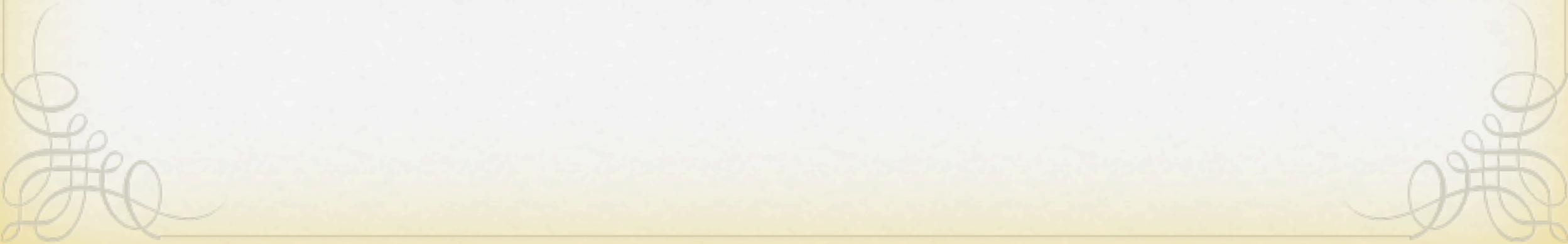
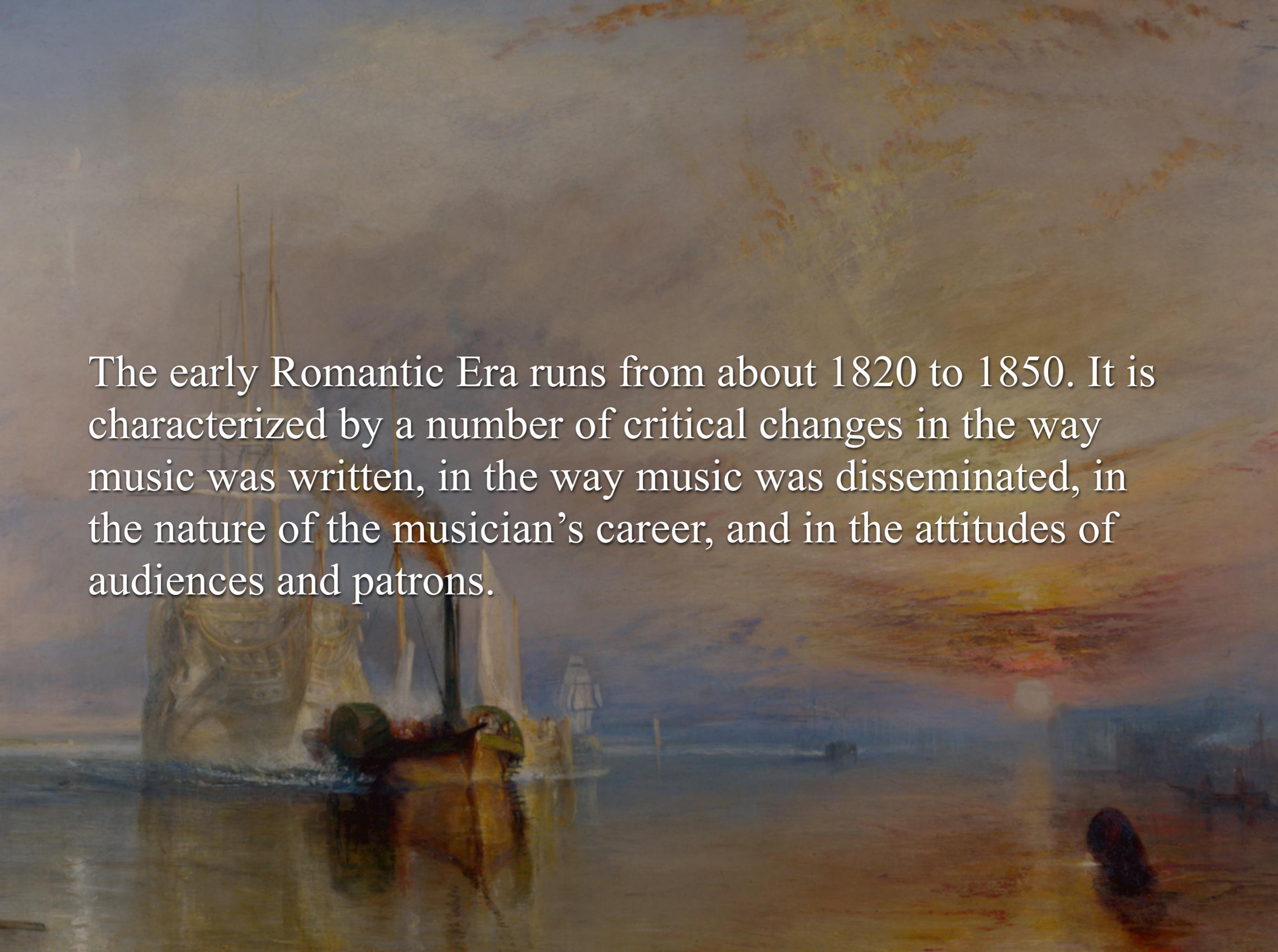


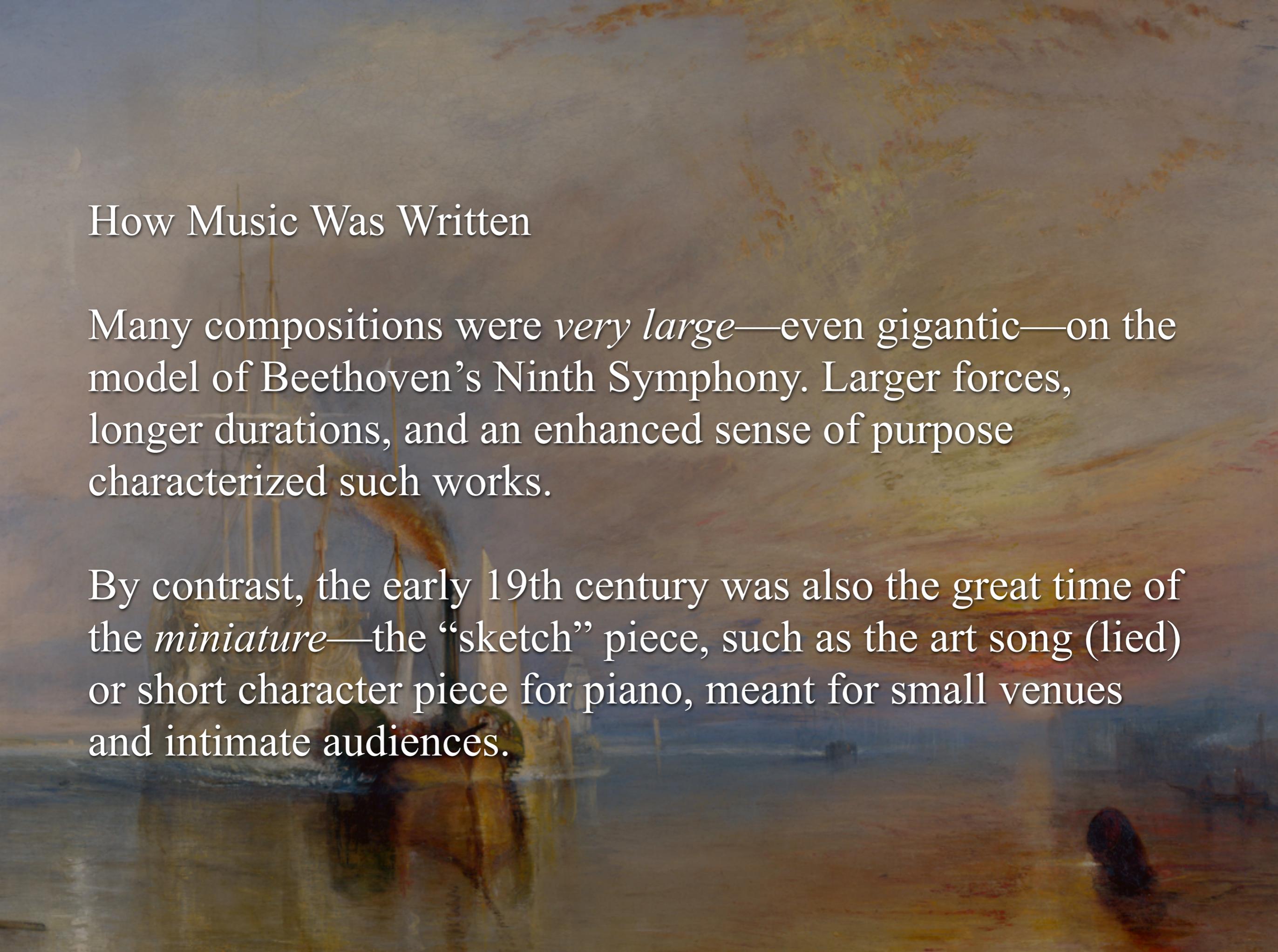
THREE CENTURIES OF SONATAS

4 - The Early Romantic Sonata



The background is a painting of a harbor scene. Several sailing ships with white sails are visible on the water. The sky is a mix of soft, muted colors, including blues, greys, and hints of yellow and orange, suggesting a hazy or overcast day. The water reflects the ships and the sky. The overall style is impressionistic or romantic, with soft edges and a focus on light and atmosphere.

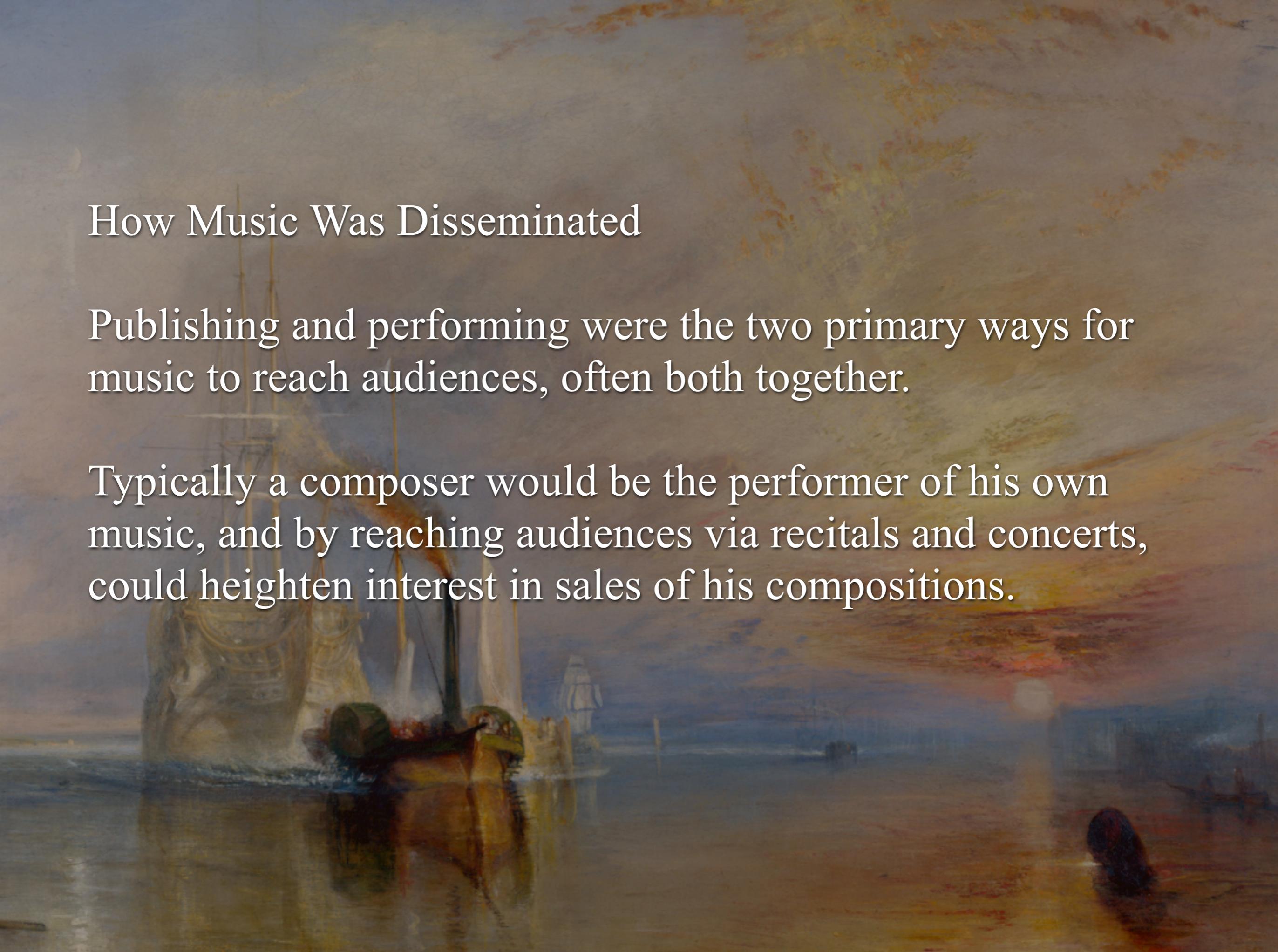
The early Romantic Era runs from about 1820 to 1850. It is characterized by a number of critical changes in the way music was written, in the way music was disseminated, in the nature of the musician's career, and in the attitudes of audiences and patrons.

The background of the slide is a painting of a harbor scene. In the foreground, a dark, rocky island features a lighthouse. Several sailing ships with white sails are visible in the harbor, their masts reaching up. The water is dark and reflects the ships. The sky is a mix of blue and grey, suggesting an overcast day. The overall style is that of a 19th-century maritime painting.

How Music Was Written

Many compositions were *very large*—even gigantic—on the model of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Larger forces, longer durations, and an enhanced sense of purpose characterized such works.

By contrast, the early 19th century was also the great time of the *miniature*—the “sketch” piece, such as the art song (lied) or short character piece for piano, meant for small venues and intimate audiences.

A painting of a harbor scene with several sailing ships on the water under a hazy, golden sky. The ships are reflected in the calm water. The overall tone is warm and atmospheric.

How Music Was Disseminated

Publishing and performing were the two primary ways for music to reach audiences, often both together.

Typically a composer would be the performer of his own music, and by reaching audiences via recitals and concerts, could heighten interest in sales of his compositions.

The Nature of a Musician's Career

The new phenomenon of the touring virtuoso marks a dramatic change from the Classical to Romantic age. High-profile superstars such as Nicolò Paganini (violin) and Franz Liszt (piano) made immense fortunes and became the media darlings of the day, their every move followed breathlessly by journalists and reported to eager readers. Not surprisingly, gossip and innuendo made up the lion's share of the coverage.

But more sober musicians could make a living as touring artists as well, and as the century progressed, a proliferation of conservatories made teaching an increasingly attractive option.

Audiences and Patrons

The new audiences came from all ranks of society, even sometimes the poorest. They wanted to be entertained, but more importantly, they wanted to be *elevated* and *inspired* by the music they heard.

Thus the emphasis on formal logic and taut structures common to Classical composers changed to an emphasis on literary associations and shades of emotion. It was an era in which music was usually *about* something, even music that had been conceived as abstract by its composer.

Composers

A divide began to appear between composers who continued to uphold Classical ideals and those who were of a more avant-garde nature.

Not surprisingly, it was the Classicist composers who composed sonatas, which were increasingly viewed as “prestige” works for the most discriminating audiences.

One can't imagine Hector Berlioz—die-hard revolutionary that he was—writing a sonata, but the genre came naturally to Classically-oriented composers such as Mendelssohn and Chopin.



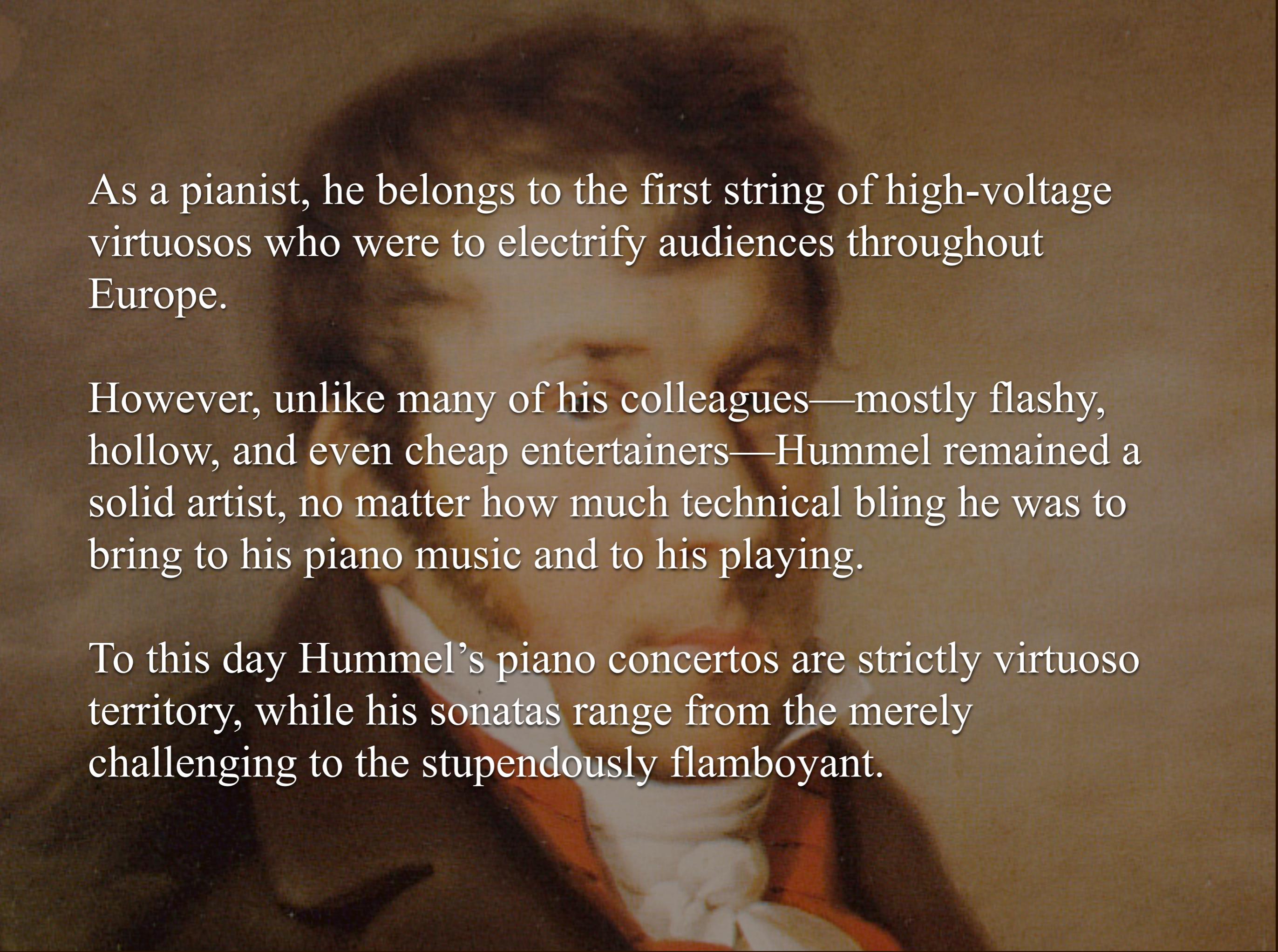
Johann Nepomuk Hummel:
Piano Sonata No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 13
Howard Shelley, piano

A portrait of Johann Nepomuk Hummel, a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark coat and a white cravat. The portrait is the background of the slide.

Johann Nepomuk Hummel—superior musician, superb pianist, and front-rank composer—was a class act from head to toe.

Born in 1778, he was Beethoven's slightly younger contemporary, and lived until 1837 when the Romantic era was in full swing.

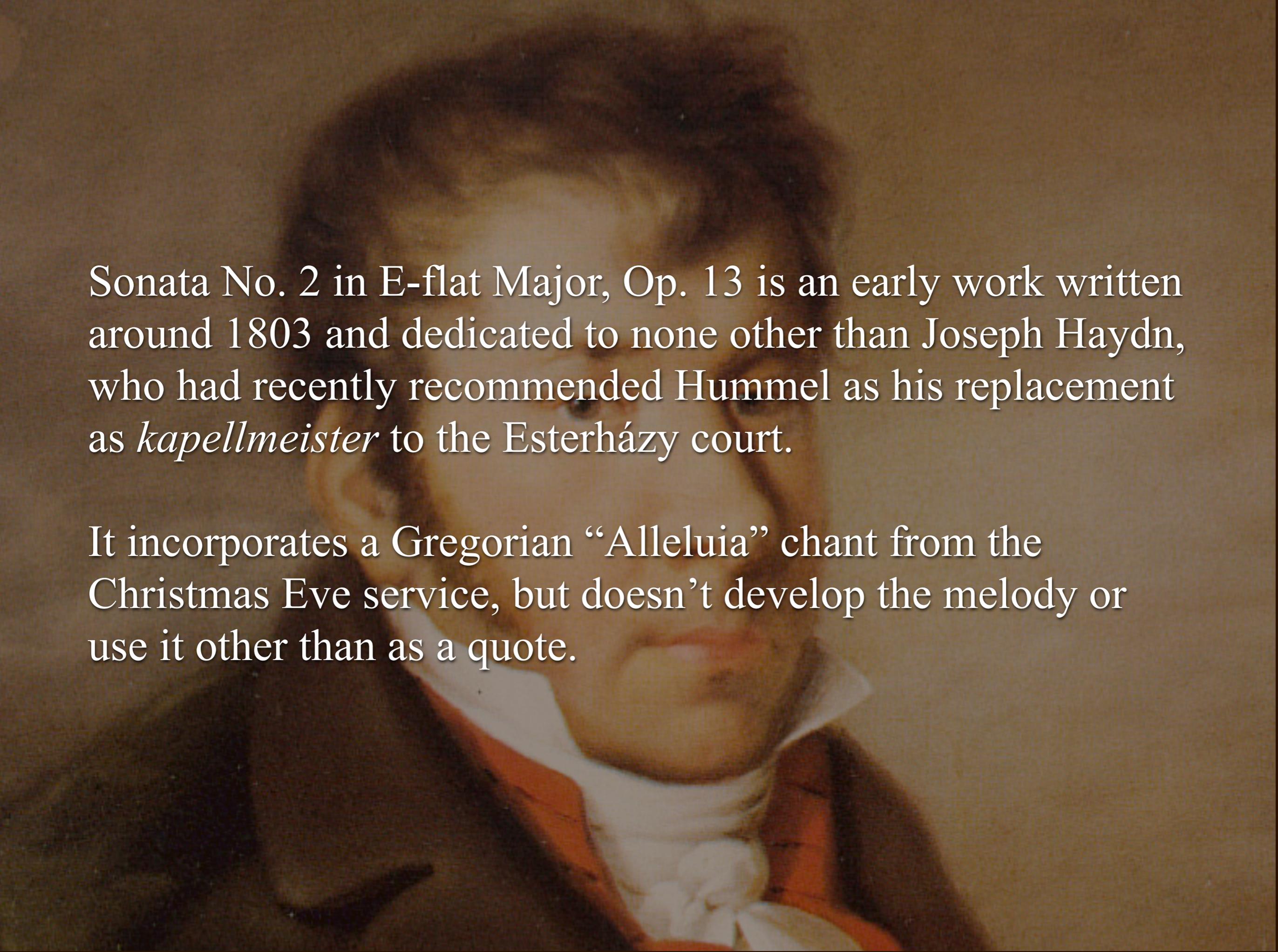
Hummel's music represents the transition from Classic to Romantic, although his ideals and sympathies were more Enlightenment than Romantic.



As a pianist, he belongs to the first string of high-voltage virtuosos who were to electrify audiences throughout Europe.

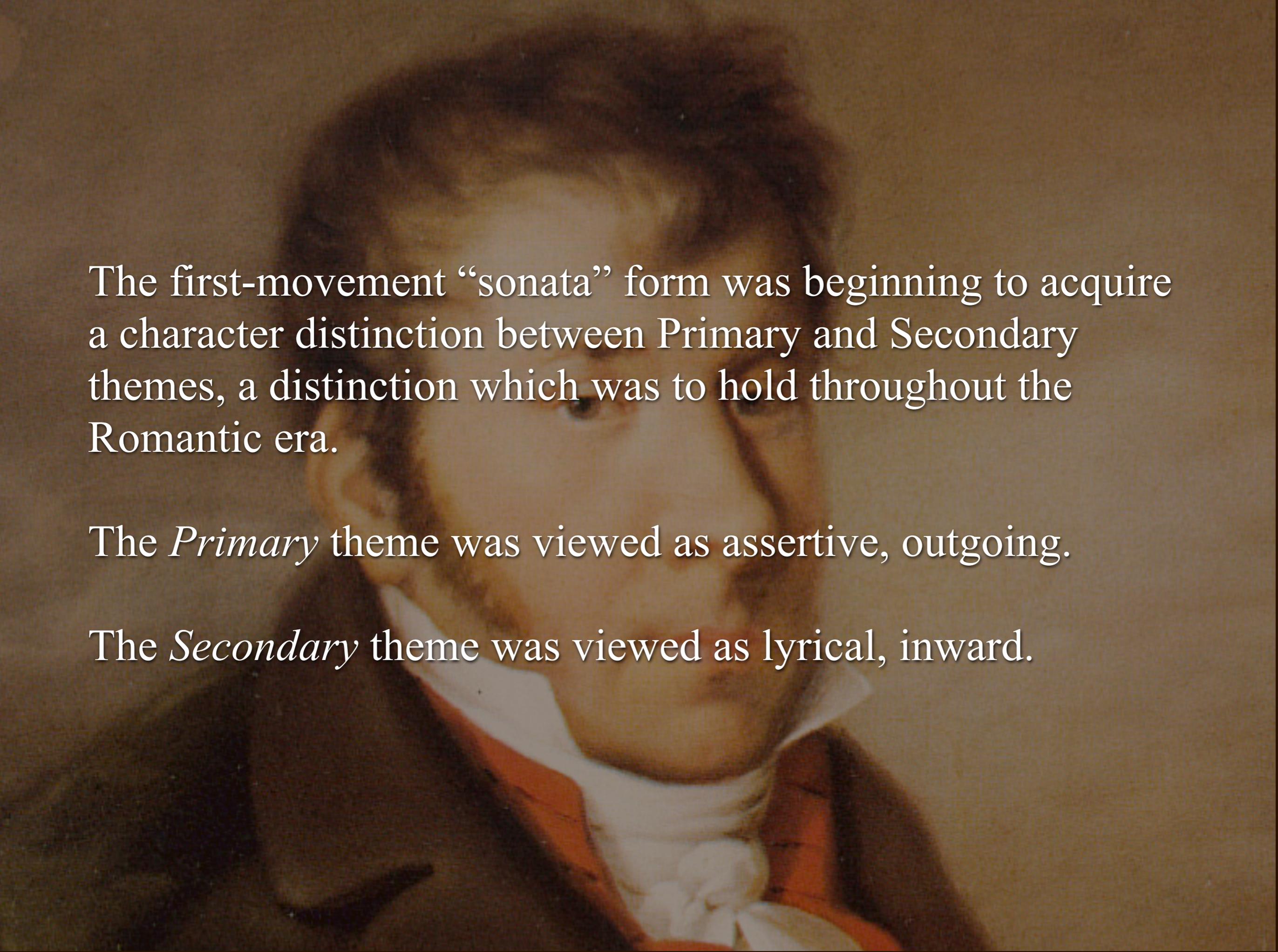
However, unlike many of his colleagues—mostly flashy, hollow, and even cheap entertainers—Hummel remained a solid artist, no matter how much technical bling he was to bring to his piano music and to his playing.

To this day Hummel's piano concertos are strictly virtuoso territory, while his sonatas range from the merely challenging to the stupendously flamboyant.

A portrait of Joseph Haydn, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark coat and a white cravat. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Sonata No. 2 in E-flat Major, Op. 13 is an early work written around 1803 and dedicated to none other than Joseph Haydn, who had recently recommended Hummel as his replacement as *kapellmeister* to the Esterházy court.

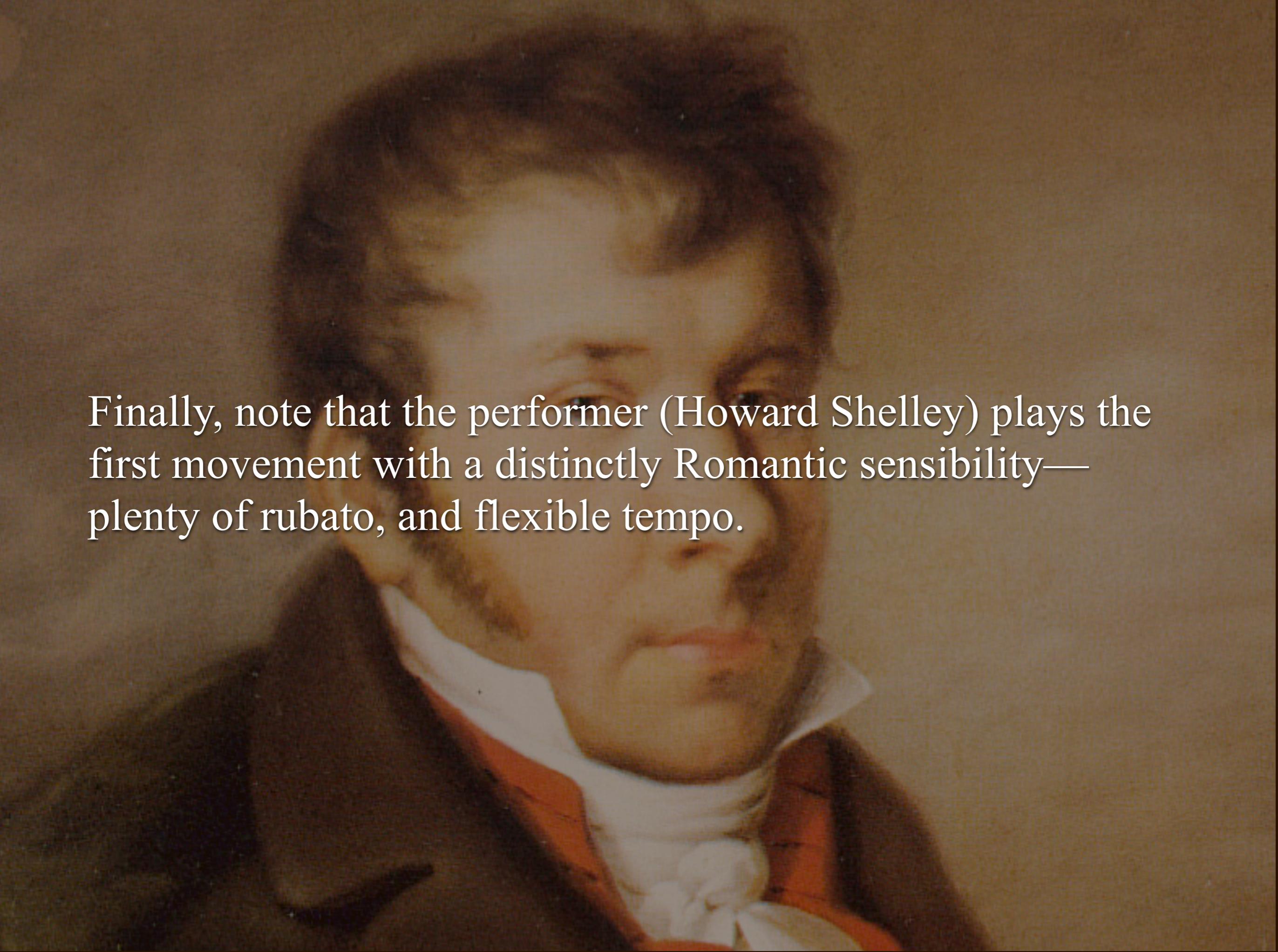
It incorporates a Gregorian “Alleluia” chant from the Christmas Eve service, but doesn’t develop the melody or use it other than as a quote.



The first-movement “sonata” form was beginning to acquire a character distinction between Primary and Secondary themes, a distinction which was to hold throughout the Romantic era.

The *Primary* theme was viewed as assertive, outgoing.

The *Secondary* theme was viewed as lyrical, inward.

A portrait of Howard Shelley, a man with dark, wavy hair and a light beard, wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red tie. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Finally, note that the performer (Howard Shelley) plays the first movement with a distinctly Romantic sensibility—plenty of rubato, and flexible tempo.



Exposition - Primary through Transition

1P is an introductory fanfare, very short

2Pa is the "Alleluia" theme, solid and formal

2Pb is a contrasting idea, fanfare-like

2Pa is repeated with extensions

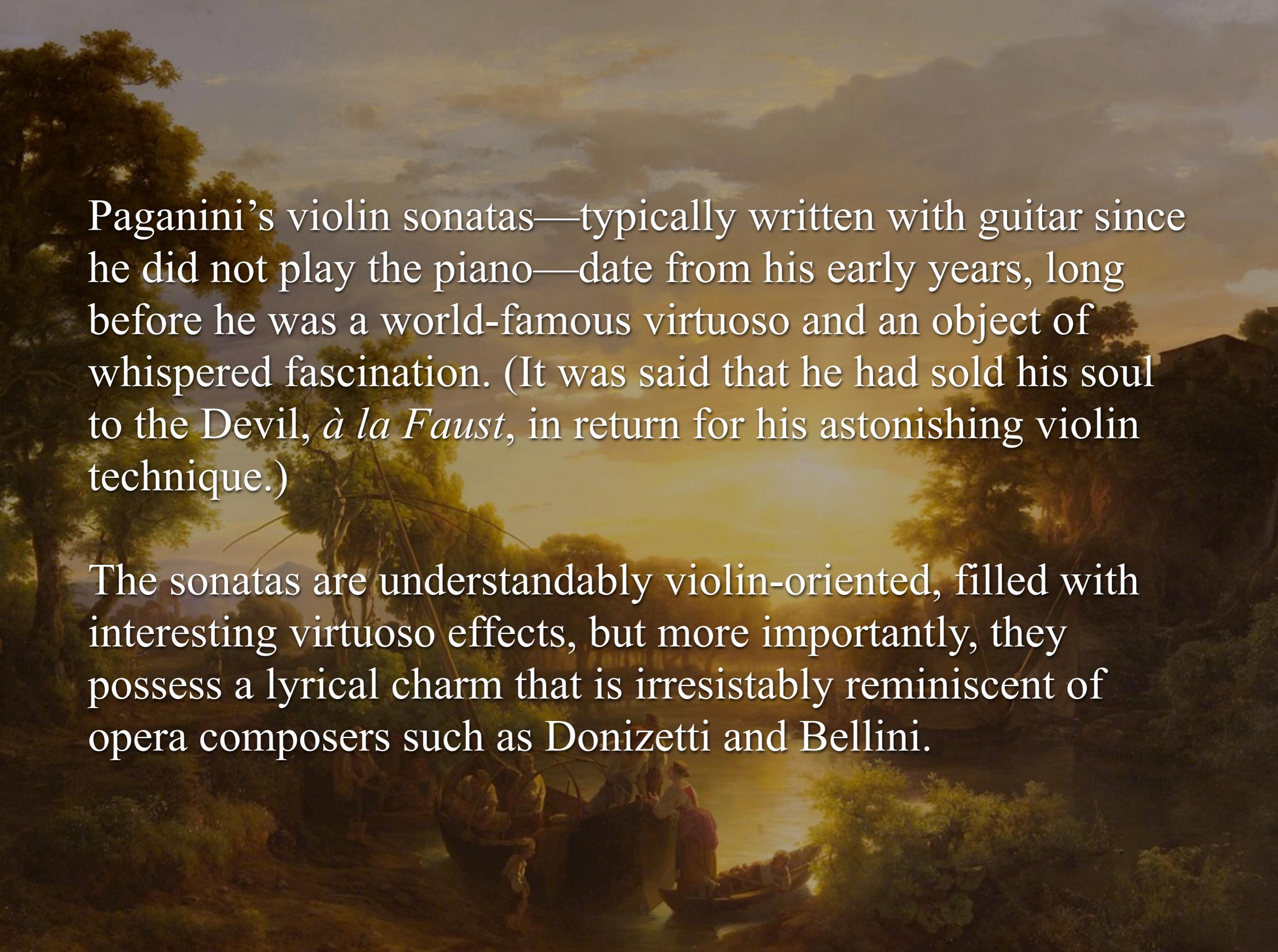
2Pb is repeated

1Ta consists of RH scales balanced by answering LH scales

1Tb is an extension of *1Ta*

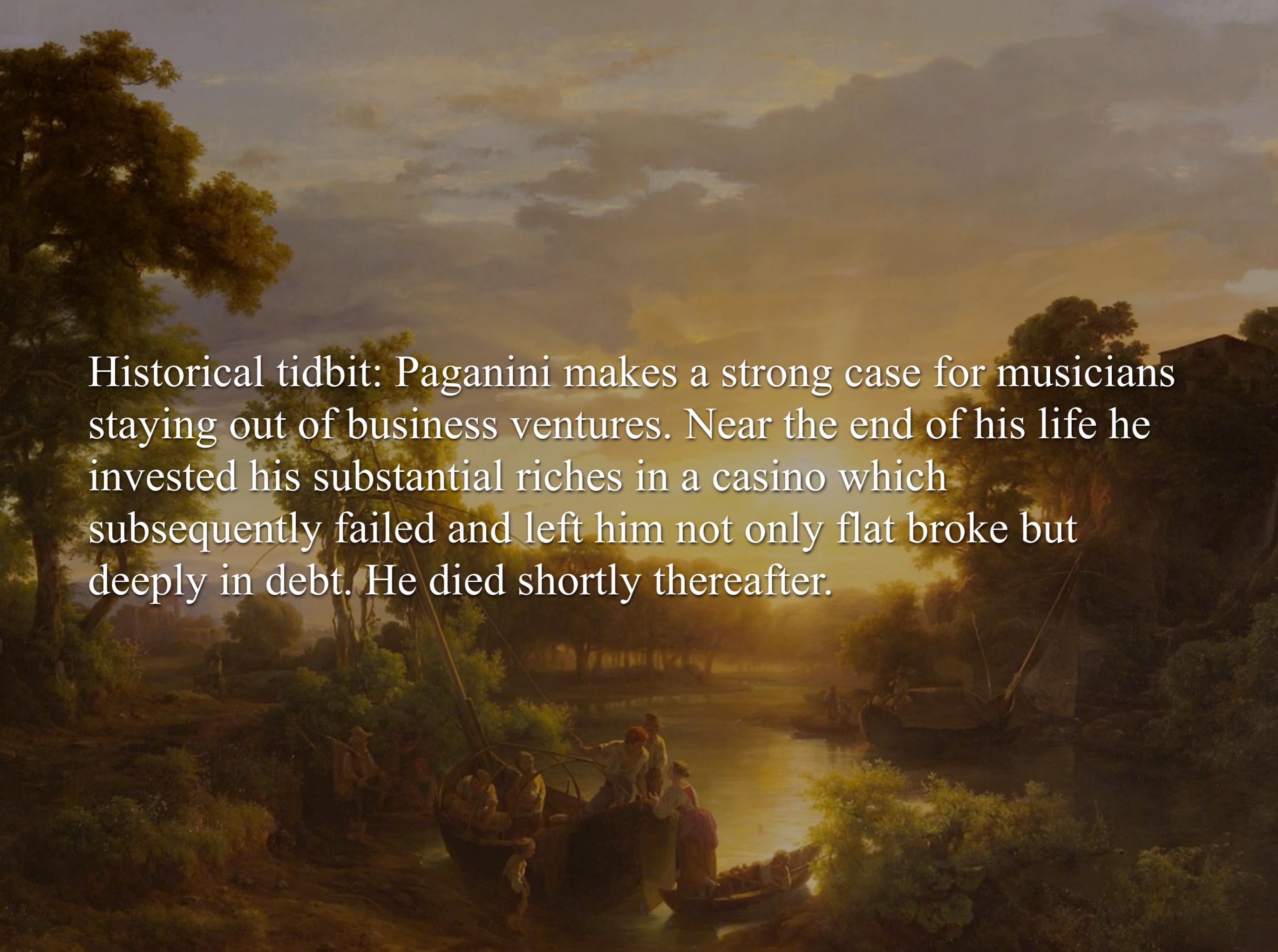


Nicolò Paganini:
Sonata for Violin and Guitar, Op. 3 No. 1
Gil Shaham, violin / Göran Söllscher, guitar

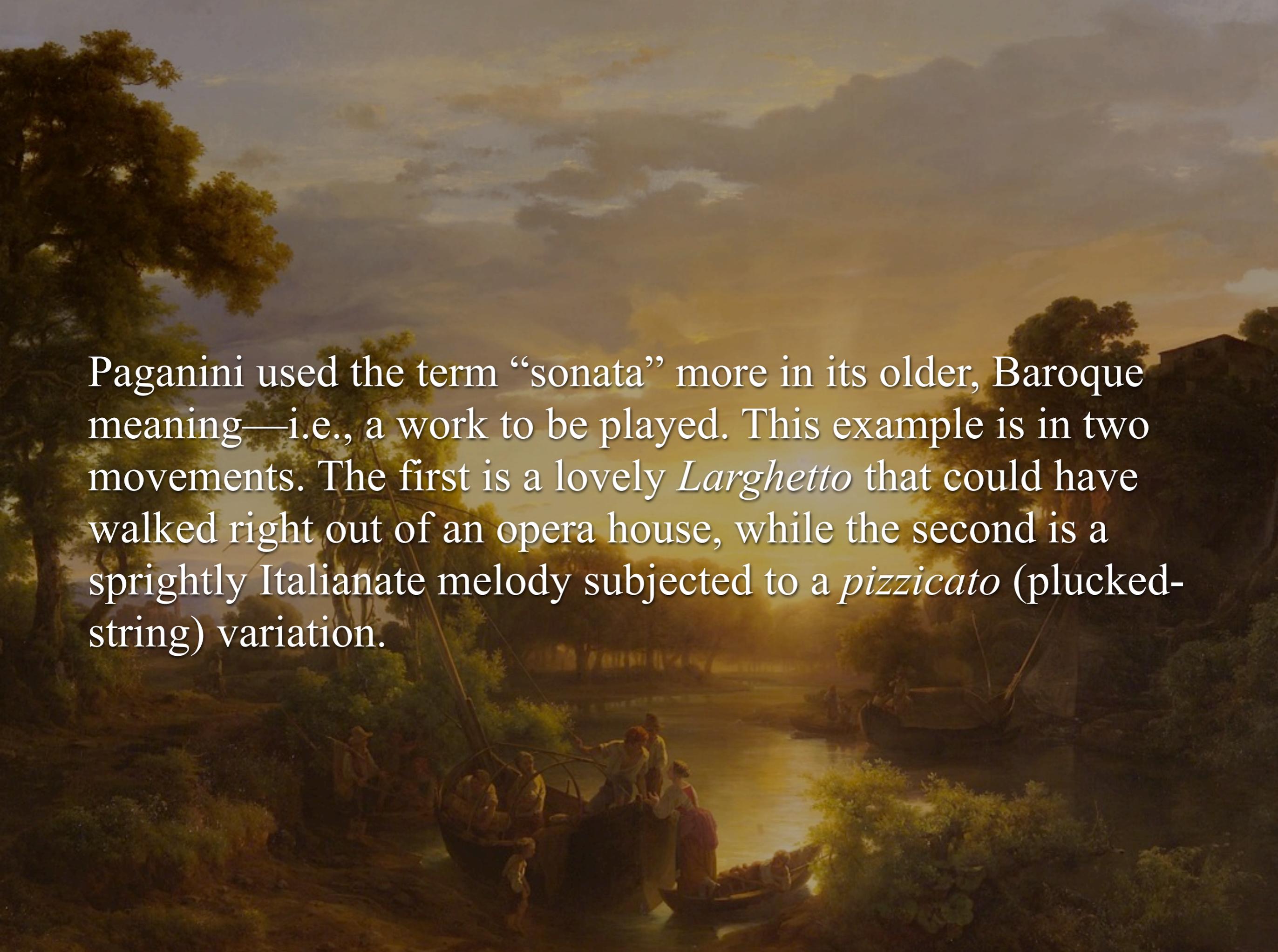
A painting of a Venetian canal scene. In the foreground, a woman in a red dress stands on a small boat, looking towards the water. Several other gondolas are visible in the canal, with people inside. The background shows lush green trees and a building on the right. The sky is filled with soft, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is serene and romantic.

Paganini's violin sonatas—typically written with guitar since he did not play the piano—date from his early years, long before he was a world-famous virtuoso and an object of whispered fascination. (It was said that he had sold his soul to the Devil, *à la Faust*, in return for his astonishing violin technique.)

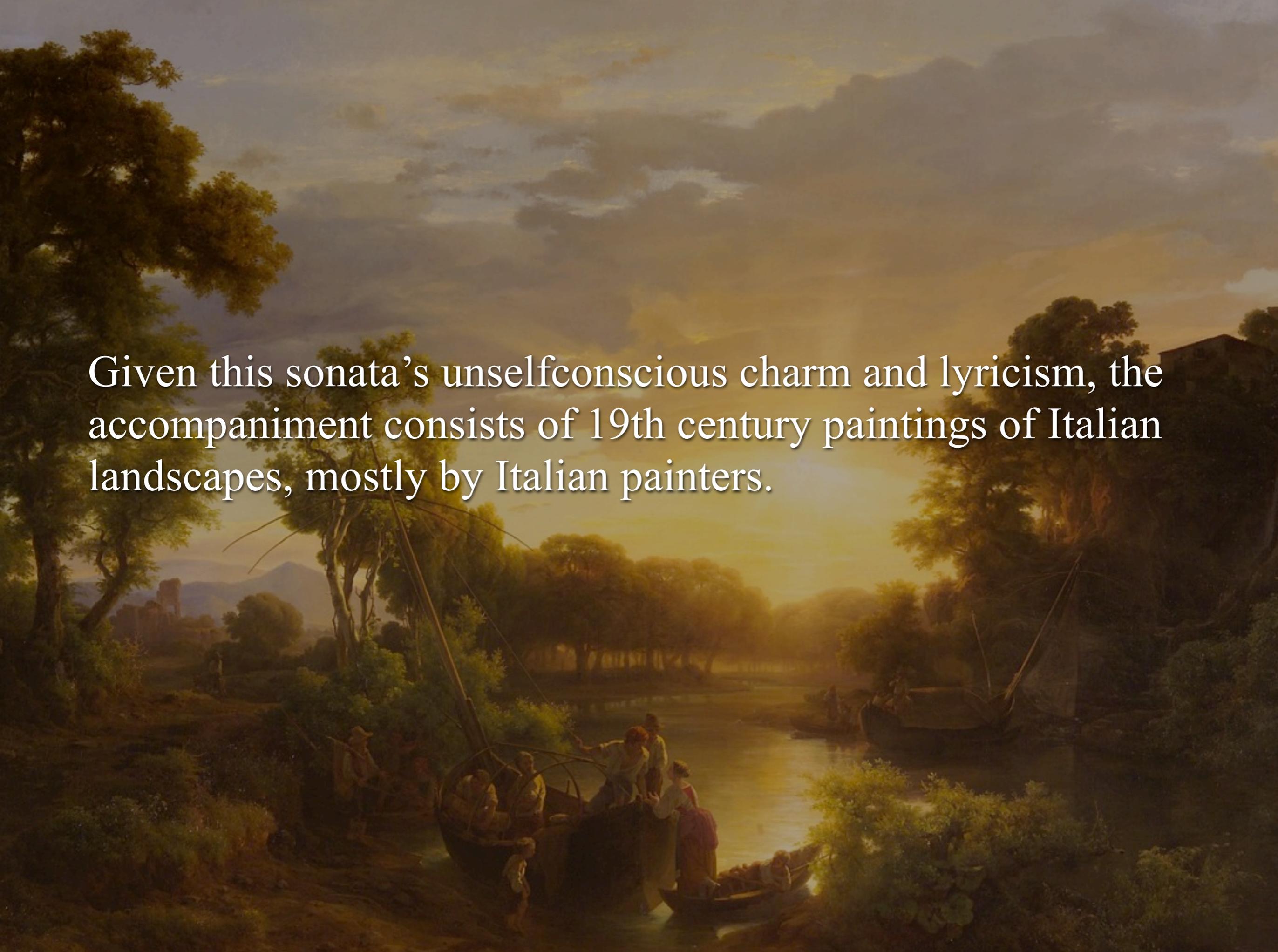
The sonatas are understandably violin-oriented, filled with interesting virtuoso effects, but more importantly, they possess a lyrical charm that is irresistibly reminiscent of opera composers such as Donizetti and Bellini.

A painting of a river scene at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, golden light and scattered clouds. The river flows through a lush, green landscape with dense trees and bushes on both banks. In the foreground, several small boats are on the water. One boat in the center has a group of people, including a woman in a pink dress, looking towards the viewer. Another boat is visible further down the river to the right. The overall mood is peaceful and nostalgic.

Historical tidbit: Paganini makes a strong case for musicians staying out of business ventures. Near the end of his life he invested his substantial riches in a casino which subsequently failed and left him not only flat broke but deeply in debt. He died shortly thereafter.

A painting of a Venetian canal scene at sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with soft, golden light and scattered clouds. In the foreground, several gondolas are on the water, with people in period clothing. The background shows a bridge and more buildings along the canal. The overall mood is peaceful and romantic.

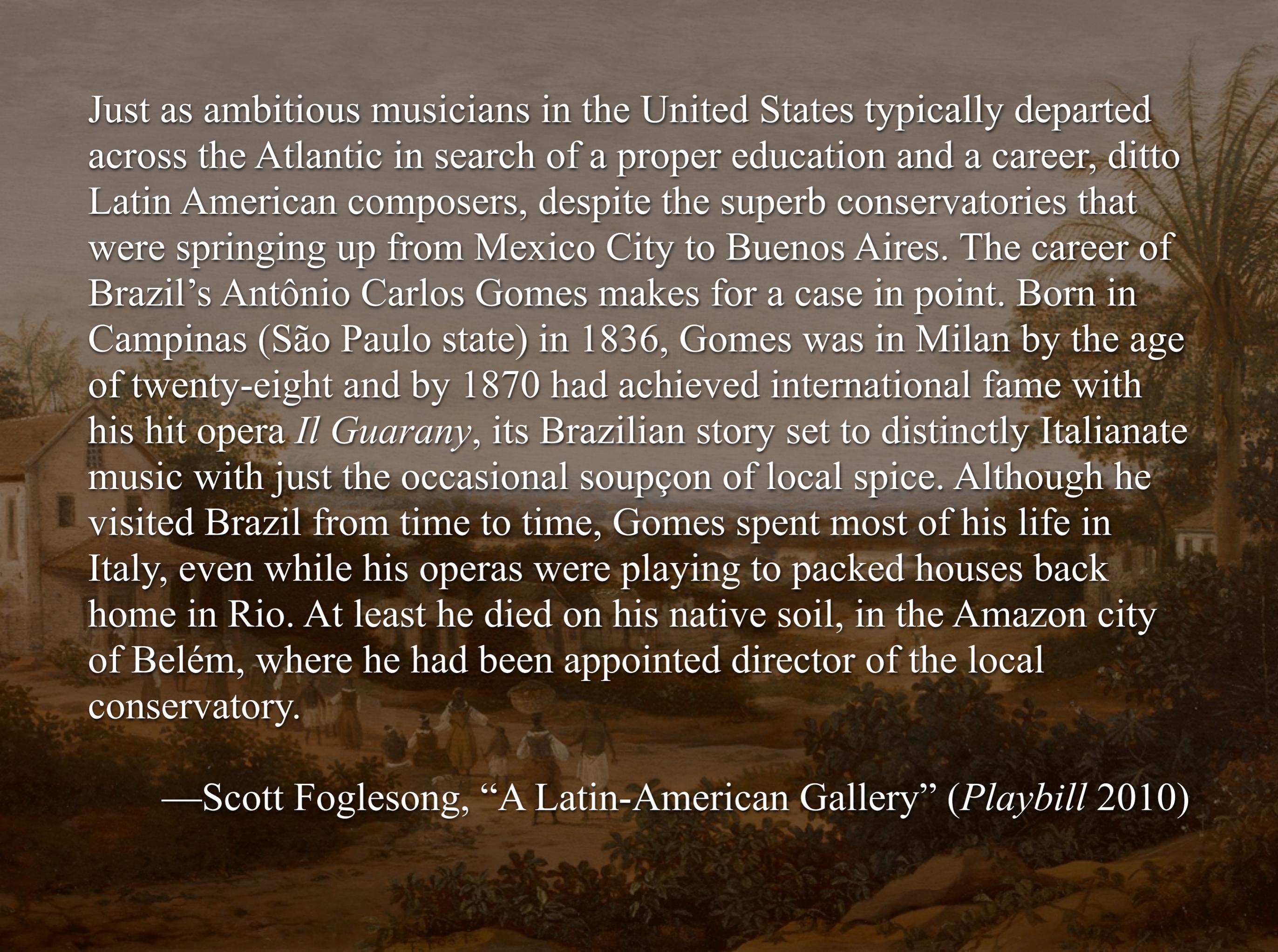
Paganini used the term “sonata” more in its older, Baroque meaning—i.e., a work to be played. This example is in two movements. The first is a lovely *Larghetto* that could have walked right out of an opera house, while the second is a sprightly Italianate melody subjected to a *pizzicato* (plucked-string) variation.



Given this sonata's unselfconscious charm and lyricism, the accompaniment consists of 19th century paintings of Italian landscapes, mostly by Italian painters.

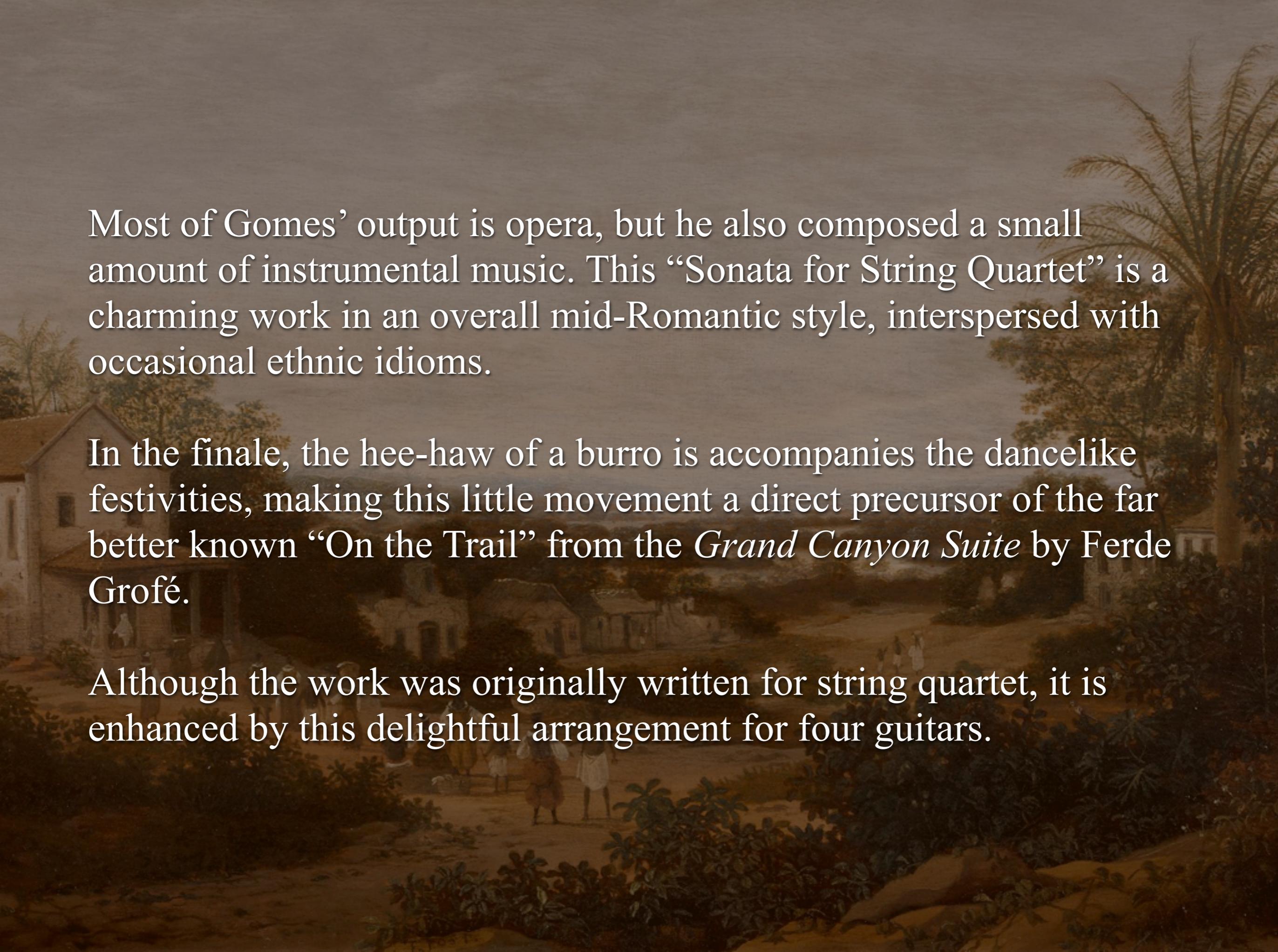


**Antônio Carlos Gomes:
Sonata in D for String Quartet: IV (Burraco de pau)
Brazilian Quitar Quartet**

A sepia-toned illustration of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a dirt road winds through a field. Several people are visible, some carrying items on their heads. In the background, there are simple buildings and a large palm tree on the right side. The overall scene is peaceful and depicts a typical rural setting.

Just as ambitious musicians in the United States typically departed across the Atlantic in search of a proper education and a career, ditto Latin American composers, despite the superb conservatories that were springing up from Mexico City to Buenos Aires. The career of Brazil's Antônio Carlos Gomes makes for a case in point. Born in Campinas (São Paulo state) in 1836, Gomes was in Milan by the age of twenty-eight and by 1870 had achieved international fame with his hit opera *Il Guarany*, its Brazilian story set to distinctly Italianate music with just the occasional soupçon of local spice. Although he visited Brazil from time to time, Gomes spent most of his life in Italy, even while his operas were playing to packed houses back home in Rio. At least he died on his native soil, in the Amazon city of Belém, where he had been appointed director of the local conservatory.

—Scott Foglesong, “A Latin-American Gallery” (*Playbill* 2010)

A sepia-toned illustration of a rural village scene. In the foreground, there are some dark, leafy bushes. A dirt road winds through the middle ground, where several people and a pack animal (possibly a mule or burro) are visible. In the background, there are several simple buildings with tiled roofs, and a large palm tree stands on the right side. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and rural.

Most of Gomes' output is opera, but he also composed a small amount of instrumental music. This "Sonata for String Quartet" is a charming work in an overall mid-Romantic style, interspersed with occasional ethnic idioms.

In the finale, the hee-haw of a burro is accompanied by the dancelike festivities, making this little movement a direct precursor of the far better known "On the Trail" from the *Grand Canyon Suite* by Ferde Grofé.

Although the work was originally written for string quartet, it is enhanced by this delightful arrangement for four guitars.

The presentation offers paintings by modern Brazilian artists.



CZERNY

Op. 740

The Art of Finger Dexterity

Carl Czerny:
Piano Sonata No. 3 in F Minor, Op. 57: III
Martin Jones, piano

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Anyone taking piano lessons—willingly or not—over the past several centuries has encountered Czerny exercises. There are close to 1000 volumes of exercises for all levels.

They are thorough, exhaustive, endless.

They are also enervating, boring, charmless, and lifeless.

Carl Czerny probably withered more budding talents than any other composer in musical history.

Thirty
New Studies
in Technics

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But there's more to Czerny than just ten million dippy little finger exercises in C Major, all going up and down and up and down and up and down. He was a student of Beethoven in both piano and composition, and went on to teach some of the greatest pianistic lights of the next generation, including Franz Liszt.

His keyboard sonatas are actually quite good, full of spectacular piano effects and a lot of fun to play.

This Scherzo movement is a prime example of the *Czerny That Nobody Knows*, a Beethoven-esque movement that's dramatic, entertaining, and highly effective.

New Studies
in Technics

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Vol. 272

It's in standard Minuet-and-Trio form.

The Scherzo proper is a 3-part song form, followed by its Trio, also a 3-part song form. Then the Scherzo is repeated.

Op. 849

Thirty

New Studies
in Technics

Scherzo

Part 1

a a a b

Part 2

a a c

Part 3

b a a a

Trio

Part 1

d d e

Part 2

f f e g

Part 3

d d e

Scherzo

Part 1

a a a b

Part 2

a a c

Part 3

b a a a

Trio

Part 1

d d e

Part 2

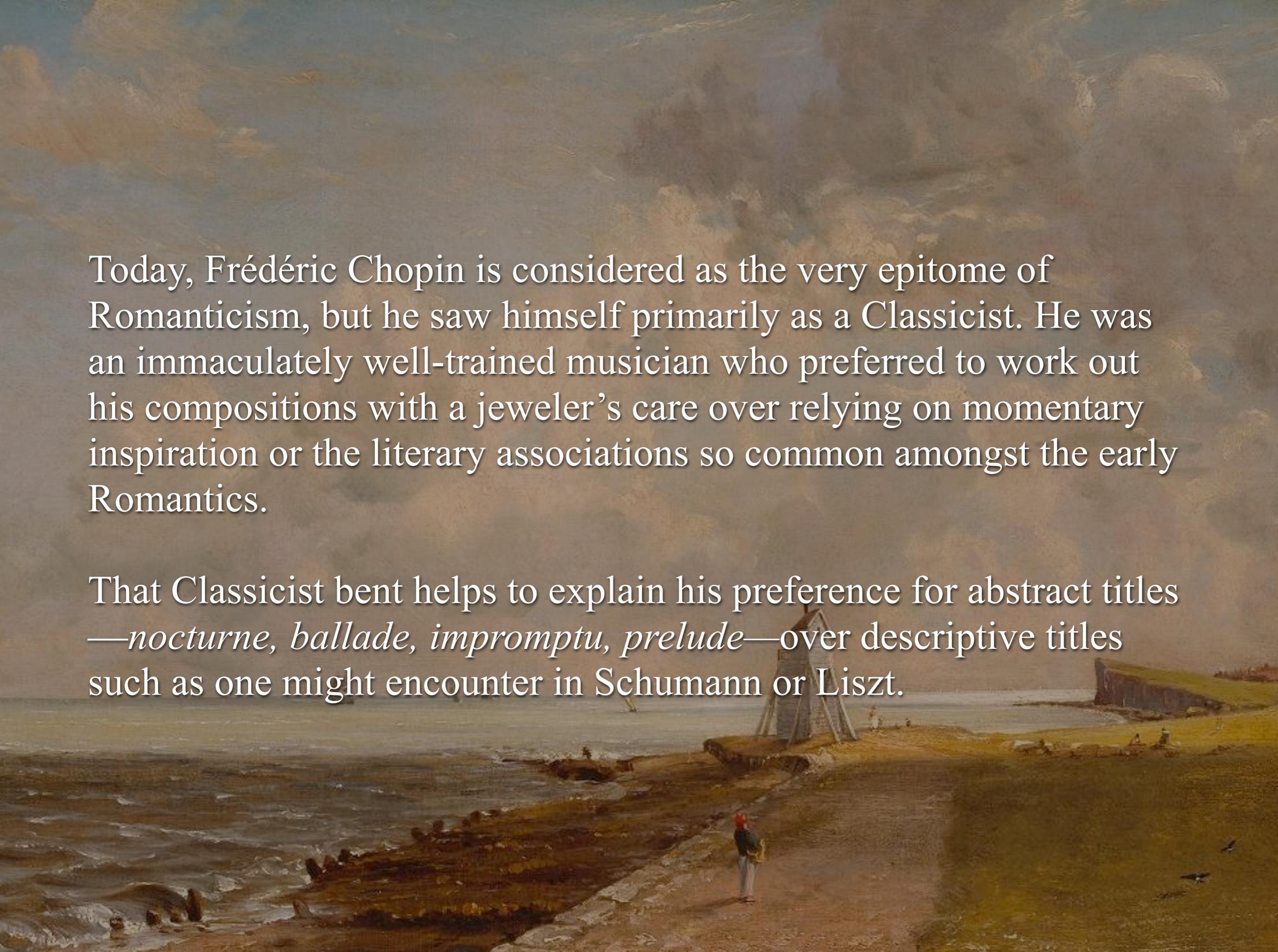
f f e g

Part 3

d d e

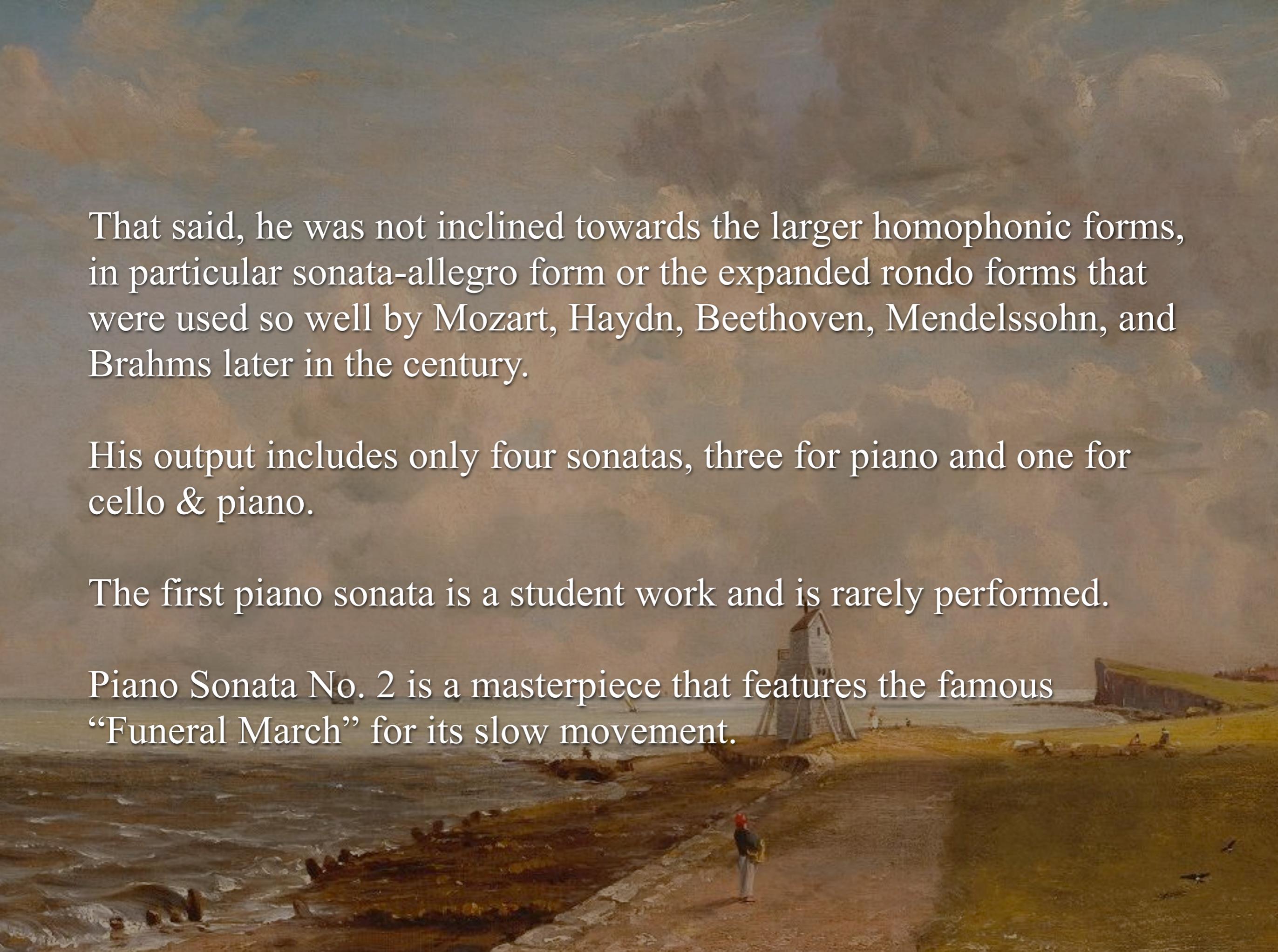


Frédéric Chopin:
Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58: III
Arthur Rubinstein, piano (recorded 1961)

A Romantic-style landscape painting of a coastal scene. In the foreground, a person wearing a red hat and a dark coat stands on a dirt path, looking out towards the sea. The path leads towards a lighthouse structure on a small island or peninsula. The sea is turbulent with white-capped waves crashing against the shore. In the background, a large, dark, rectangular structure, possibly a ship's hull or a large building, is partially visible on the right. The sky is filled with dramatic, swirling clouds in shades of brown, grey, and blue, suggesting a storm or a dramatic sunset. The overall mood is one of solitude and the power of nature.

Today, Frédéric Chopin is considered as the very epitome of Romanticism, but he saw himself primarily as a Classicist. He was an immaculately well-trained musician who preferred to work out his compositions with a jeweler's care over relying on momentary inspiration or the literary associations so common amongst the early Romantics.

That Classicist bent helps to explain his preference for abstract titles—*nocturne, ballade, impromptu, prelude*—over descriptive titles such as one might encounter in Schumann or Liszt.

The background of the slide is a painting of a coastal scene. In the foreground, a person wearing a red hat and a dark coat walks along a path that leads towards a lighthouse. The lighthouse is a tall, white, cylindrical structure with a lantern room on top. The sea is visible to the left, with waves crashing against the shore. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds, suggesting an overcast day. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

That said, he was not inclined towards the larger homophonic forms, in particular sonata-allegro form or the expanded rondo forms that were used so well by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Brahms later in the century.

His output includes only four sonatas, three for piano and one for cello & piano.

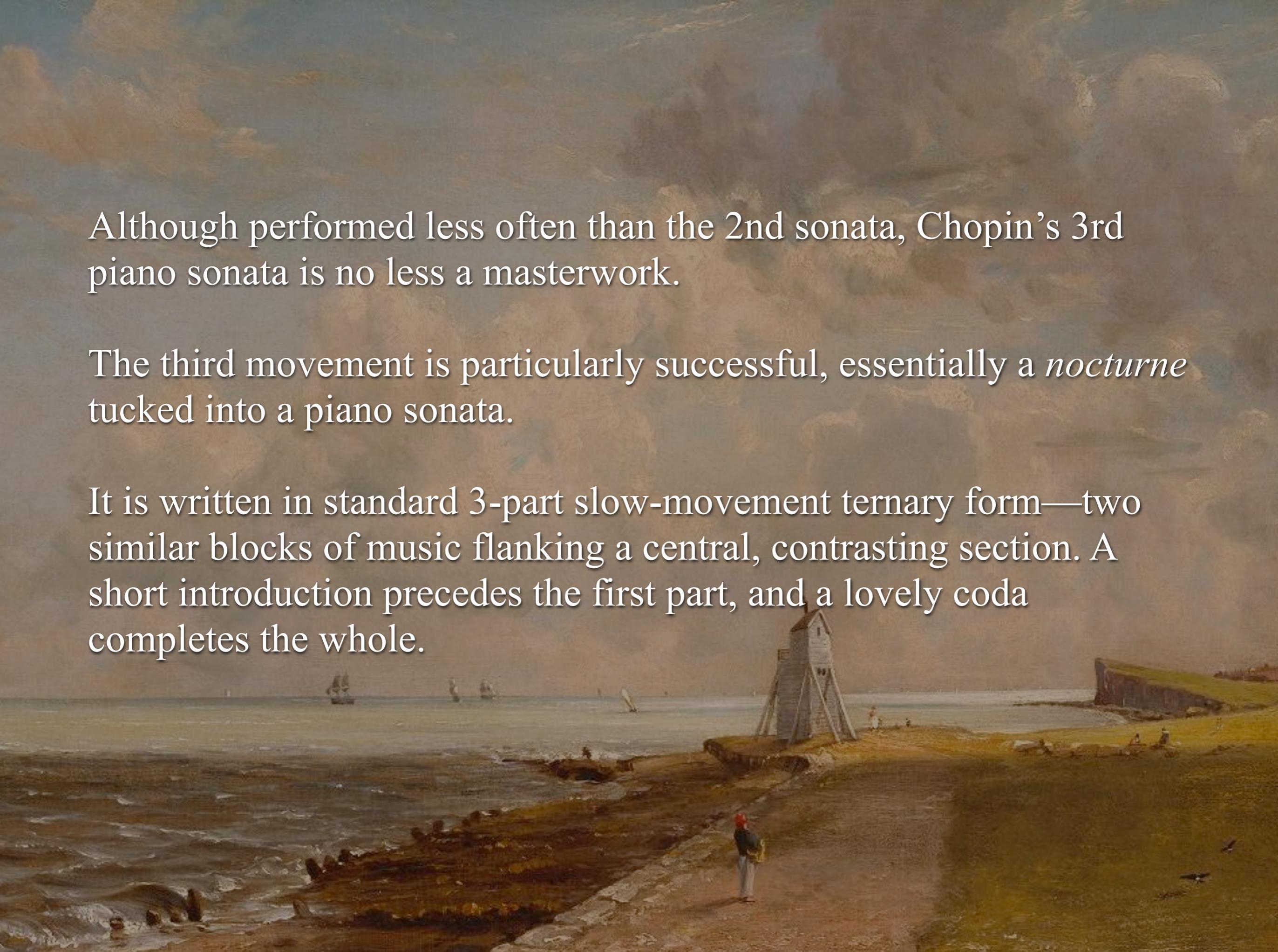
The first piano sonata is a student work and is rarely performed.

Piano Sonata No. 2 is a masterpiece that features the famous “Funeral March” for its slow movement.

Although performed less often than the 2nd sonata, Chopin's 3rd piano sonata is no less a masterwork.

The third movement is particularly successful, essentially a *nocturne* tucked into a piano sonata.

It is written in standard 3-part slow-movement ternary form—two similar blocks of music flanking a central, contrasting section. A short introduction precedes the first part, and a lovely coda completes the whole.

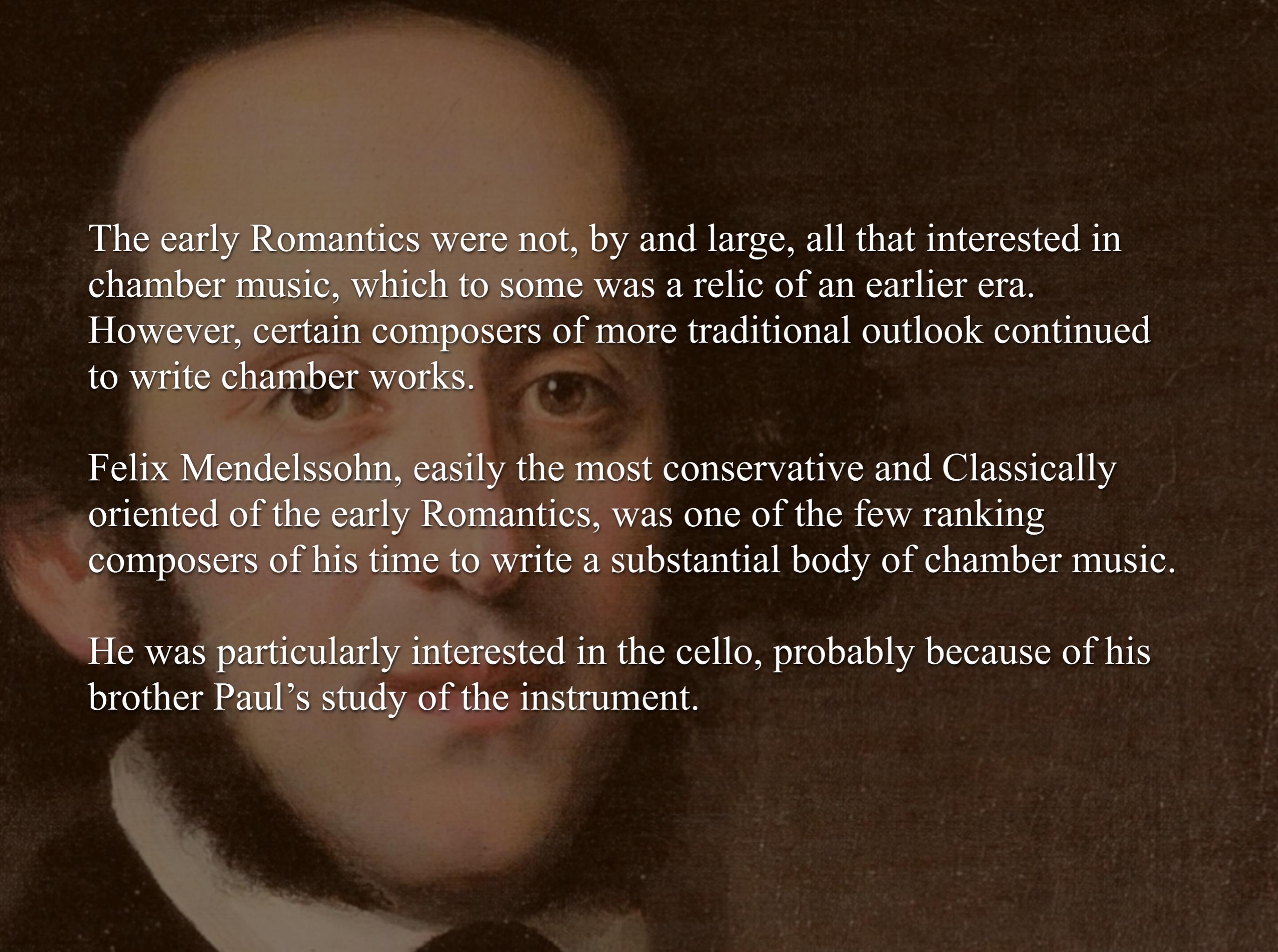


Arthur Rubinstein's magisterial and lucid performance is accompanied by paintings by English romantic John Constable, particularly those with prominent cloudscapes. Labels identify the larger divisions of the movement.





Felix Mendelssohn:
Cello Sonata No. 2 in D Major, Op. 58: IV
Janos Starker, cello / György Sebök, piano

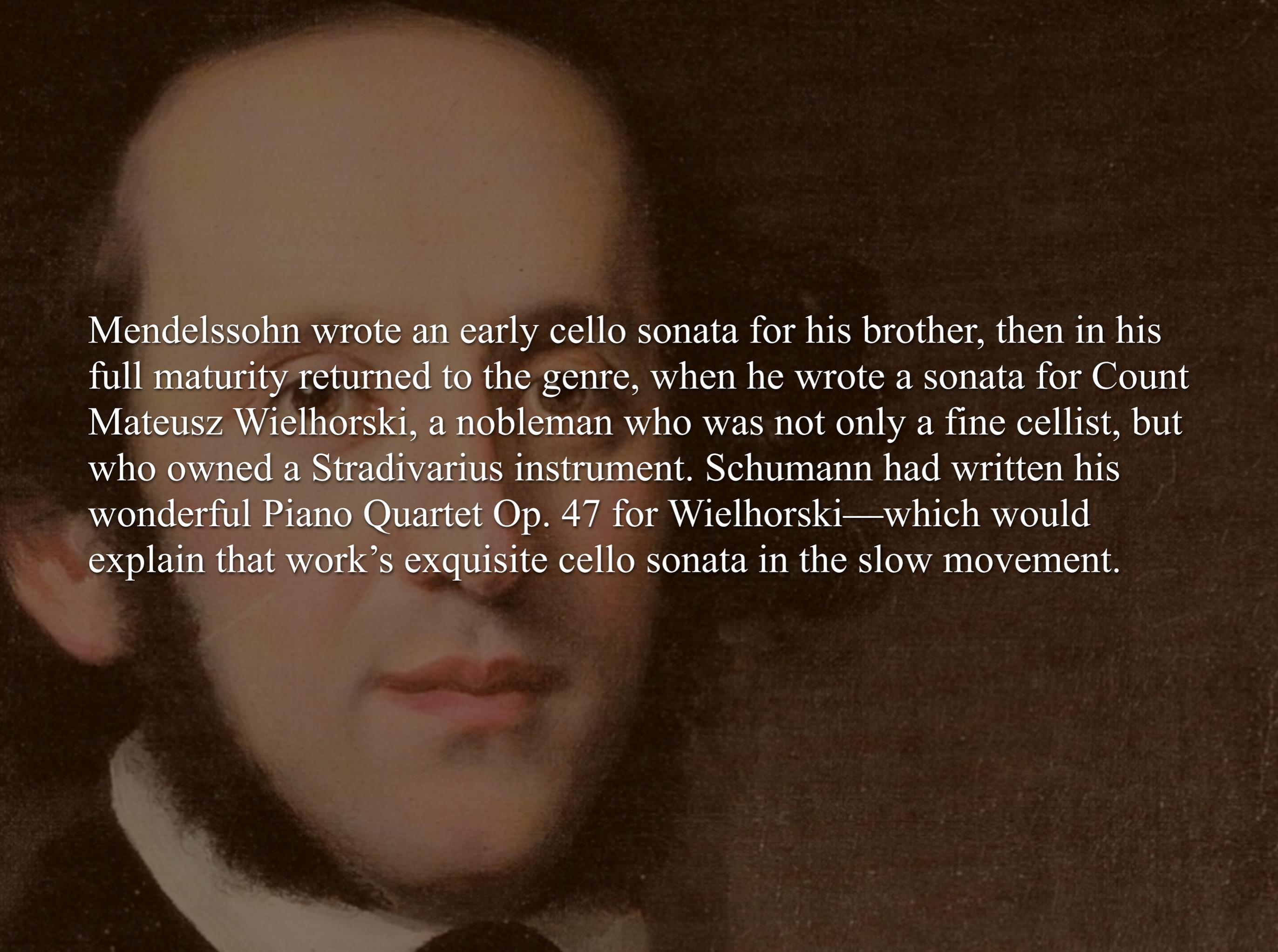
A close-up portrait of Felix Mendelssohn, showing his face from the nose up. He has a high forehead, dark eyes, and a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus.

The early Romantics were not, by and large, all that interested in chamber music, which to some was a relic of an earlier era.

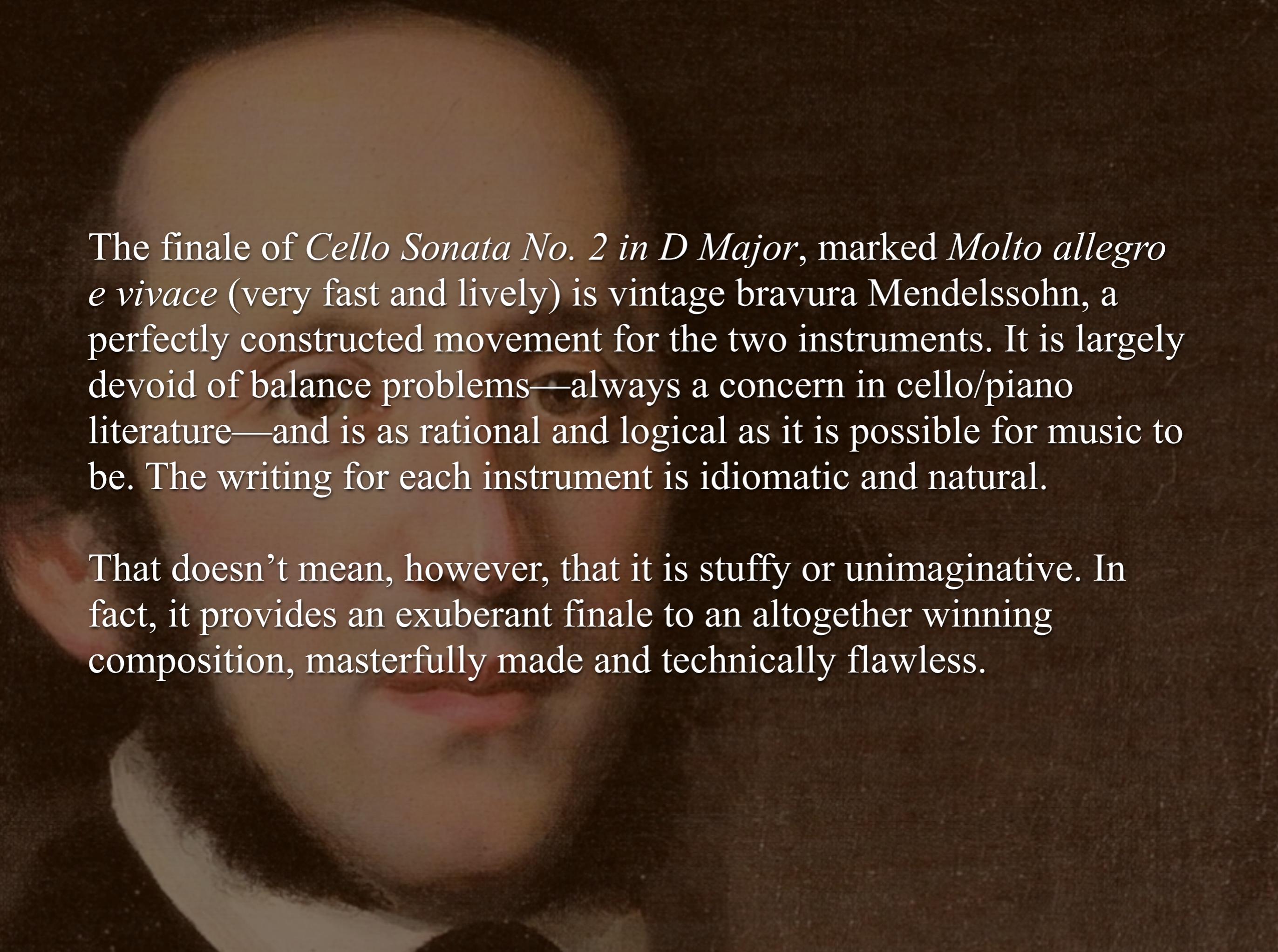
However, certain composers of more traditional outlook continued to write chamber works.

Felix Mendelssohn, easily the most conservative and Classically oriented of the early Romantics, was one of the few ranking composers of his time to write a substantial body of chamber music.

He was particularly interested in the cello, probably because of his brother Paul's study of the instrument.

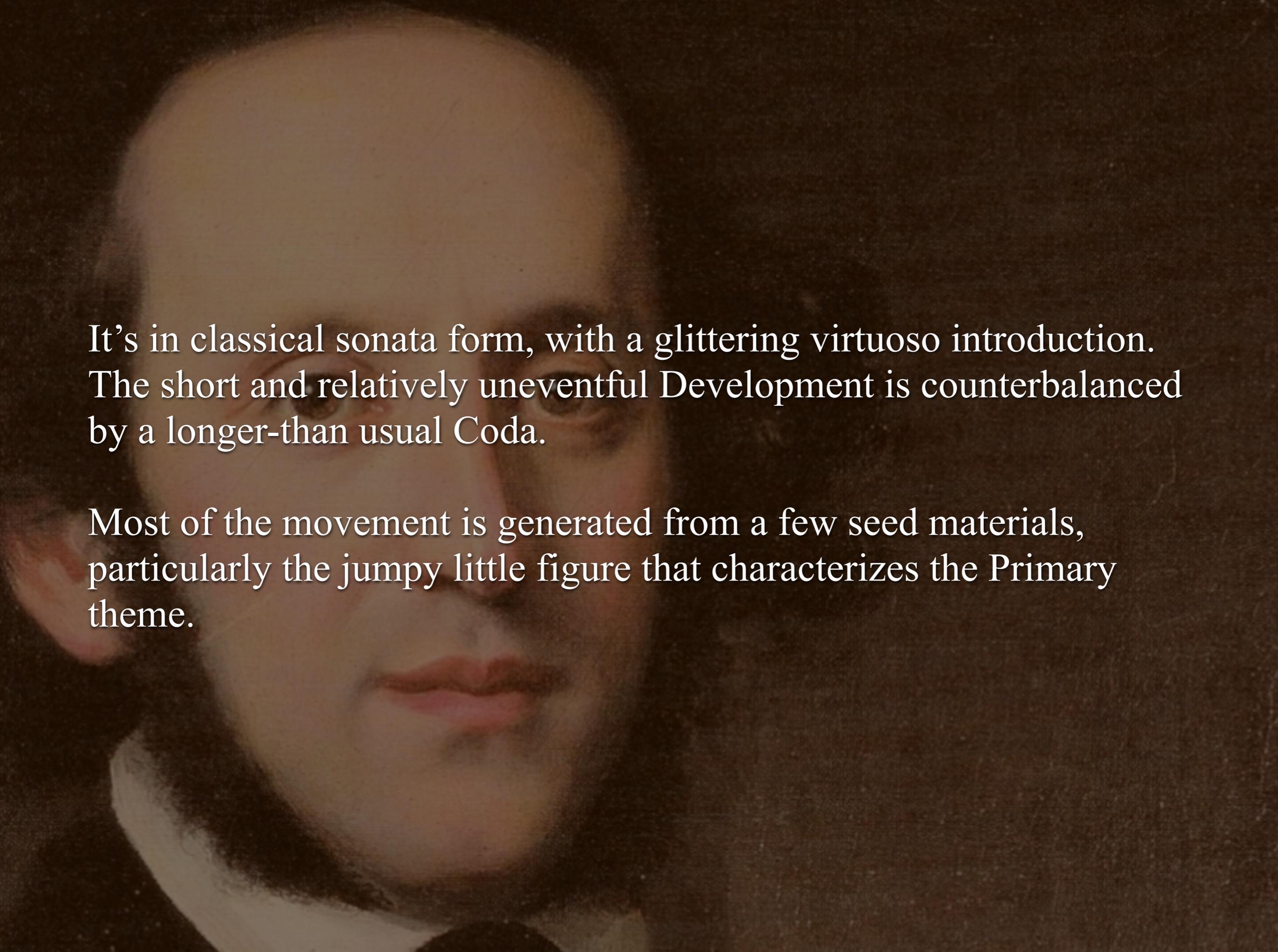
A close-up portrait of Felix Mendelssohn, showing his face from the nose up. He has a high forehead, dark eyes, and a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus.

Mendelssohn wrote an early cello sonata for his brother, then in his full maturity returned to the genre, when he wrote a sonata for Count Mateusz Wielhorski, a nobleman who was not only a fine cellist, but who owned a Stradivarius instrument. Schumann had written his wonderful Piano Quartet Op. 47 for Wielhorski—which would explain that work's exquisite cello sonata in the slow movement.

A close-up, slightly faded portrait of Felix Mendelssohn, showing his eyes, nose, and beard. The background is dark and textured.

The finale of *Cello Sonata No. 2 in D Major*, marked *Molto allegro e vivace* (very fast and lively) is vintage bravura Mendelssohn, a perfectly constructed movement for the two instruments. It is largely devoid of balance problems—always a concern in cello/piano literature—and is as rational and logical as it is possible for music to be. The writing for each instrument is idiomatic and natural.

That doesn't mean, however, that it is stuffy or unimaginative. In fact, it provides an exuberant finale to an altogether winning composition, masterfully made and technically flawless.

A close-up portrait of a man with a full, dark beard and mustache, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a white shirt and a dark tie. The background is dark and out of focus.

It's in classical sonata form, with a glittering virtuoso introduction. The short and relatively uneventful Development is counterbalanced by a longer-than usual Coda.

Most of the movement is generated from a few seed materials, particularly the jumpy little figure that characterizes the Primary theme.



O

Introduction

Oa consists of piano flourishes with cello answers

Ob is dialog (in scales) between the two instruments

Oc is piano figurations with a sustained cello line

Od is dialog between the two instruments, leading to ...

