

DESCRIPTIONS OF MEMORIES OF CLEVELAND (RECUERDOS DE CLEVELAND)

In April of 2021, I traveled to Cleveland for the first time. Like most tourists in a new place—I was very intrigued and attentive to all details in the city. I visited for a recording engagement and my stay involved a lot of walking—an activity that often makes me ponder. This experience provided the images that I now use as titles for these pieces.

For instance, the first thing that captured my attention was the birds. I listened to some sounds that reminded me of a *Mockingbird* (a little bird that mimics the sounds of other animals). The mockingbird is a natural musician of mother nature, and therefore the title I used for the first piece. The same thought took me to another related memory, the wonderful book (and later movie) *To Kill a Mockingbird*, with its central message of empathy –to stand in each other’s shoes. The title and musical motive were then used for an ensemble piece; in the case of *Mockingbirds*, the piece is just that, a party of three mockingbirds mimicking the sound of each other.

In my walking, the other sounds and images that were present were cars and streets. From this, came the titles for some of the pieces. *Crossroads* is an experience I had by crossing the intersections of Euclid Ave. Since the piece is a repeating arpeggio pattern, for me, every string represents the sound of different cars in the middle of the intersection. For this, when played, the artist should pay attention to every string (or car) and the natural rhythm that the string creates. Another image that captured my attention was a *Little Road* that I saw in a small corner. When composing, I had that little road image very clear in my head and interpreted it as a slow and nostalgic piece. In the nights, there were *Lightings* in all roads, cars were always in *Exchanges*, and then, the piece *Easy Walk* describes the happy walk I did after finishing an important recording (the main reason for my visit to the city).

Walking is an activity that cherished my reflective personality. From these pondering came the titles for the other pieces. *Memory* is one of those thoughts, but, in this case, I invite artists to imagine their own memory with the music. One morning, I imagined *Flaring Winds* by admiring the clouds in the city. I also reflected on those things that were *Far Away*, leaving the title open to the interpretation of the artists. With the same musical subject, *A Different Journey* is a happy and uplifting variation of *Far Away* but for ensemble. In the journey of any walker, there are surprises that change his expectancies; these surprises are what makes the journey interesting, inspiring me for the title of this ensemble piece.

Finally, there are other titles that show my Latino heritage. For instance, *Salseado* is an adjective related to the music of Salsa (a very characteristic music from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Colombia, and New York). Salsa –which means sauce in English— is a music that you will most probably listen to when visiting *La Villa Hispana* on the west side of Cleveland. The piece *Salseado* is a minimalistic and counterpoint exercise for guitar ensemble. In the same fun mood, I envisioned *Sparks*, in the ostinato of the bass, like sparks of lights that accompanied the Latino melody. In this, we are, again, putting spice to the music... *salseado*. *Escape* is also very rhythmic and ends the selection of the solo pieces. *Escape* is the feeling I get when leaving, and, in the case of my stay in Cleveland, I left behind the wonderful inspiration that I received while visiting the city by returning home.