STORIES

IN CLASSICAL MUSIC

STORIES IN MUSIC

"Music with stories" = PROGRAM MUSIC

STORIES IN MUSIC

What kinds of Program Music
are there?

STORIES IN MUSIC

❖ Program Music = Music from:

- Pictures

- Stories

- Extra- musical associations

Often music scores include the images, story or poem that inspired the music
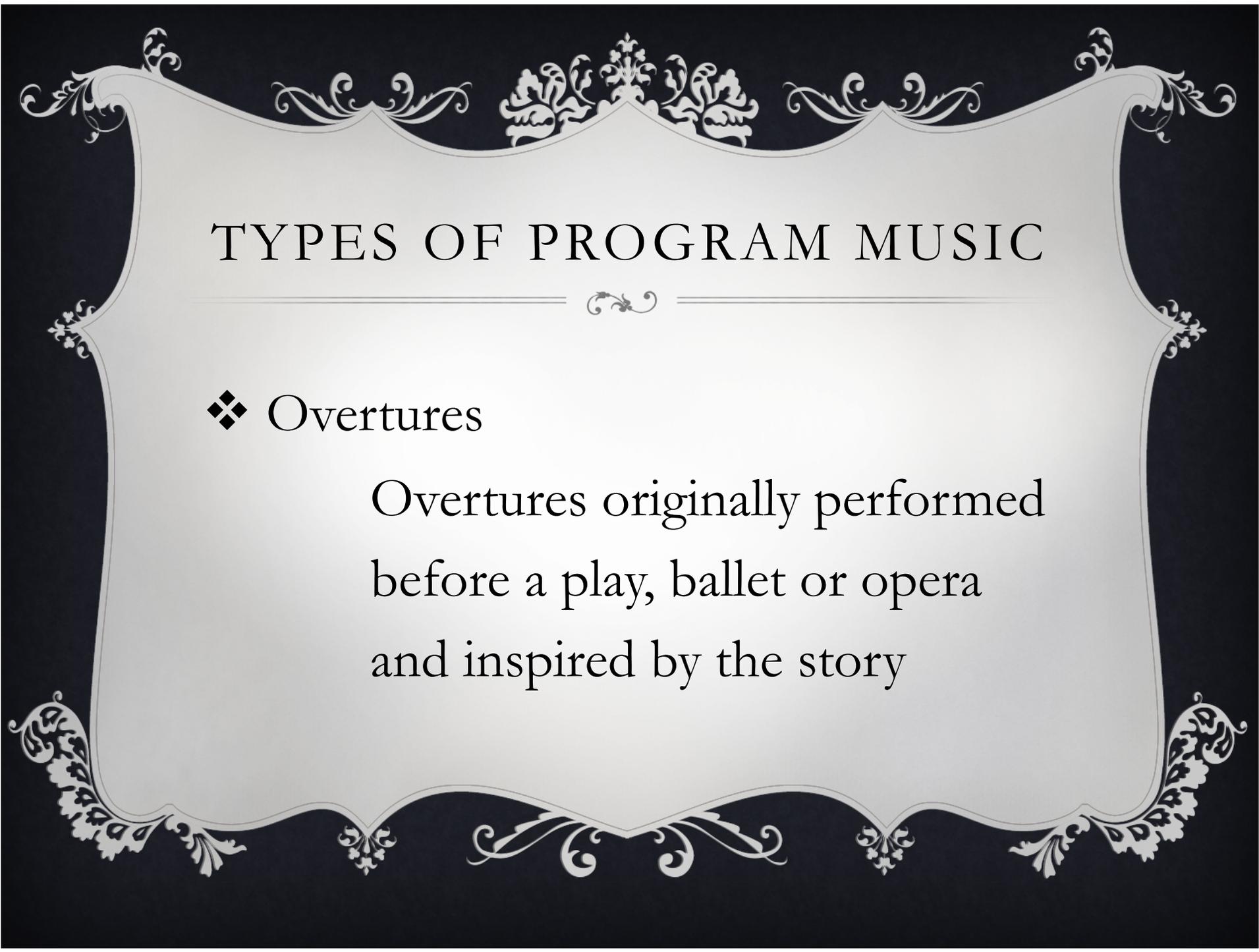
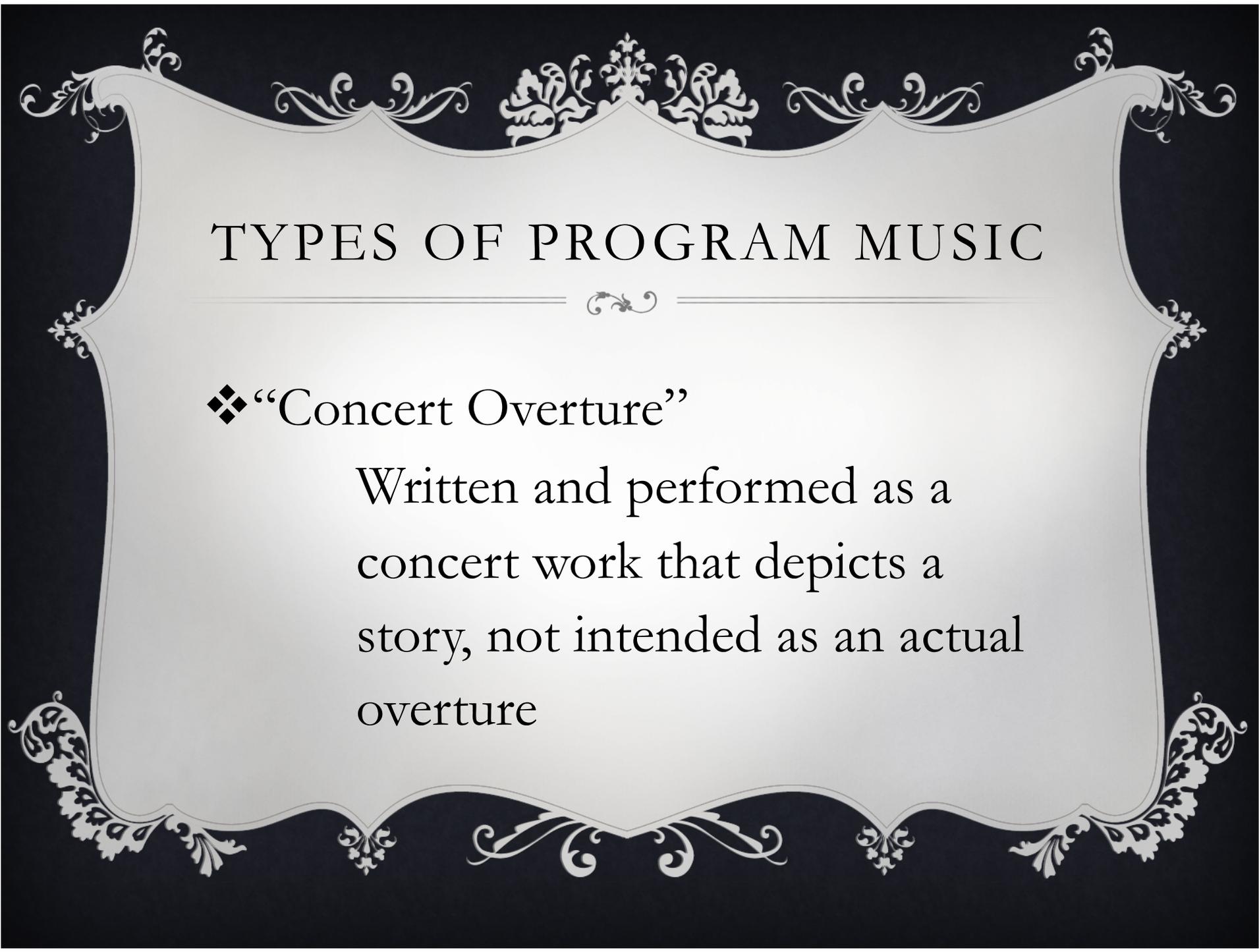# TYPES OF PROGRAM MUSIC

- ❖ Suites
- ❖ Concert Overtures
- ❖ Tone Poems
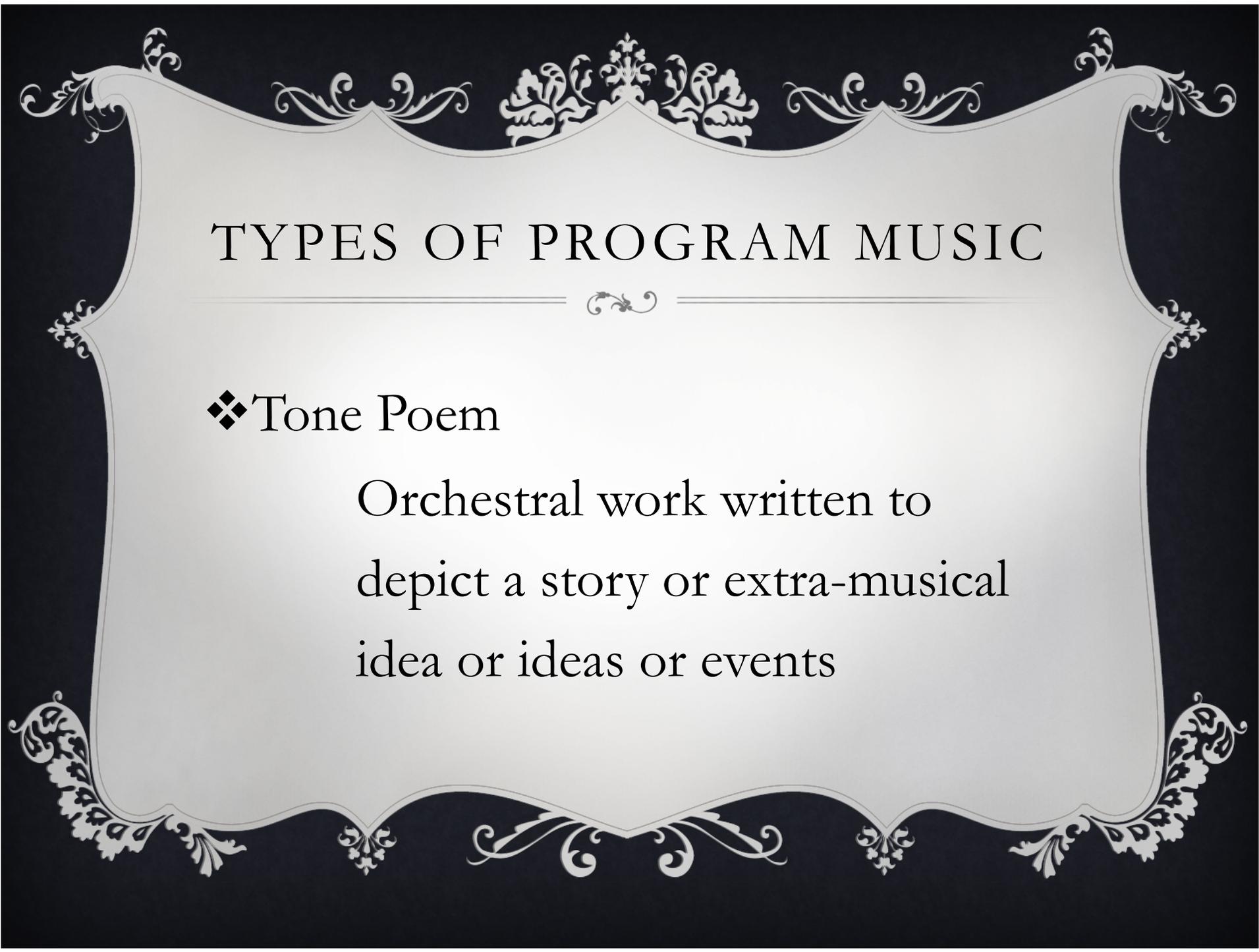
TYPES OF PROGRAM MUSIC

❖ Overtures

Overtures originally performed before a play, ballet or opera and inspired by the story

TYPES OF PROGRAM MUSIC

❖"Concert Overture"

Written and performed as a concert work that depicts a story, not intended as an actual overture

TYPES OF PROGRAM MUSIC

❖Tone Poem

Orchestral work written to depict a story or extra-musical idea or ideas or events

ABSOLUTE MUSIC (1846)

ABSOLUTE MUSIC IS…

❖ Not about anything but **itself** (it's music)

❖ **Non-representational** (it's just music)

❖ "Music for Music's sake" (it's just music)

SIGNIFICATION

❖ Music is a kind of **language** (signification)
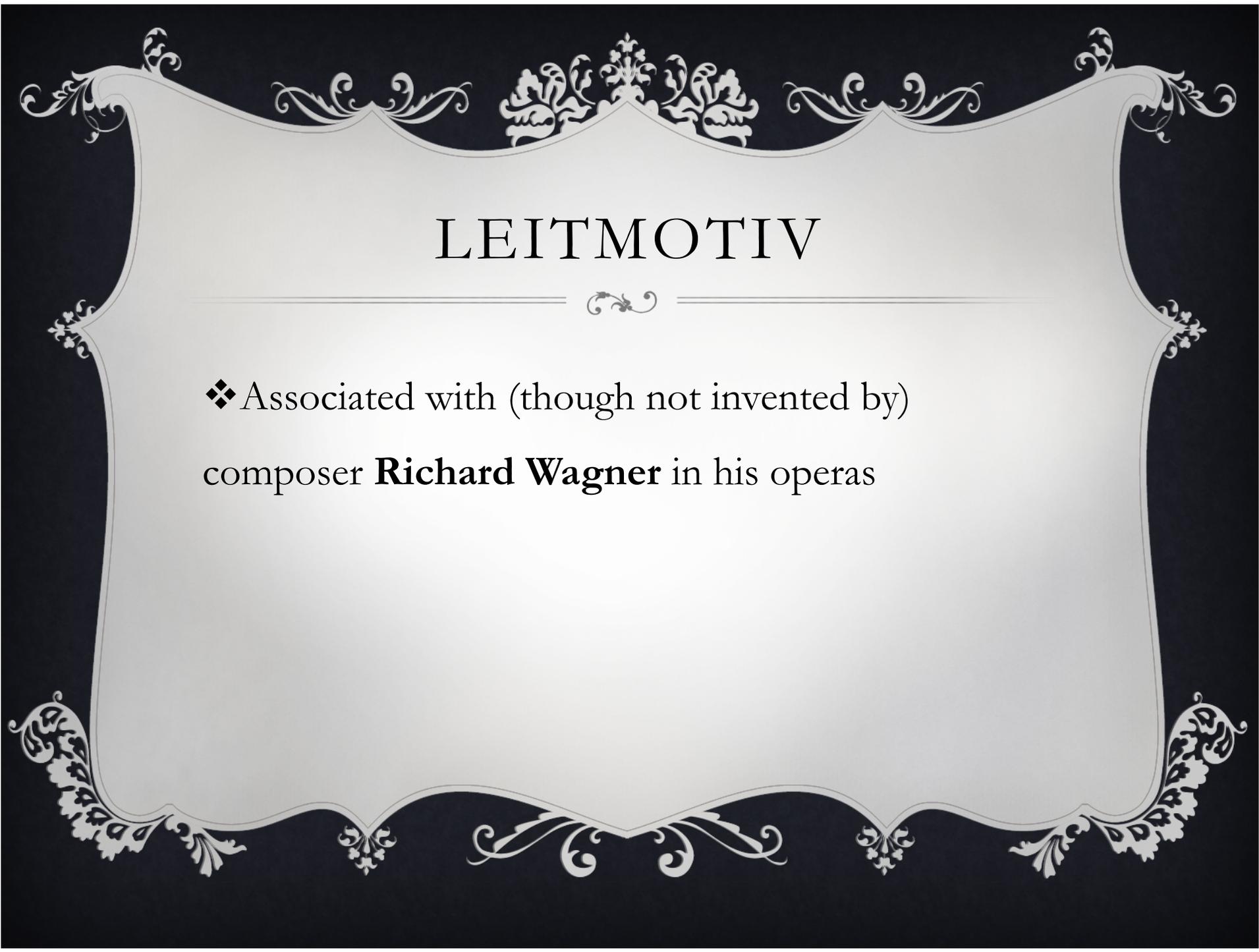
❖ Music, therefore, **communicates meaning**

HOW DOES MUSIC CREATE STORIES?

LEITMOTIV

❖ A short **musical theme** that is associated with a person, place, thing, or idea

LEITMOTIV

❖ Associated with (though not invented by)

composer **Richard Wagner** in his operas
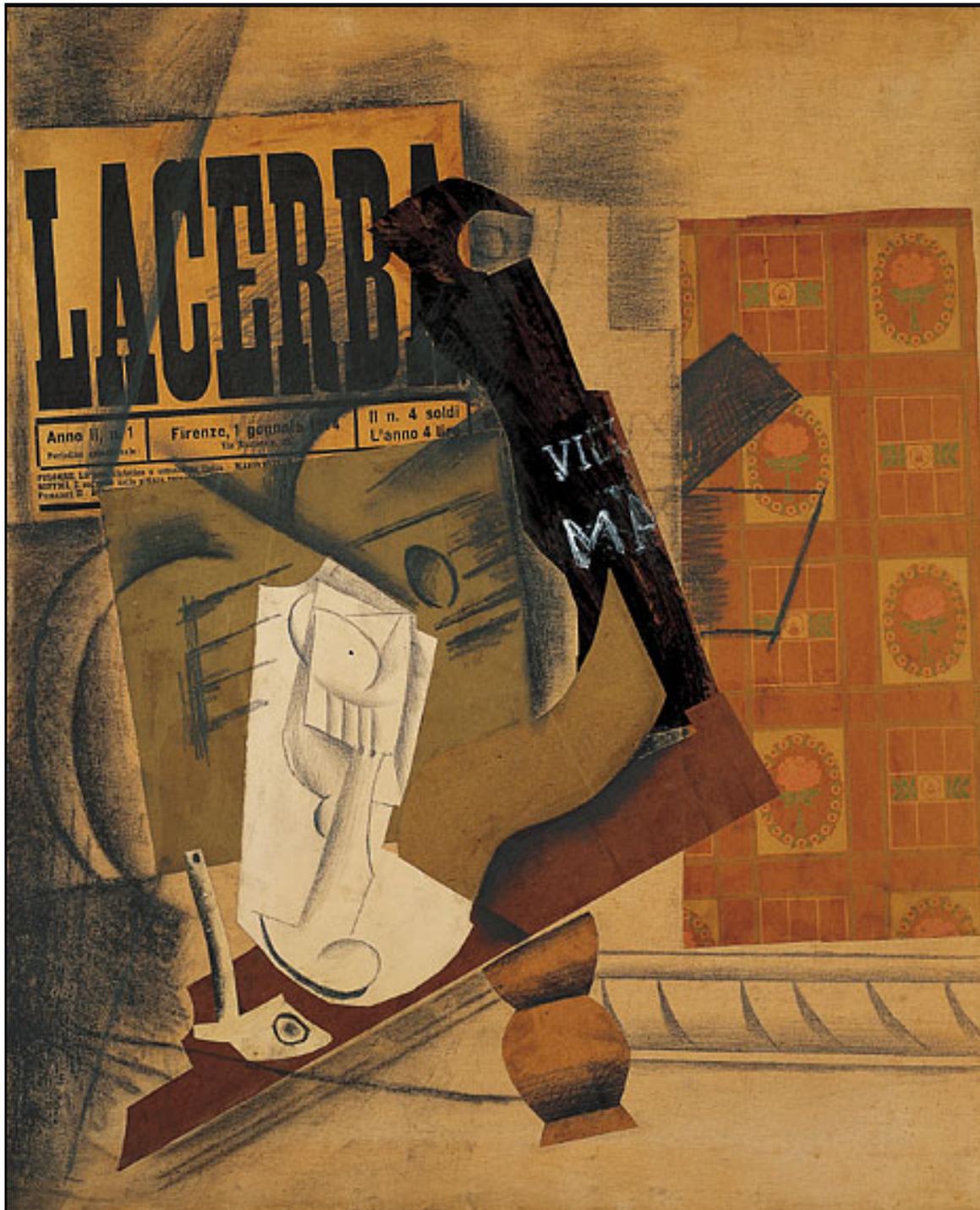
MONTAGE

❖**Sequence of events**—images, musical themes—

in a particular temporal order

COLLAGE

❖ From *coller* (Fr.) "to glue together

❖ Static assemblage of images to create new image

Pablo Picasso
Pipa, Vaso, Botella

MONTAGE

❖Associations viewer or listener makes to **fill in** between the series images or themes **creates a story**

Associated with the film making of Russian director Sergei Eisenstein

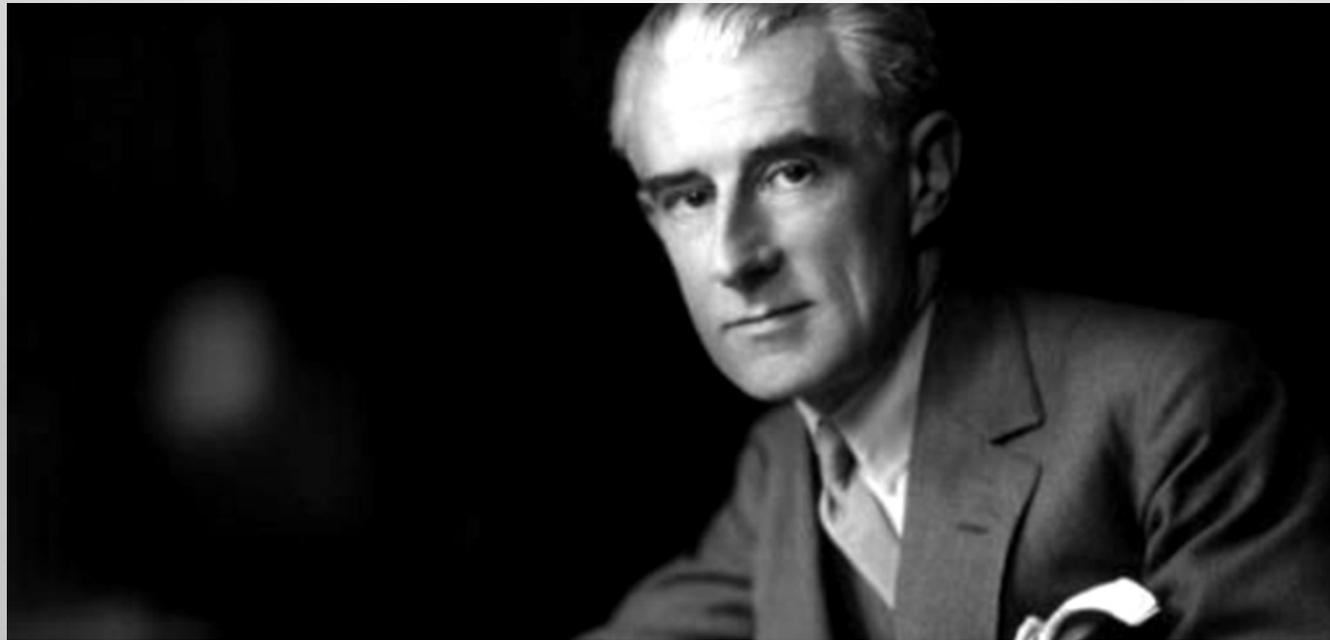Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION (1874)

Modeste Mussorgsky
(orch. Maurice Ravel, 1922)

MODESTE MUSSORGSKY

MAURICE RAVEL

PICTURES

❖ Composer Modeste Mussorgsky meets artist Viktor Hartmann in 1879

❖ Both devoted to the idea of developing Russian music and art

❖ Hartmann dies in 1873 of aneurysm, when he was only 39 years old

PICTURES

❖ Mussorgsky helps organize an exhibition of over 400 of Hartmann's works in 1874

❖ Inspired by the exhibition, Mussorgsky composes *Pictures at an Exhibition—A Remembrance of Viktor Hartmann* for piano in 4 weeks

PICTURES

❖ A Suite (collection of pieces) in **10 movements** ("pictures") depicting various Hartmann paintings

❖ Movements connected by a recurring "**Promenade**" (walking piece), a self-portrait of Mussorgsky walking through the exhibition

❖ **"Montage"** of Mussorgsky (in the Promenade) looking at the pictures in the Hartmann Exhibition

PROMENADE; 1st Picture: **"Gnomus"**

PROMENADE; 2nd Picture: "**Il vecchio castello"** [The old castle]

PROMENADE; 3rd Picture **"Tuileries: Dispute d'enfante après jeux"** [The Tuileries Garden: Children arguing]

4th Picture: **"Bdylo"** [Cattle]

PROMENADE: 5th Picture: **"Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks"**

6th Picture: **"Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuÿle"**

PROMENADE; 7th Picture: **"Limoges: le marché—la grand nouvelle"** [Limoges, the market—the great news]

8th Picture: **"Catacombae (Sepulcrum romanum): con mortuis in lingua mortua"** [Catacombs (Roman sepulcher): with the dead in a dead language]

9th Picture: **"The Hut on Fowl's Legs"** [Baba-Yaga]

10th Picture: **"The Bogatyr Gates in the Capital of Kiev"** [The Great Gate of Kiev]

ORIGINAL PIANO VERSION

❖ Mussorgsky write *Pictures* for solo piano

❖ Considered on of the most difficult pieces to play

- Long—a suite of pieces, unified by the "Promenade"
- Mussorgsky not a trained pianist, and writes for the piano in very idiosyncratic way

Promenade

ORCHESTRATION

❖ The piano version has inspired many composers to arrange it for the orchestra

❖ French composer Maurice Ravel orchestrates *Pictures* in 1922

❖ *Pictures* has inspired many composers to orchestrate the work: Mikhail Tushmalov (1891), Henry Wood (1915), Leo Funtek (1922), Leonidas Leonarid (1924), Leopold Stokowsky (1929, Lucian Cailliet (1937)…

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PROMENADE

❖ Depicts Mussorgsky walking: "roving through the exhibition, now leisurely, now briskly in order to come close to a picture that has attracted his attention, and at times sadly, thinking of his departed friend"

❖ Originally written in 11/4 meter; based on models of Russian folksongs

Promenade

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5. BALLET OF UNHATCHED CHICKS

- ❖ A "Scherzo" (musical joke)
- ❖ Inspiration picture a costume design for the ballet *Trilby*
- ❖ In Ternary form (ABA) with coda

Promenade . . . Ballet of Unhatched Chicks

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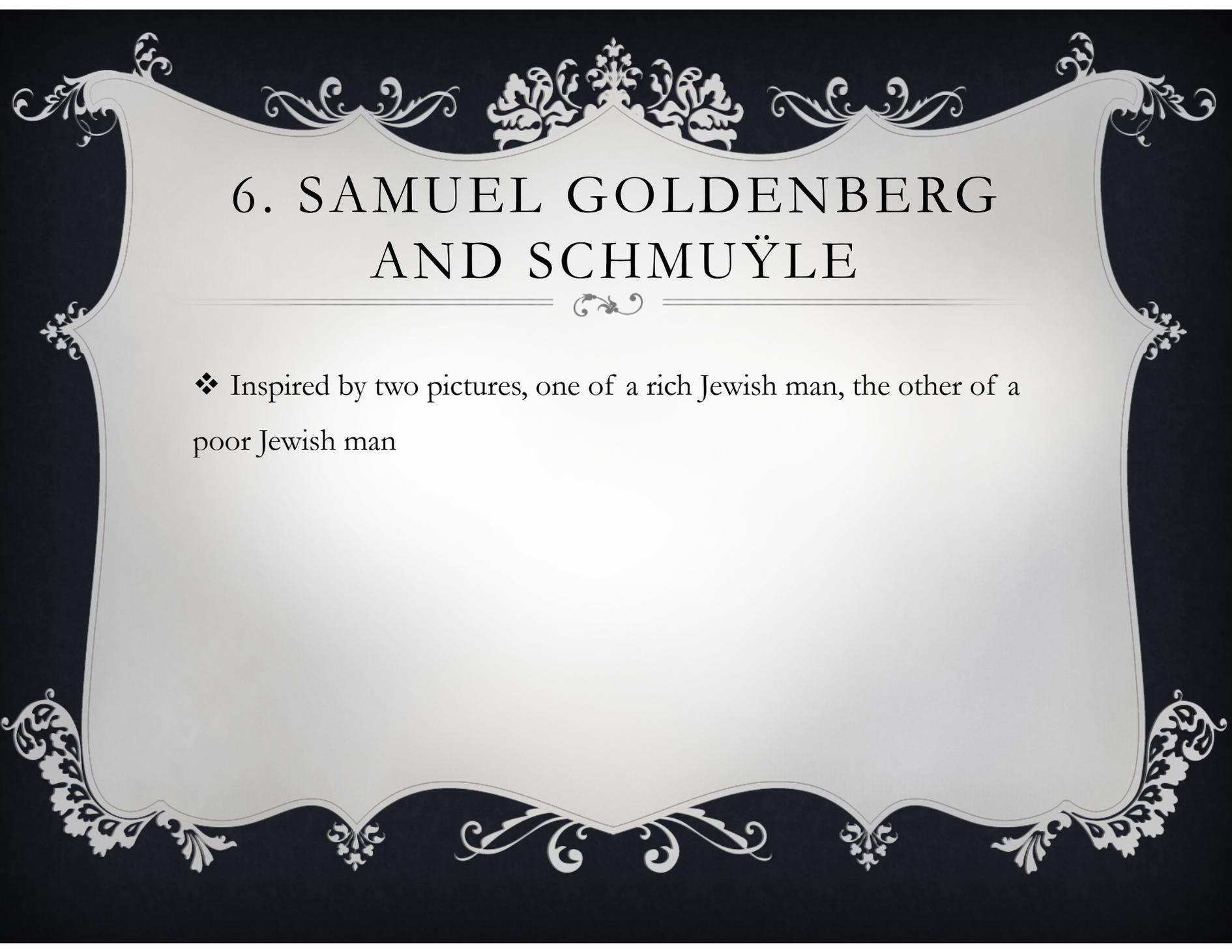PROMENADE: 5th Picture: **"Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks"**

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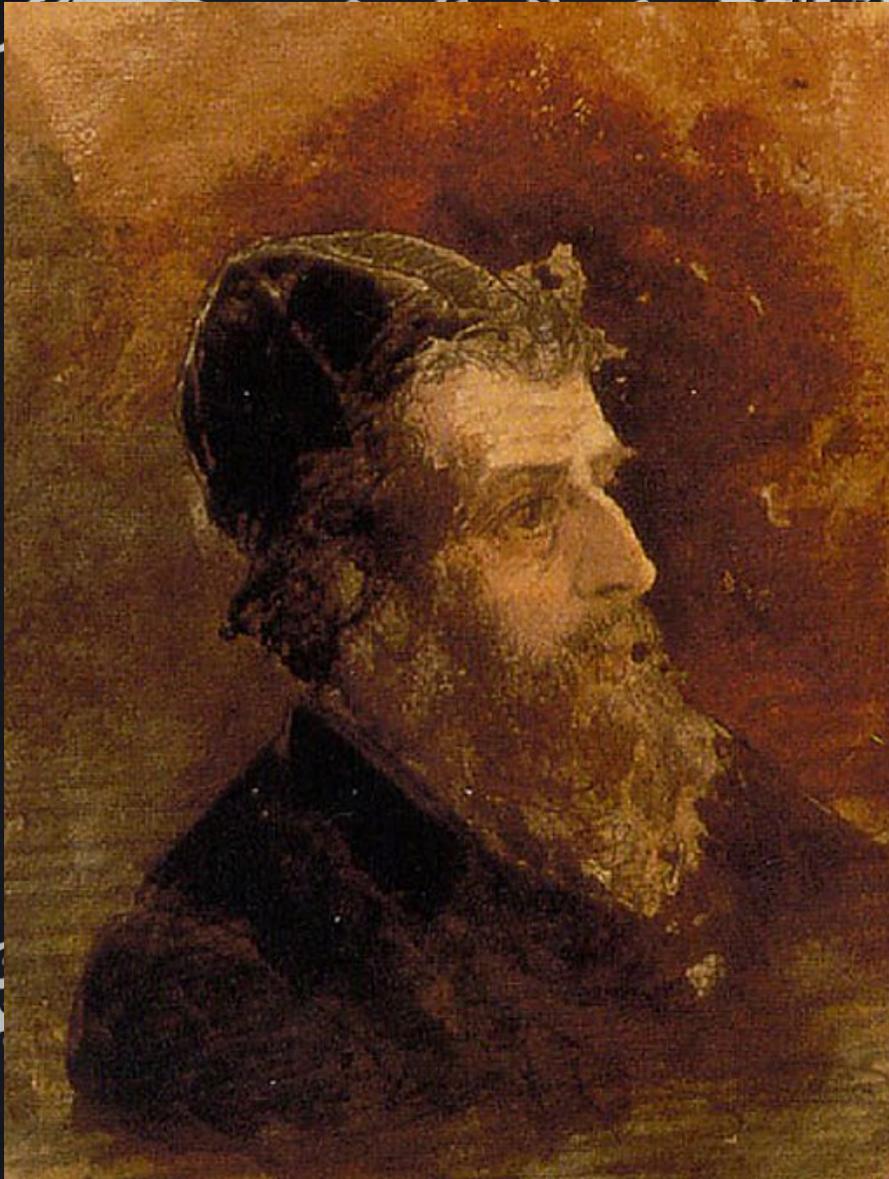
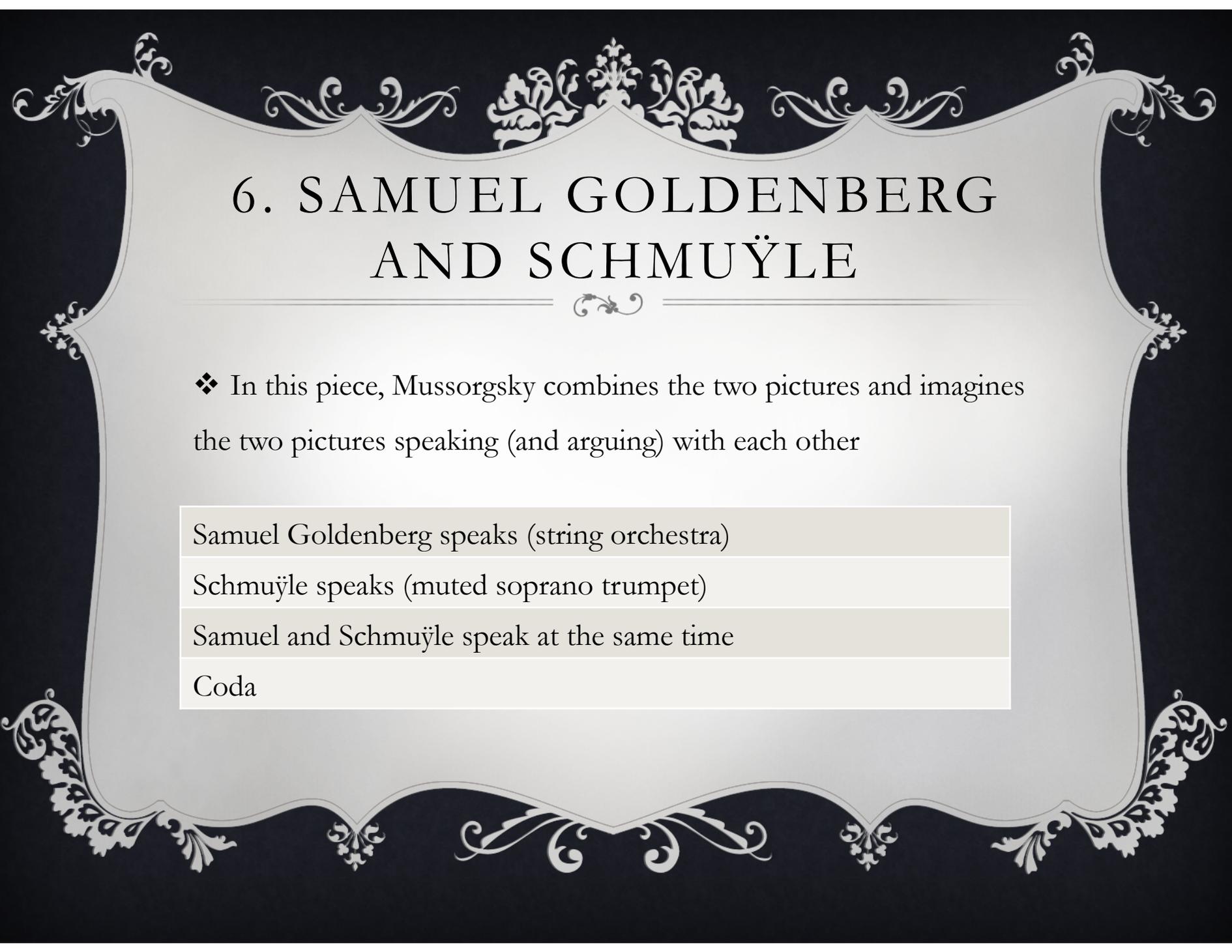9th Picture: **"The Hut on Fowl's Legs"** [Baba-Yaga]

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6. SAMUEL GOLDENBERG AND SCHMUŸLE

❖ Inspired by two pictures, one of a rich Jewish man, the other of a poor Jewish man

6. SAMUEL GOLDENBERG AND SCHMUŸLE

❖ In this piece, Mussorgsky combines the two pictures and imagines the two pictures speaking (and arguing) with each other

Samuel Goldenberg speaks (string orchestra)
Schmuÿle speaks (muted soprano trumpet)
Samuel and Schmuÿle speak at the same time
Coda

Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuÿle

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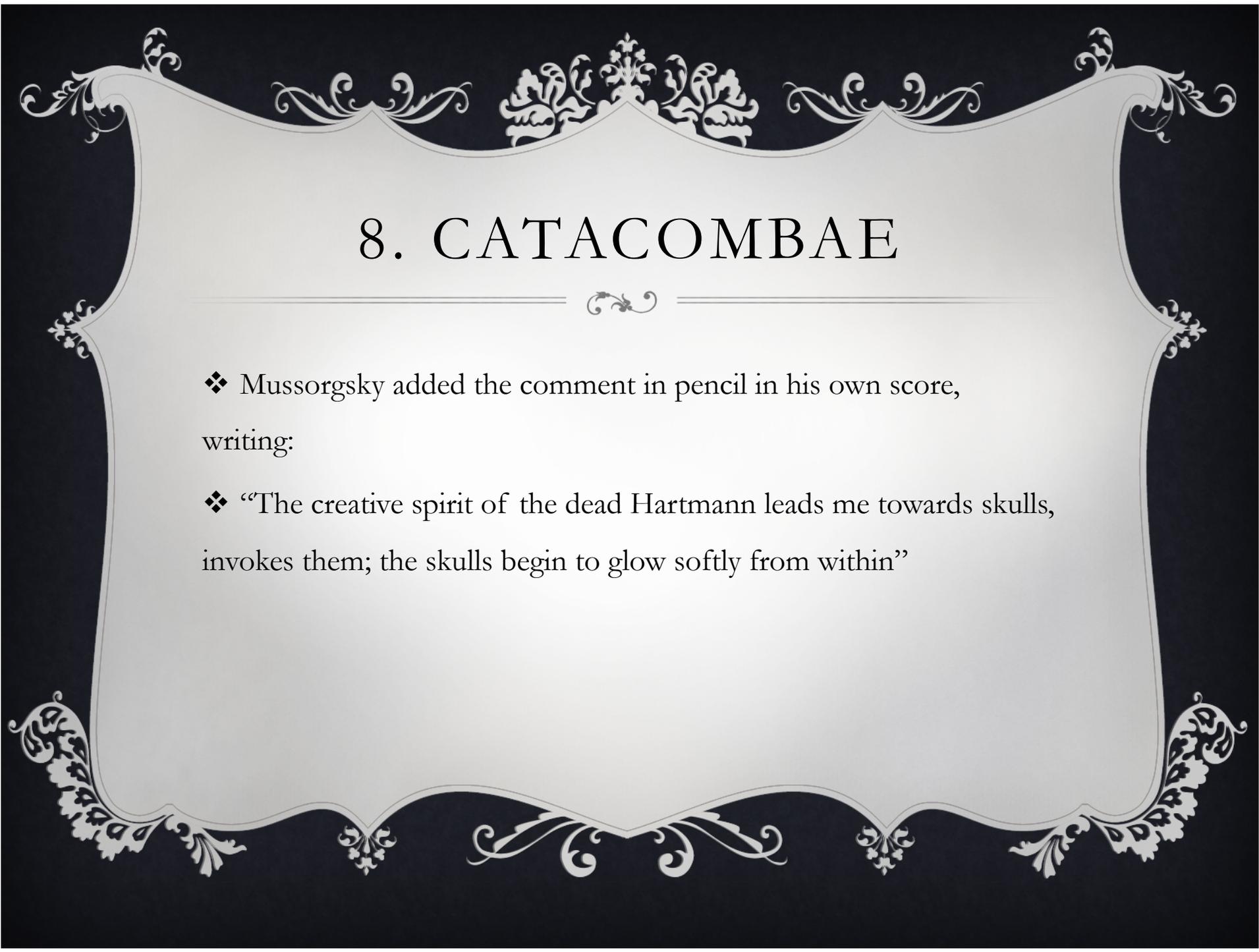9th Picture: **"The Hut on Fowl's Legs"** [Baba-Yaga]

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8. CATACOMBAE

❖ Movement in two sections corresponding to the two-part title

Catacombae (sepulcrum romanum)

Con mortuis in lingua mortua [With the dead in a dead language]

8. CATACOMBAE

❖ Mussorgsky added the comment in pencil in his own score, writing:

❖ "The creative spirit of the dead Hartmann leads me towards skulls, invokes them; the skulls begin to glow softly from within"
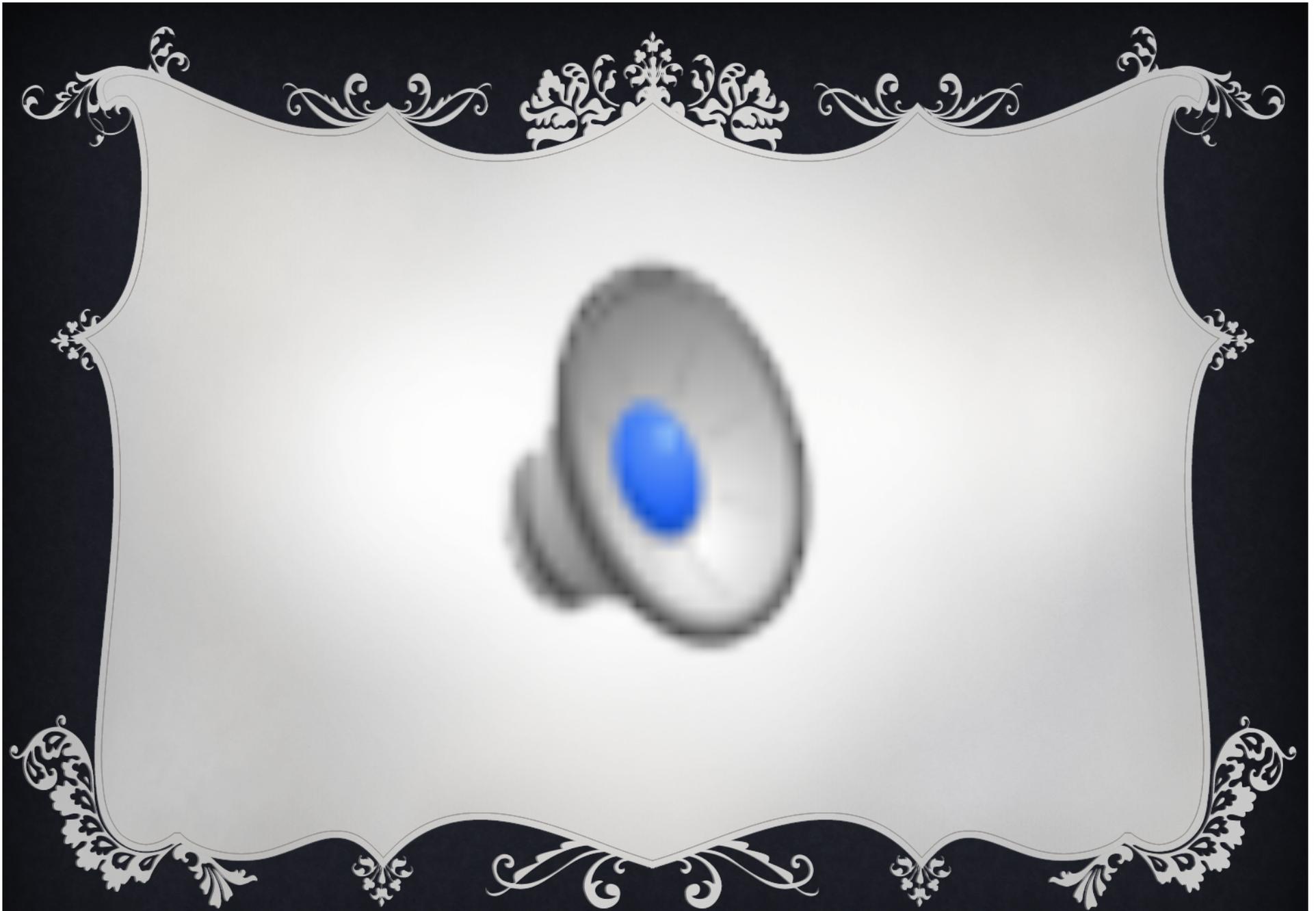
Paris Catacombs

Catacombae (Sepulcrum Romanum): Con mortuis in lingua mortua

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9. THE HUT ON FOWL'S LEGS

❖ Inspired by a Hartmann drawing of a clock shaped as Baba Yaga's hut

❖ Baba Yaga a witch in Russian mythology, that lived in a hut that stood and moved on chicken legs
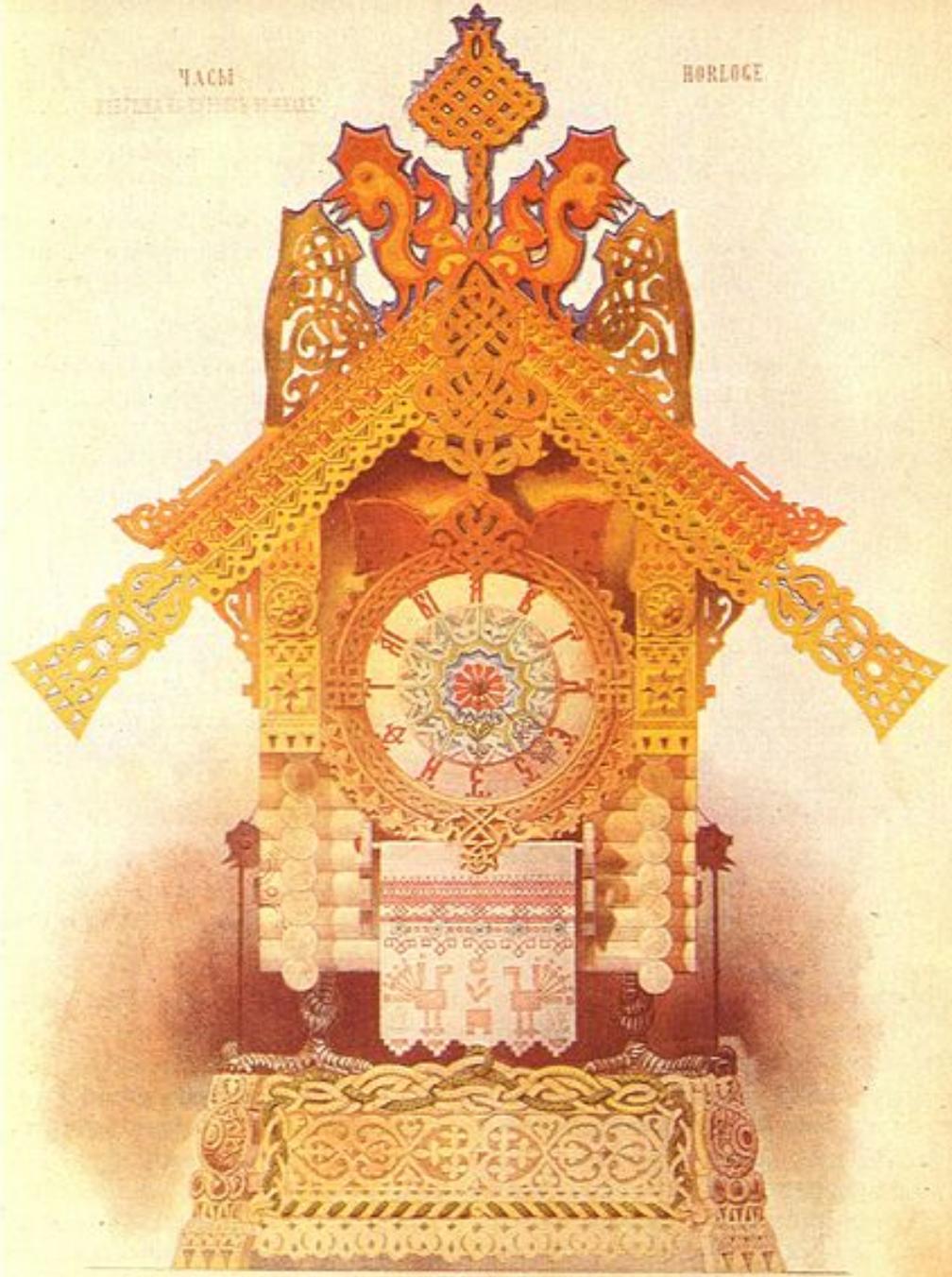
Baba Yaga

Baba Yaga's Hut

МОТИВЫ РУССКОЙ АРХИТЕКТУРЫ   MOTIFS DE L'ARCHITECTURE RUSSE №8

ЧАСЫ   HORLOGE

9.THE HUT ON FOWL'S LEGS

❖ Movement in Ternary form (ABA) + coda

"A" Section: Fast running of Baba Yaga's Hut
"B" Section: mysterious and quiet
Return of "A" Section: Fast running of Baba Yaga's Hut

❖ Movement is connected without break to next (and final movement)

Baba Yaga

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10. GREAT GATE OF KIEV

❖ Inspired by painting by Hartmann for proposed gate in city of Kiev. While the painting won the design competition, the gate was never constructed.

10. GREAT GATE OF KIEV

A: Majestic "Gate" theme [0:00]

B: Hymn Tune [1:09]

A: "Gate" theme, with church imitation of church bells [1:46]

B: Hymn Tune [2:24]

C: Transition, with bells (quotation from his opera *Boris Godunov* [3:00]

A: "Gate" theme (softly [3:30]; Reappearance of "Promenade" [3:40]

D: Transition and Buildup [3:55]

A: "Gate" Theme [4:13]; transition [5:09]; "Gate" Theme [5:24]

The Great Gate of Kiev

PIECES TO KNOW

ALL FROM "PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION"

- ❖ "Promenade"

- ❖ "Ballet of Unhatched Chicks"

- ❖ "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuÿle"

- ❖ "Catacombae"

- ❖ "The Hut on Fowl's Legs [Baba Yaga]"

- ❖ "The Great Gate of Kiev"

TERMS TO KNOW

- ❖ Collage, Montage
- ❖ Suite
- ❖ Overture, Concert Overture
- ❖ Program Music
- ❖ Absolute Music
- ❖ Leitmotiv

- ❖ Viktor Hartmann
- ❖ Promenade
- ❖ Ternary Form (ABA)
- ❖ Rondo Form (ABACA)
- ❖ Catacombs
- ❖ Baba Yaga