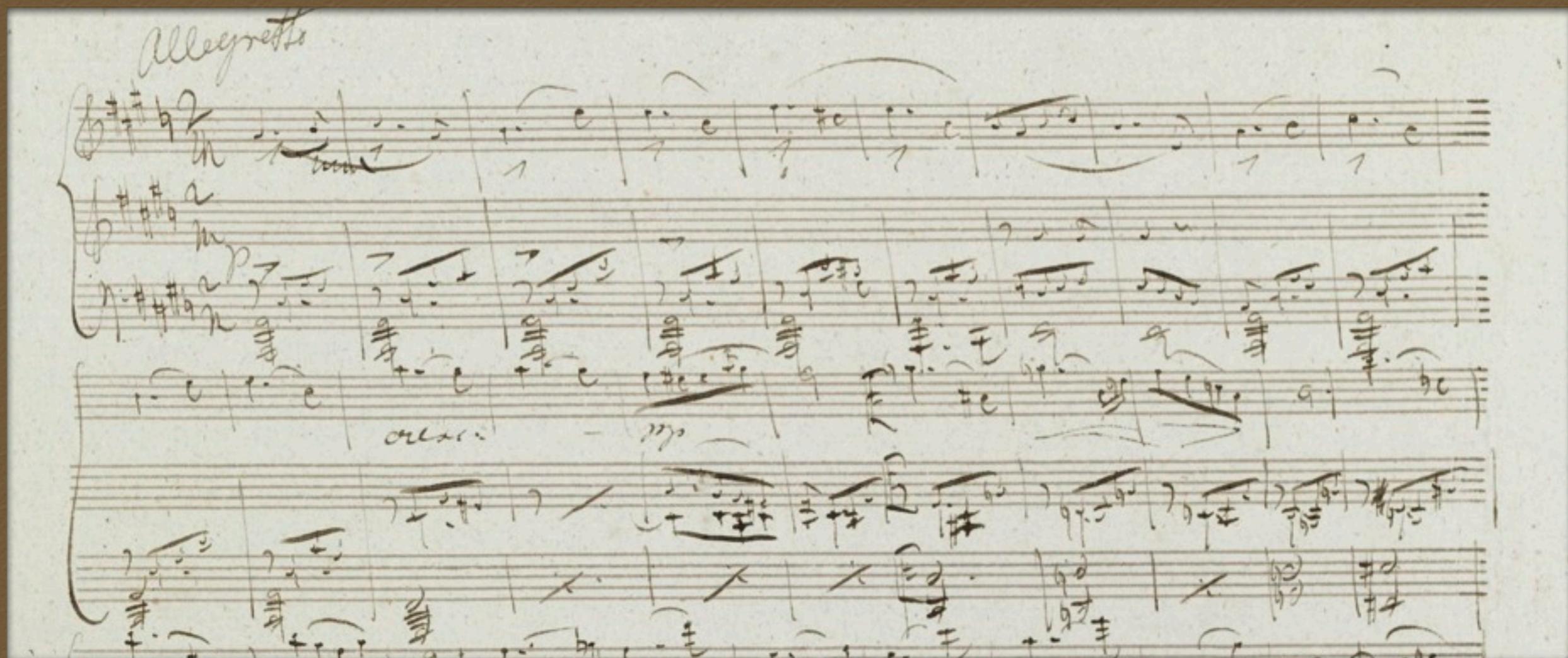
## Exposition

***Pa*** is rippling arpeggios with slow harmonic motion

*Pb* speeds up the harmonic motion; more complex harmony

*Pb'* is almost a verbatim repeat

*Pc* is an expanded final chord



Franz Schubert

Arpeggione Sonata, D. 821: III

Mstislav Rostropovich, cello / Sviatoslav Richter, piano

Allo giusto. <sup>in D moll</sup>

Arie aus der Oper: Alfonso e Estrella.

Adolfo

Piano.  
Forte.

Stumpf zu / jagen die blitzende Stumpf gab mir auch Stumpf zu

Schubert wrote sonatas throughout his short but extraordinarily prolific career. Like so much of his music, they were ignored by the general public for decades.

The piano sonatas in particular had to wait until the 20th century to find their champions and audiences, but they are now among the most beloved works in the repertory.

The *Arpeggione*, a low string instrument that's bowed like a cello but fretted like a guitar, had a brief fling of popularity after its invention around 1823.

Schubert's one sonata has preserved the instrument's name, but the sonata is played on cello these days, since the arpeggione itself is more or less extinct. (There have been some sporadic attempts to revive it, and even to commission new repertory for it, but with only limited success.)



The finale is cast in a late Classical structure that blends Rondo with Sonata-Allegro form.

More important than the form is the juxtaposition of lyrical melancholy with robust energy, a stellar example of Schubert's late style in its full—albeit brief—flower.

This performance was recorded live in 1965, at Benjamin Britten's Aldeburgh Festival.



## Exposition

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Reprise

Excursion  
No. 1

Reprise

## Development

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Excursion  
No. 2

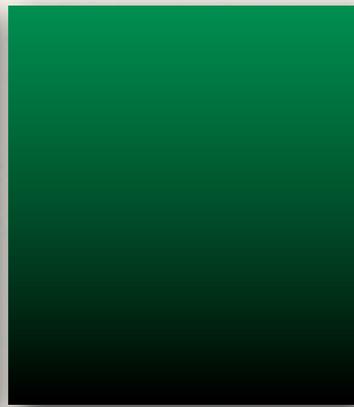
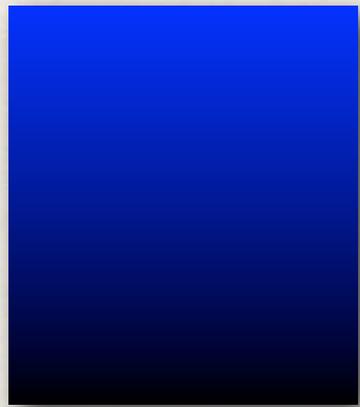
*Transition*

## Recapitulation

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Excursion  
No. 1

Reprise



## Reprise



### **Phrase *a* in cello; lyrical**

Phrase *a*<sup>1</sup> moves to a cadence in minor

Phrase *b* is written in shorter groups

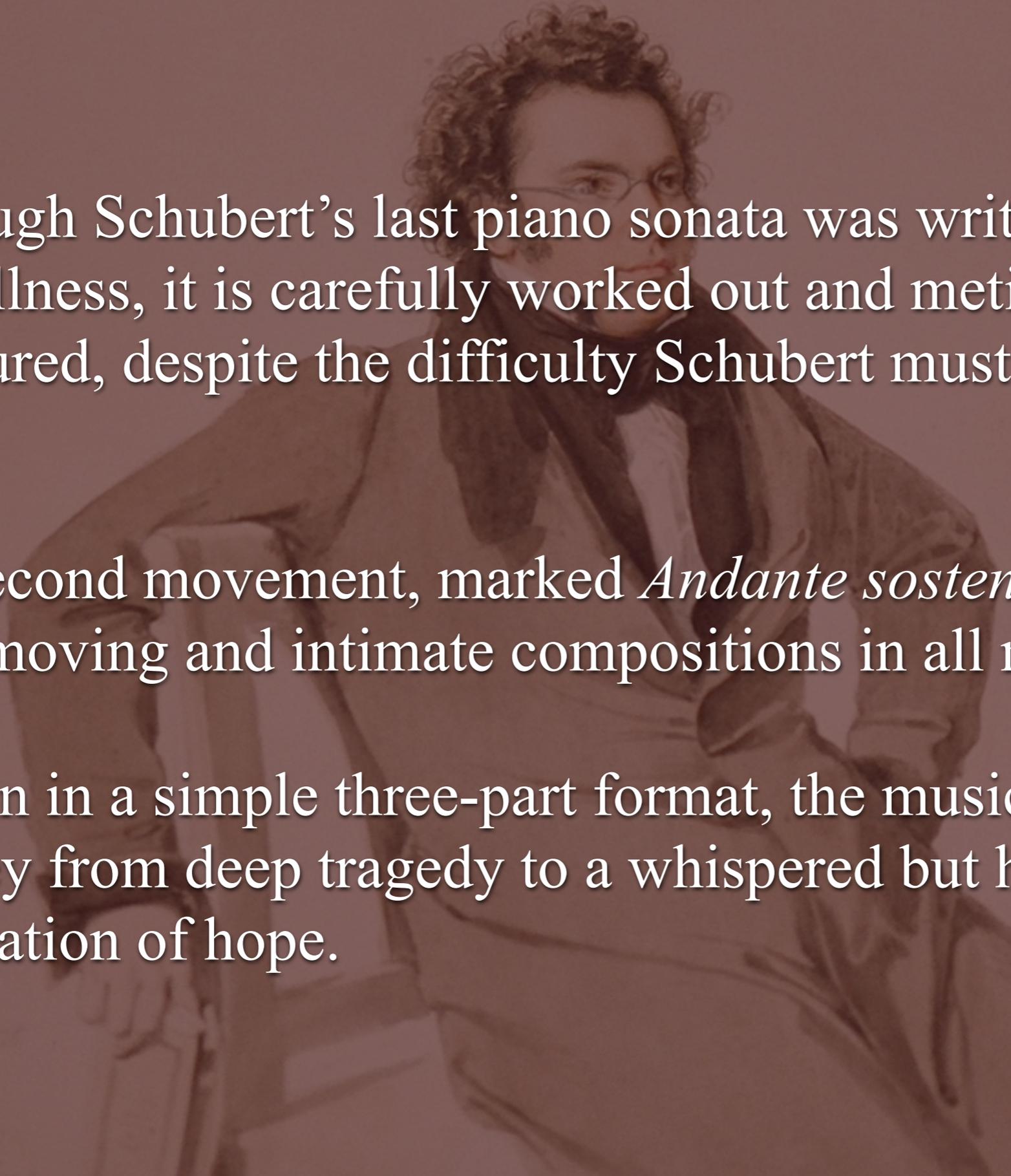
Phrase *c* has a transitional quality about it; descending

Phrase *a* returns in cello

This phrase concludes the entire Reprise



**Franz Schubert**  
**Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960: II**  
Scott Foglesong, piano

A sepia-toned portrait of Franz Schubert, showing him from the chest up. He has curly hair, wears glasses, a dark cravat, and a light-colored coat. The background is a plain, light color.

Although Schubert's last piano sonata was written during his final illness, it is carefully worked out and meticulously structured, despite the difficulty Schubert must have had writing it.

The second movement, marked *Andante sostenuto*, is one of the most moving and intimate compositions in all music.

Written in a simple three-part format, the music traces the journey from deep tragedy to a whispered but heartfelt affirmation of hope.

