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# IMAGERY AND THE COMPOSITION OF

## **MUSIC**

An insight into an original compositional method inspired by mental imagery

Volume II

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Submitted for the degree of PhD in Creative Practice (Music) to:

City University, Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB.

Research conducted at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, Laban Building, Creekside, London SE8 3DZ.

July, 2016.

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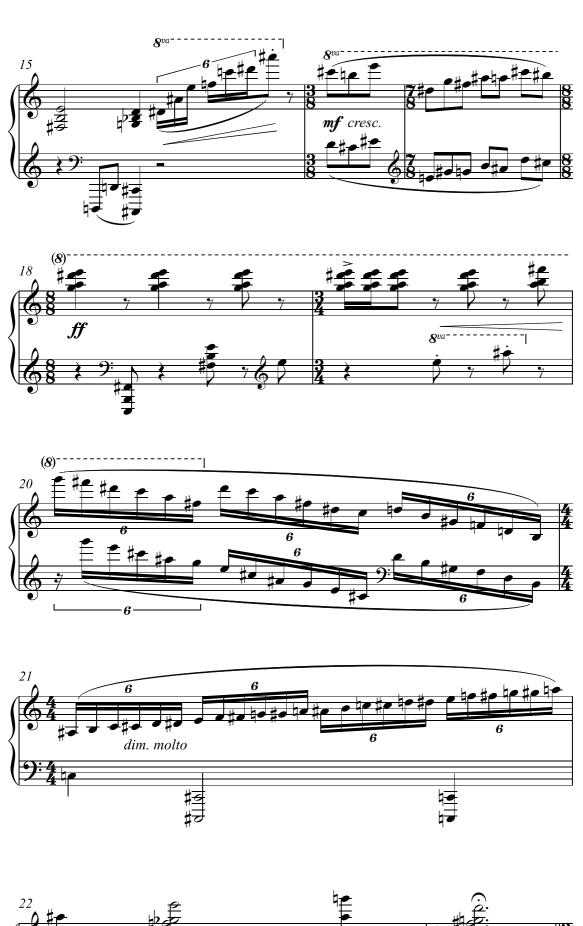
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#### Piano sonata no.1

Formas e simetrías



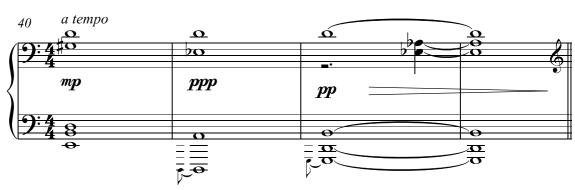




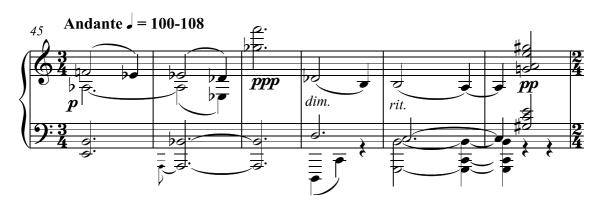


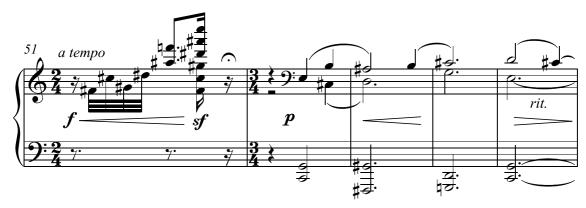
















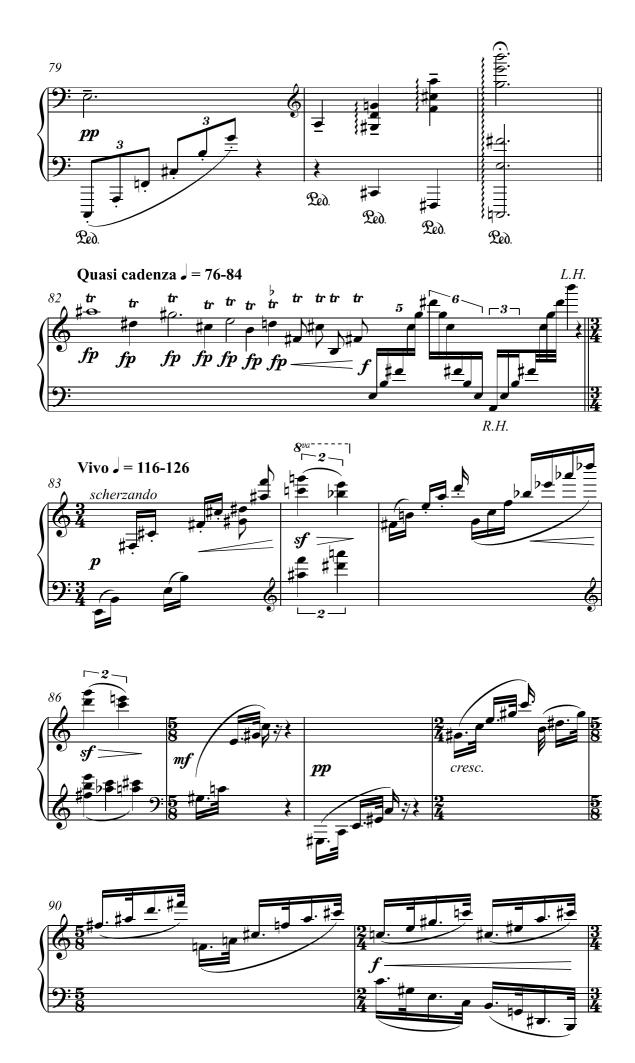


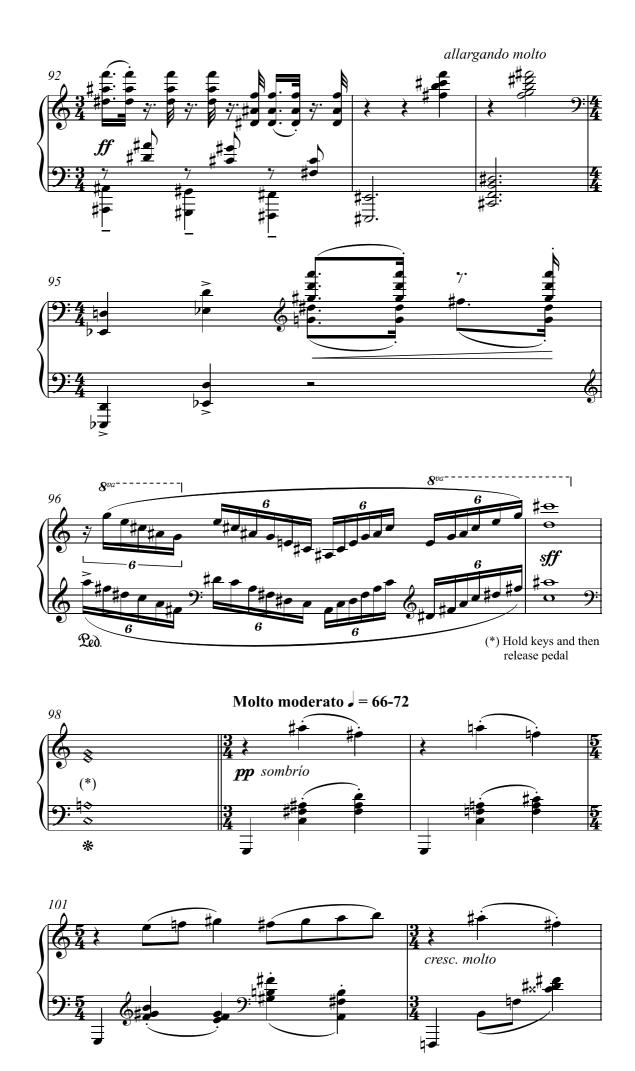












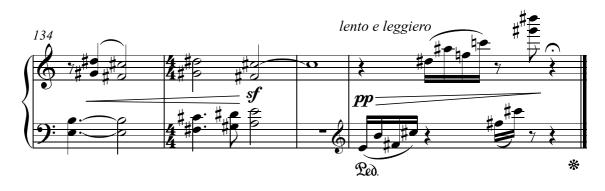






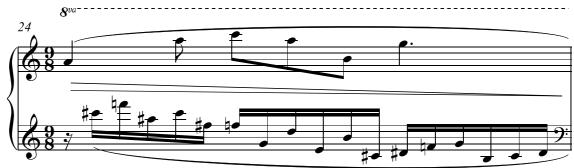








Var. I: Poco meno mosso .. = 42-46 pp espress. pp mpppp =

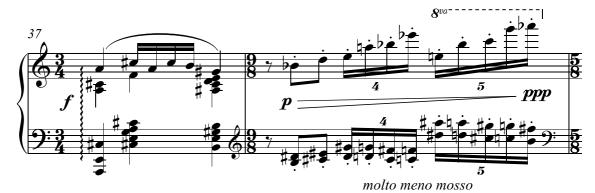


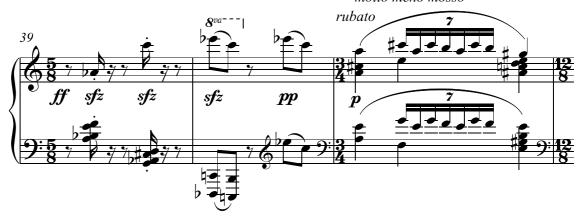




Var. II: Poco allegretto  $\int = 69-76$ 







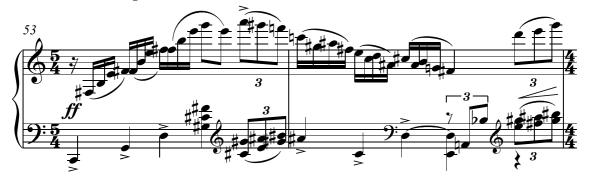




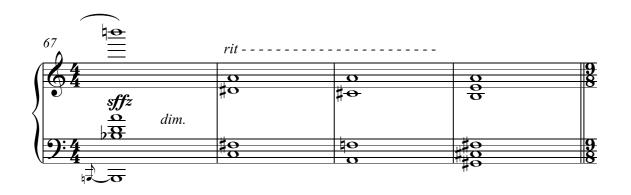
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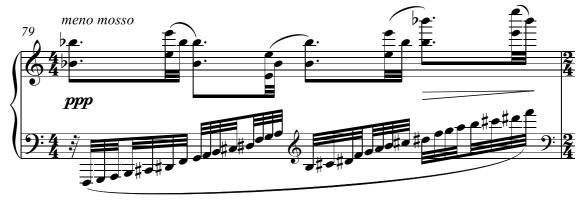


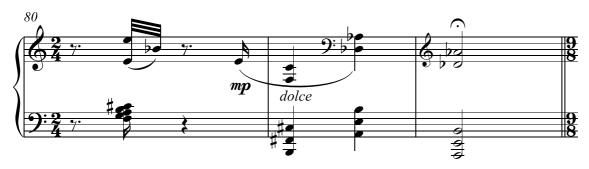


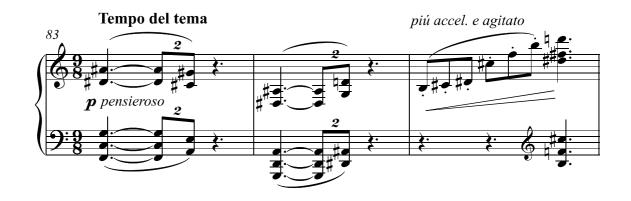


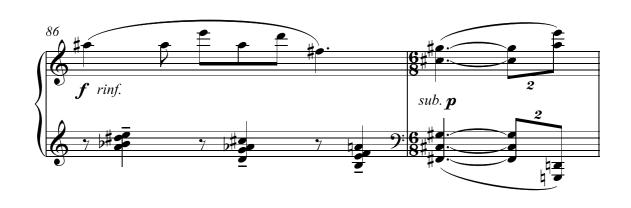


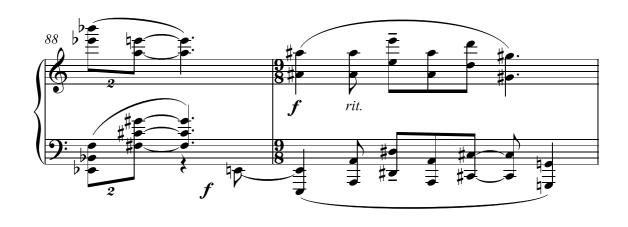


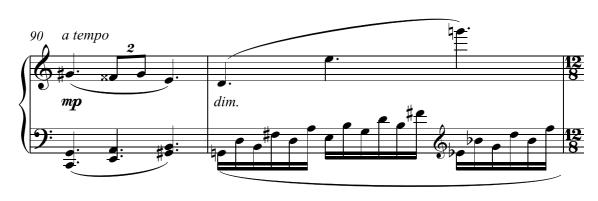


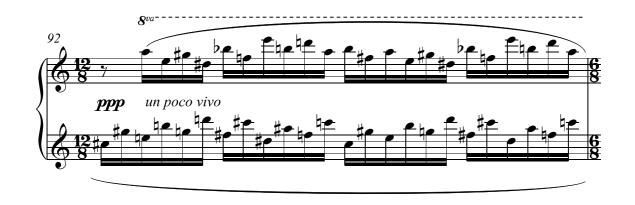


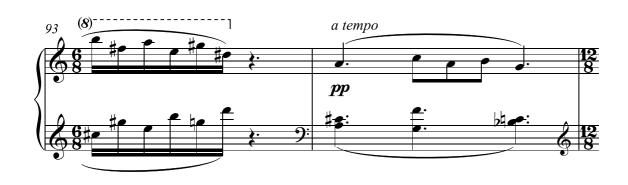


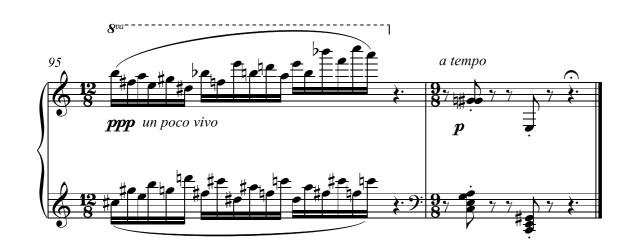
















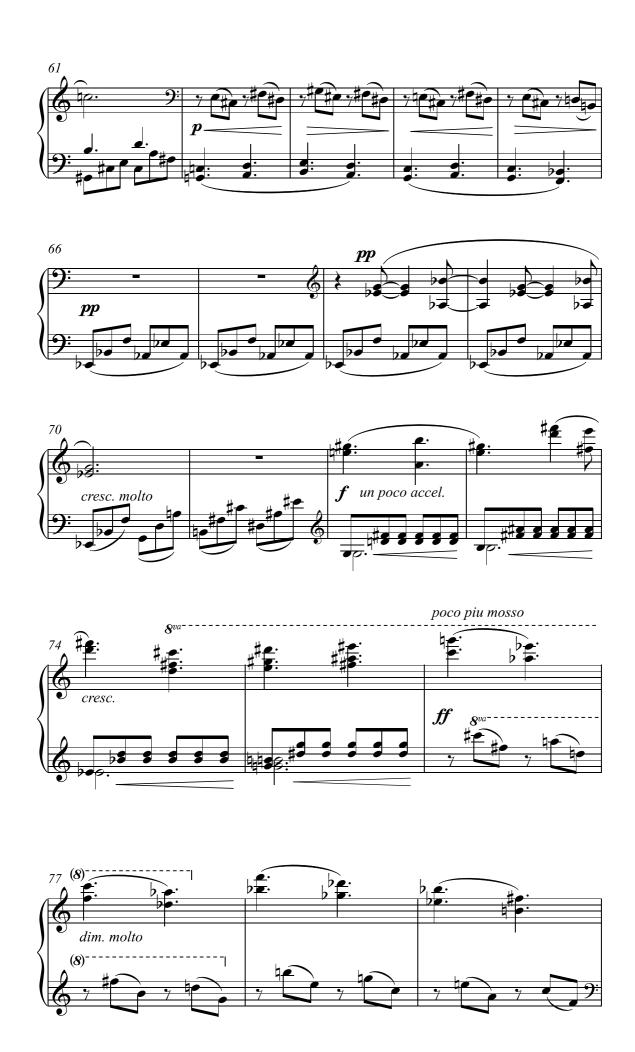






















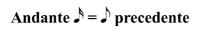




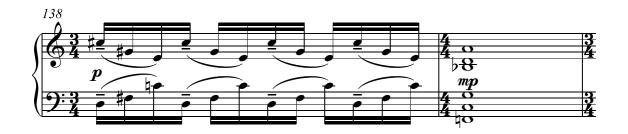


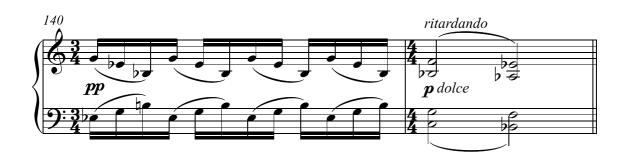


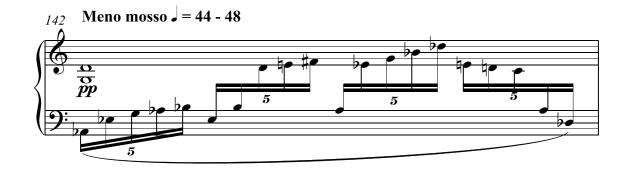










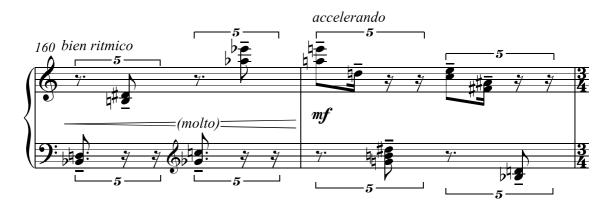




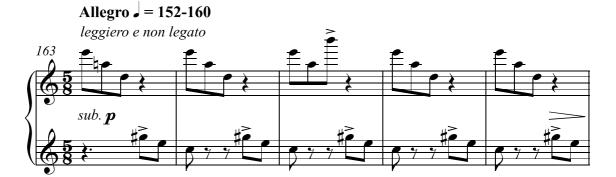


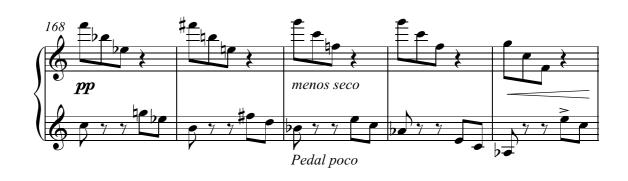














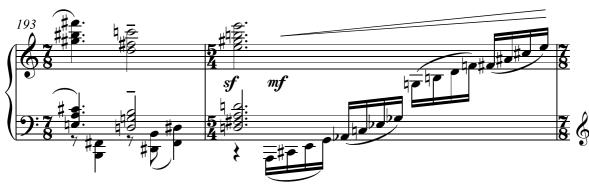






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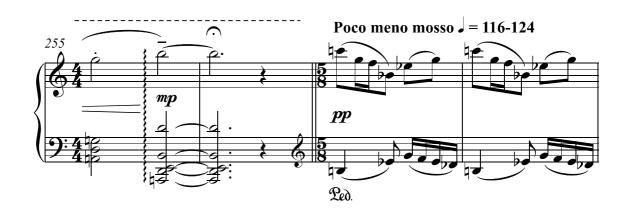




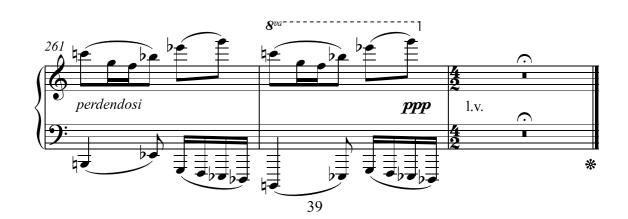












## for my brother Luis Sendeiros imaxinarios

## Claroscuro





















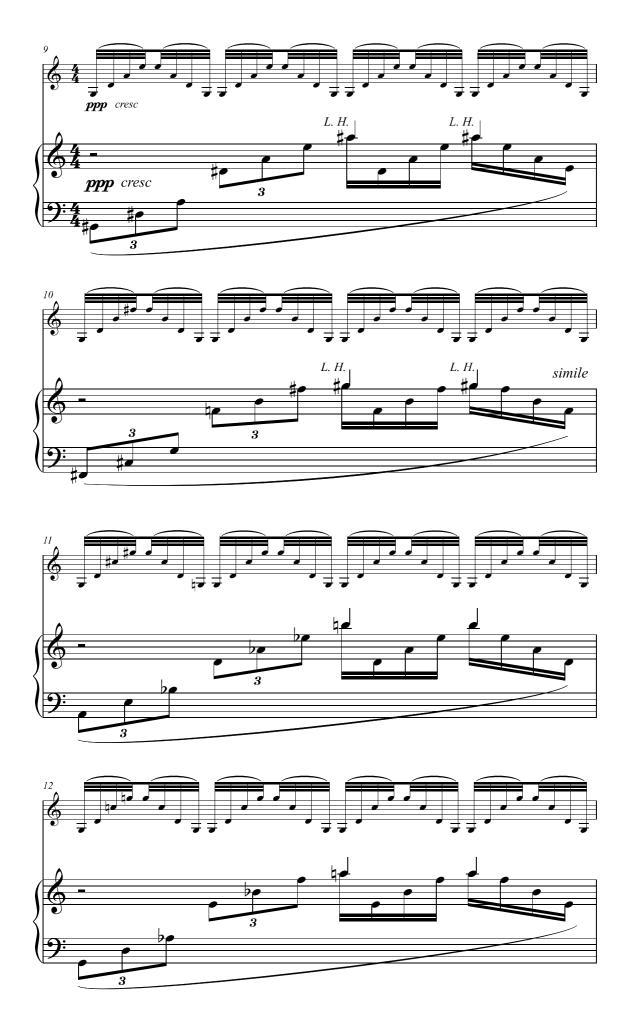


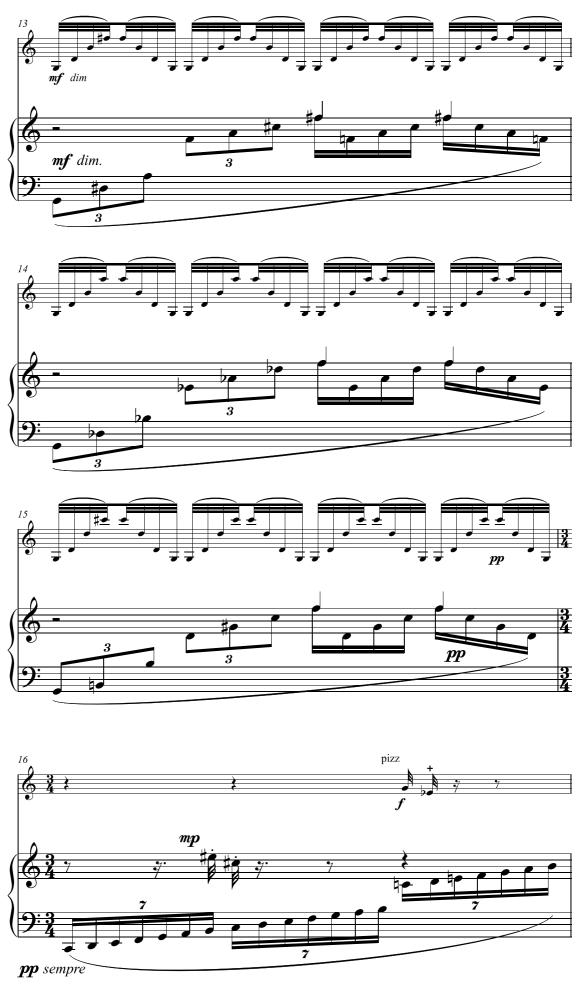


II Natureza e arquitectura



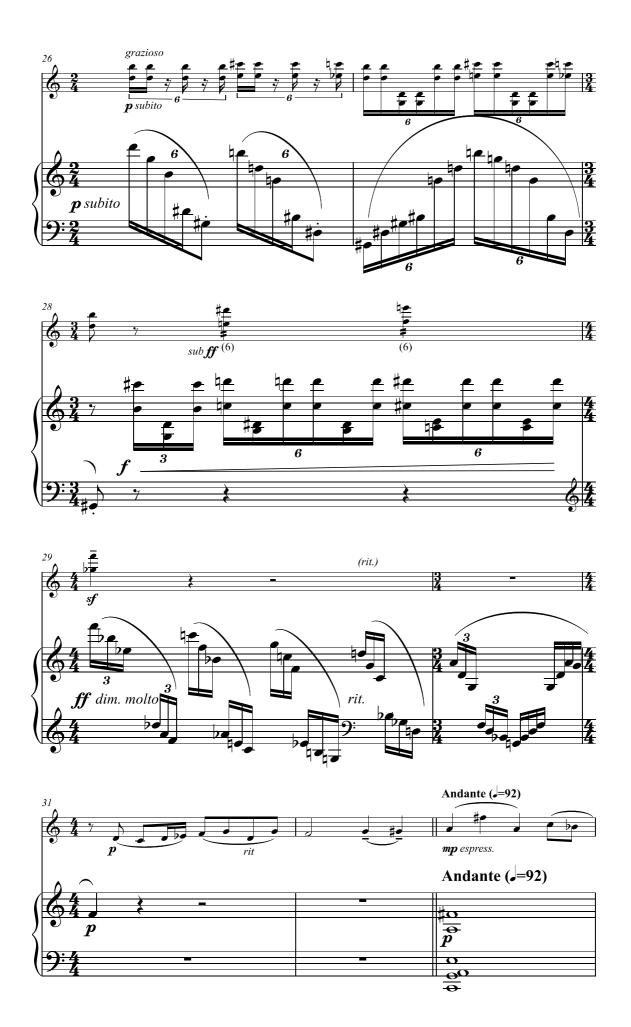






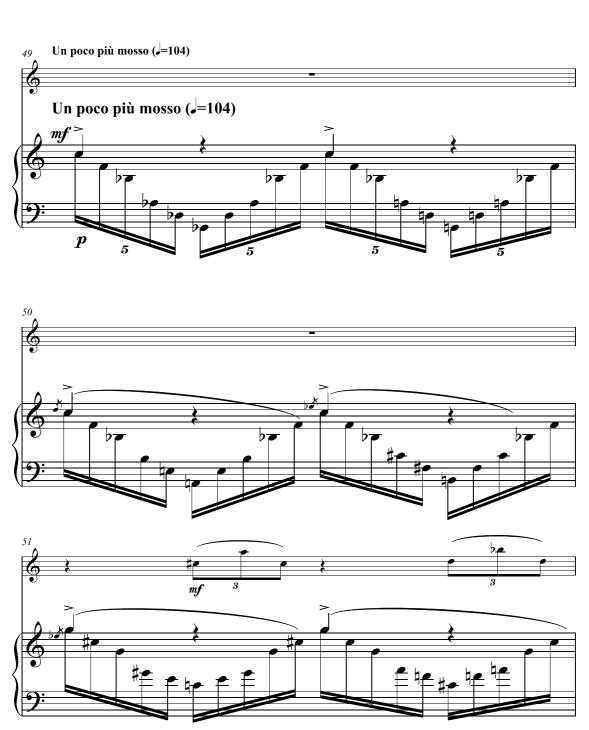












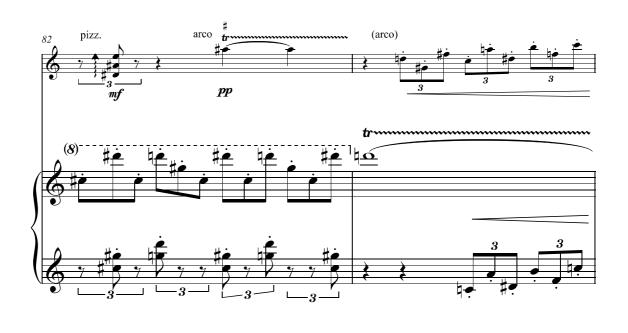


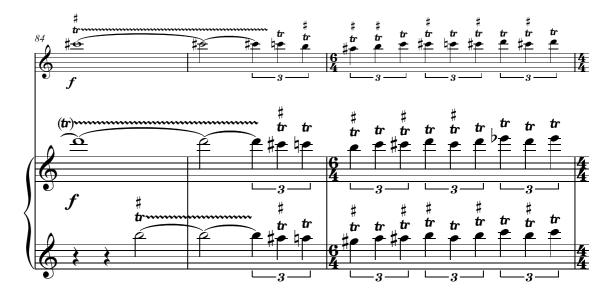




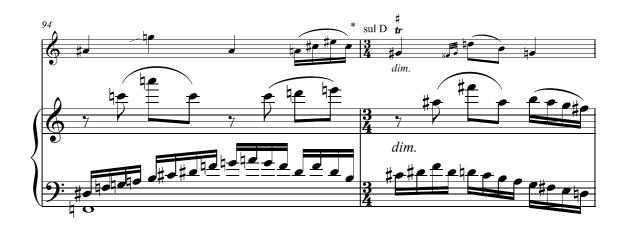


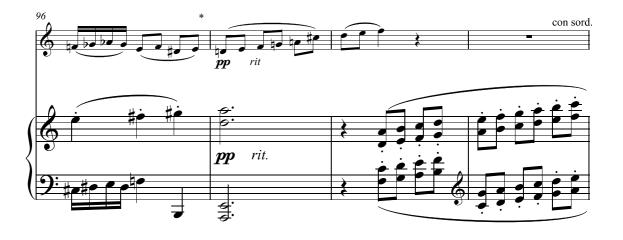


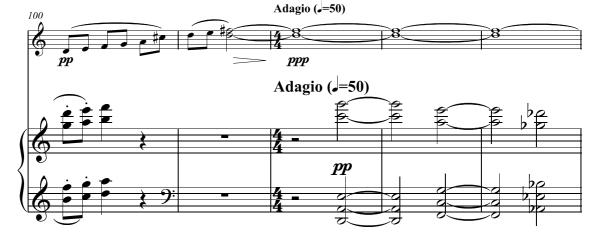


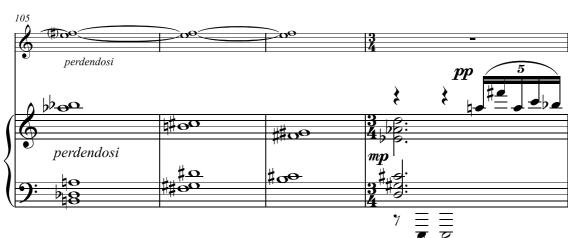








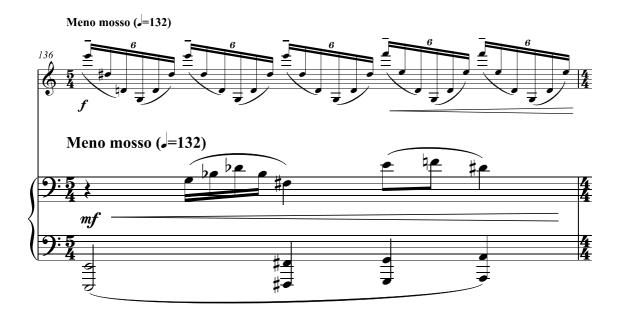








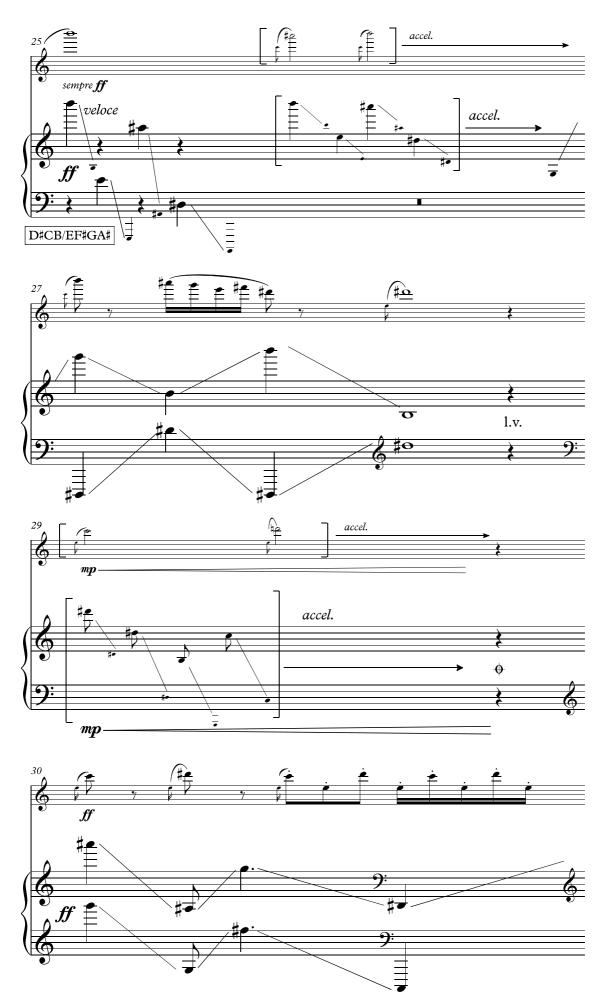


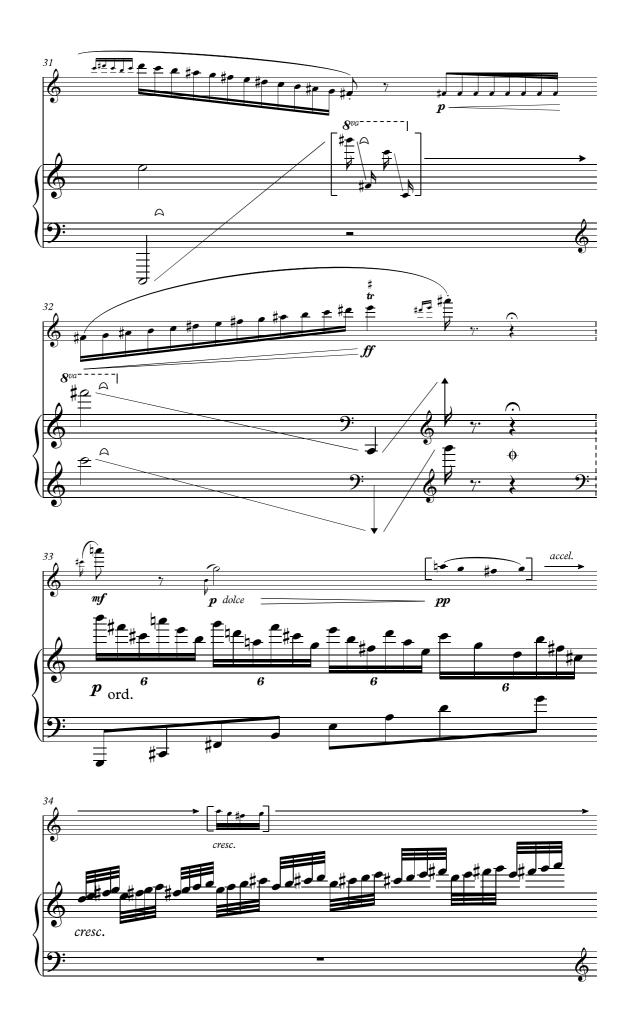




## Jakobsland















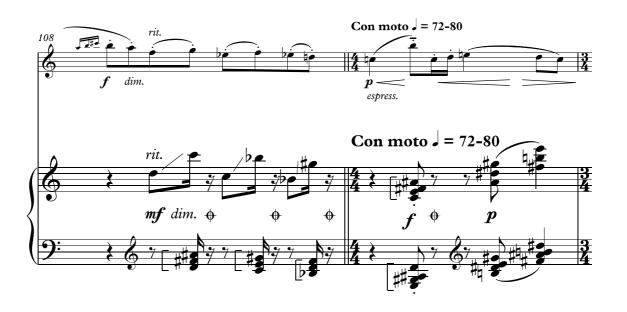


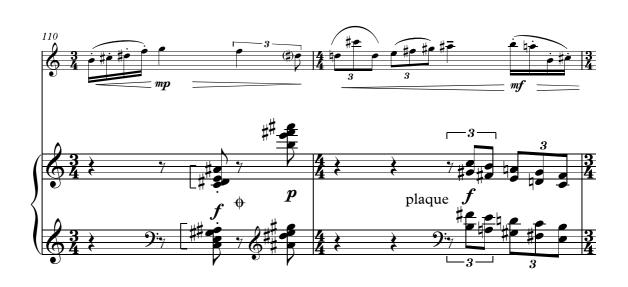


































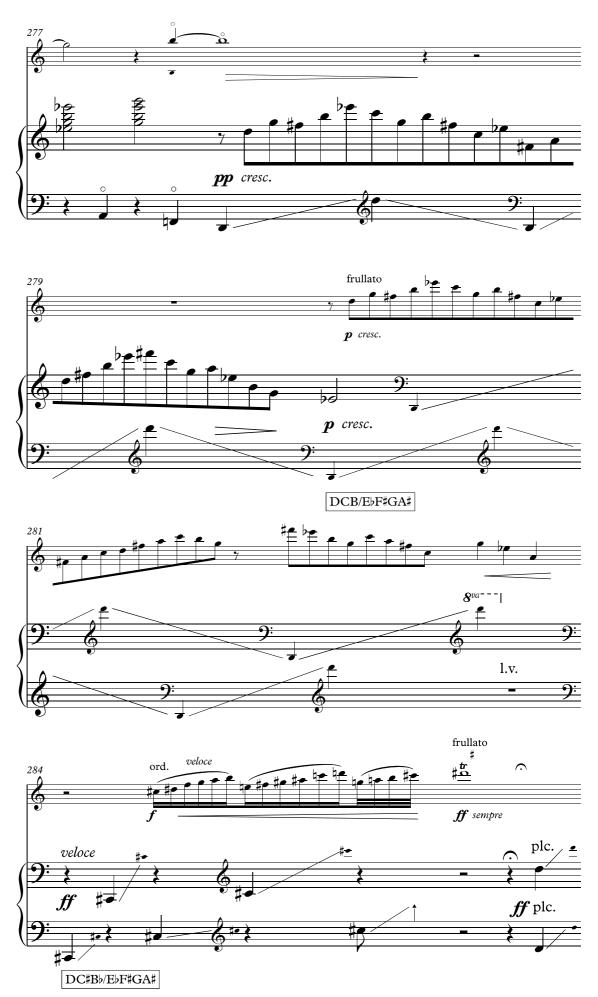


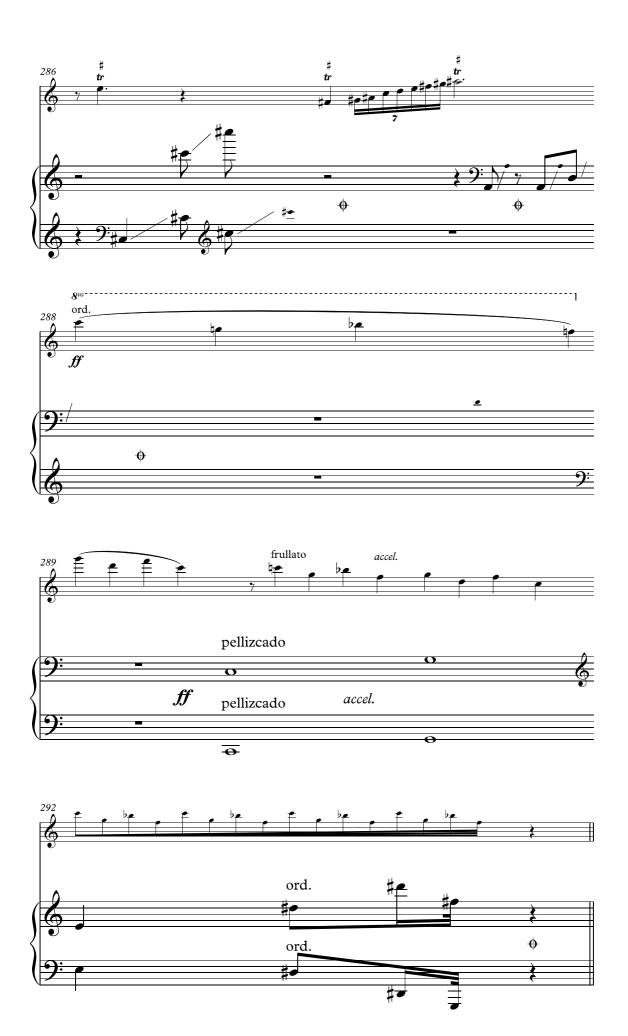


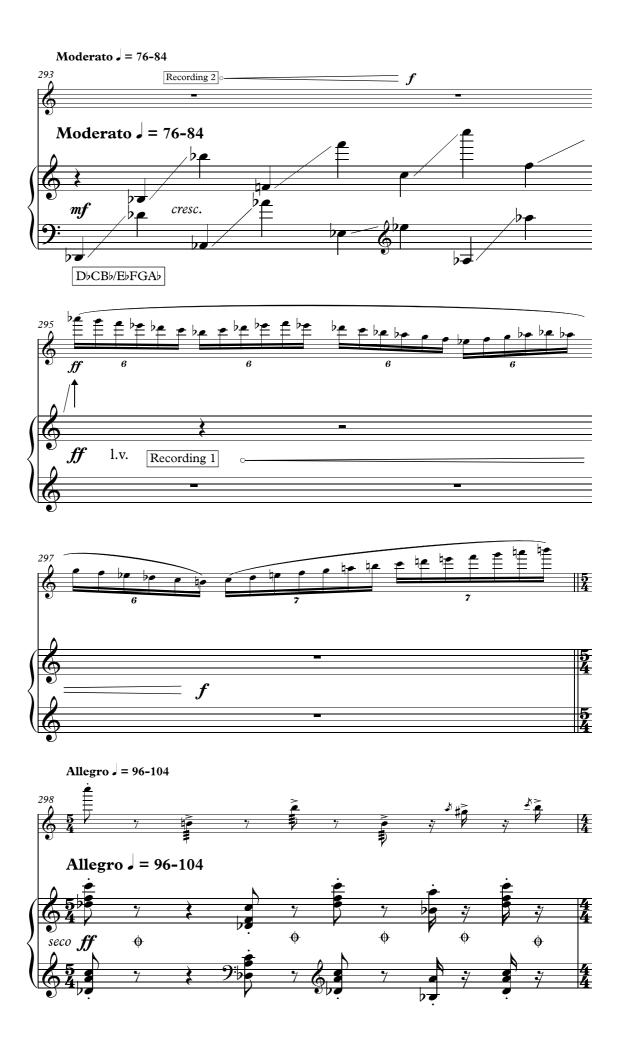




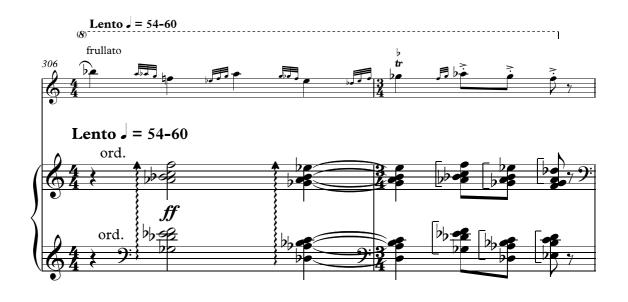


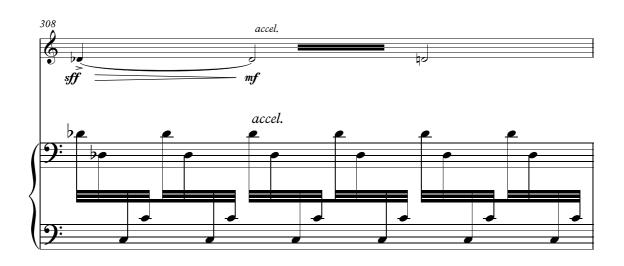


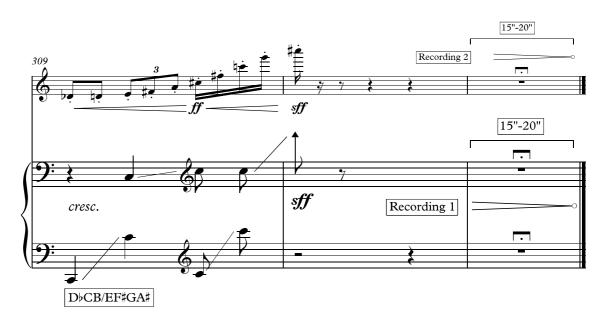




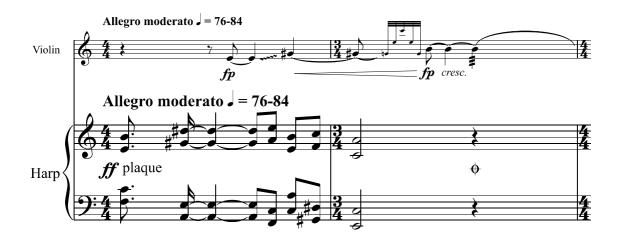








## Lembranzas de Jakobsland











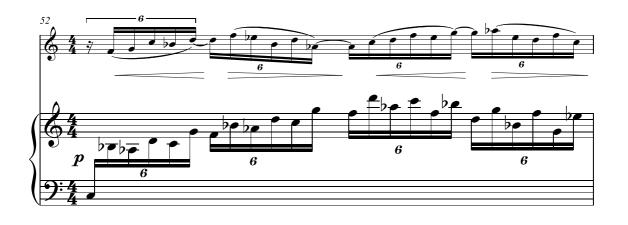


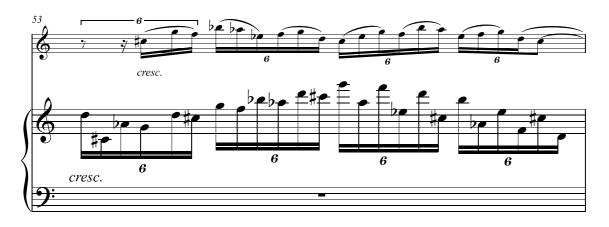


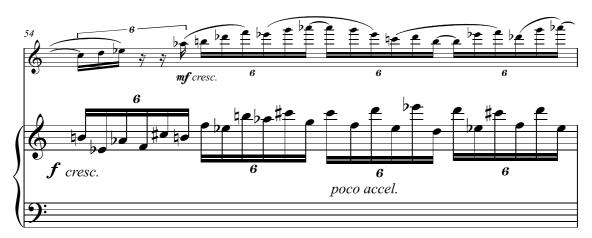


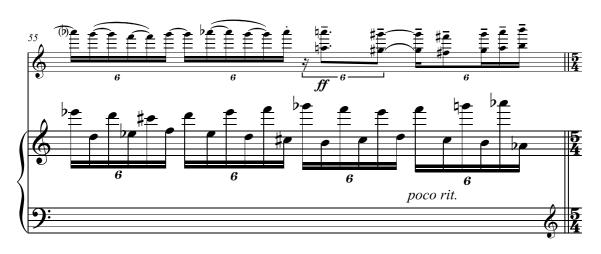








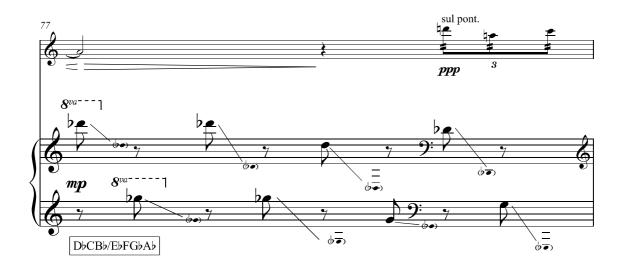


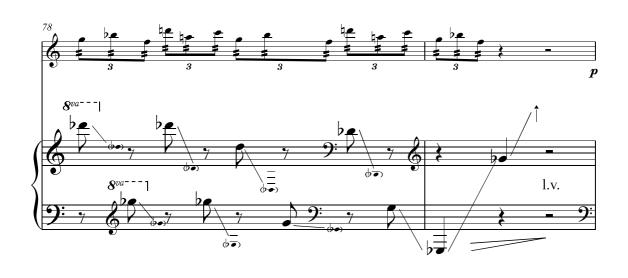






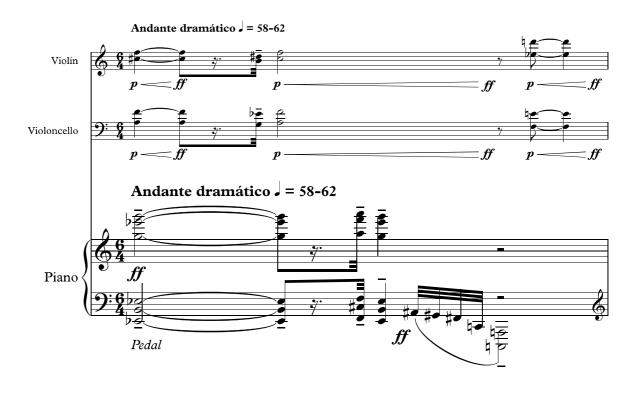


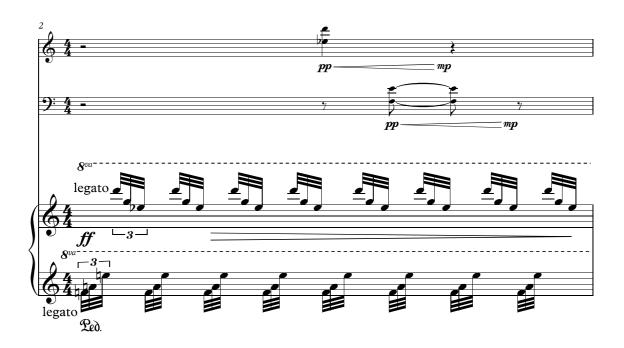


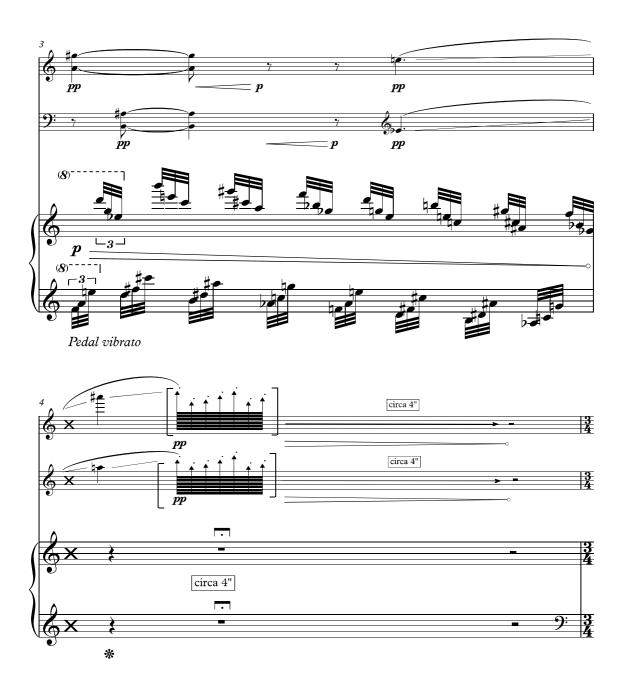


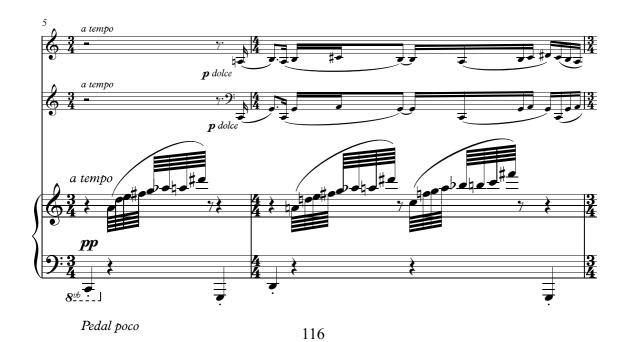


## Un afogado





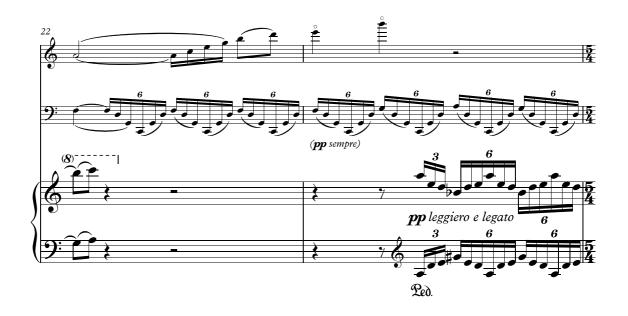


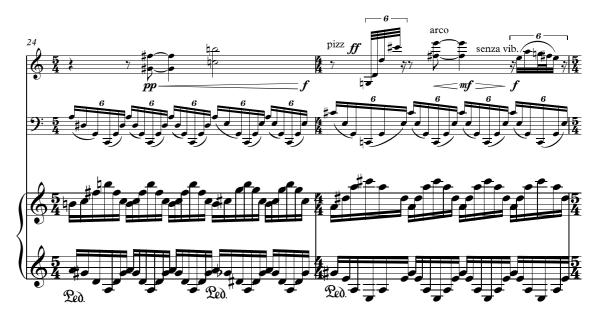




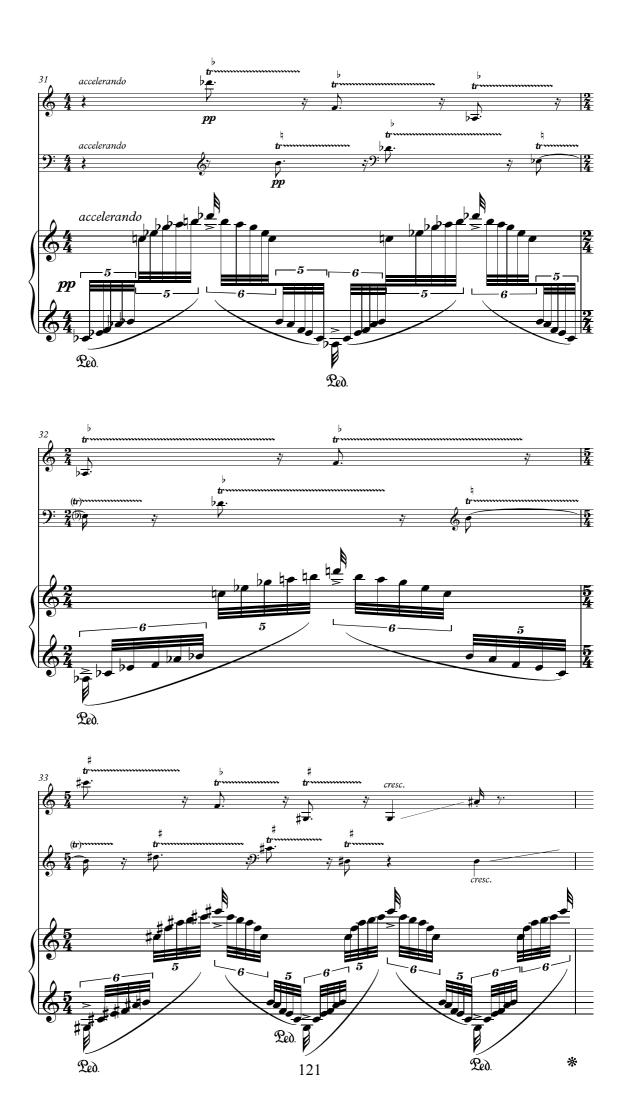


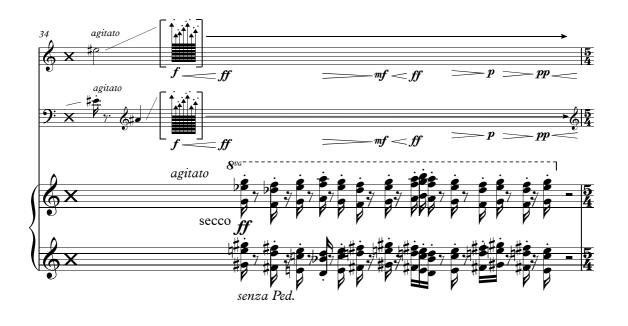


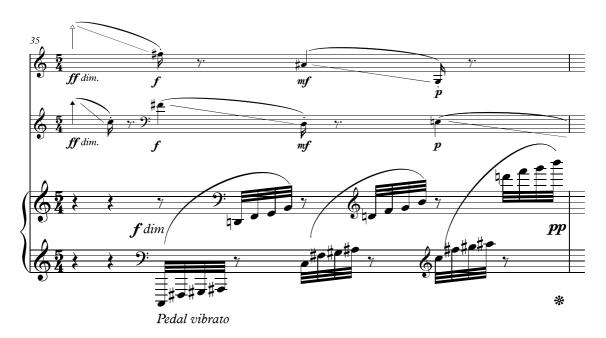


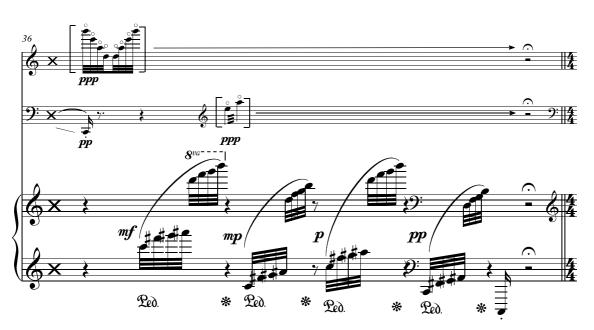




















\* Pizzicato with finger on the strings











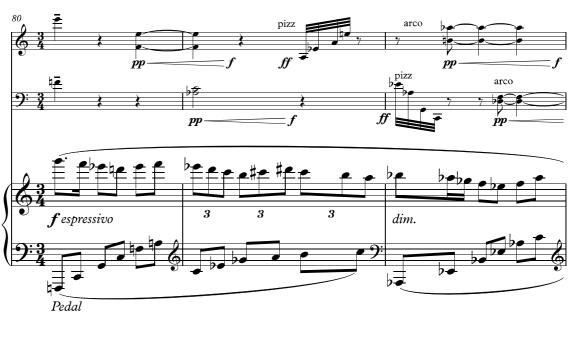


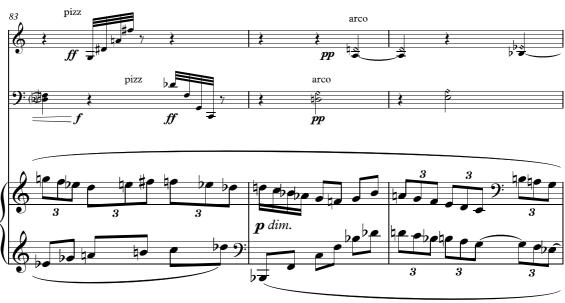


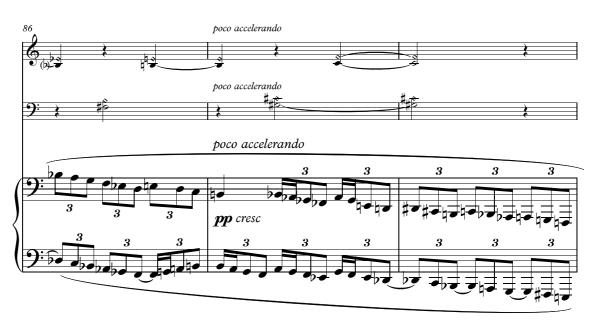


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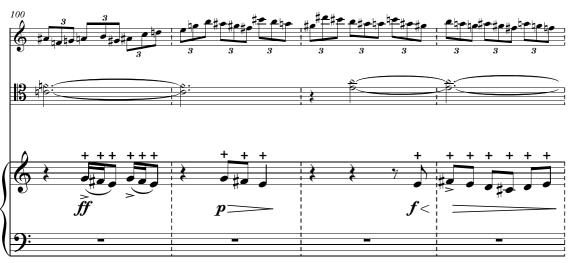


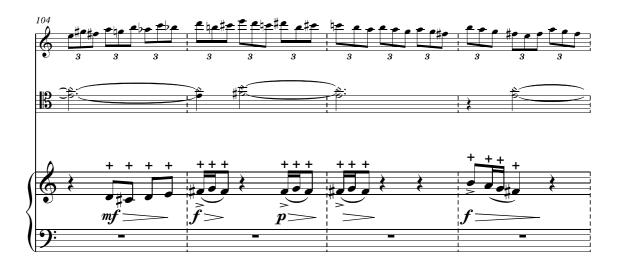


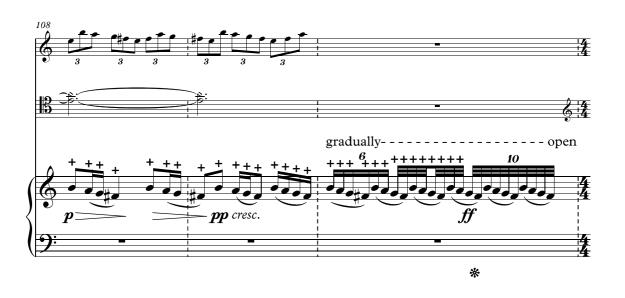


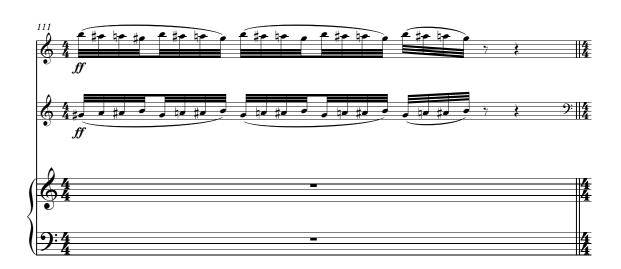




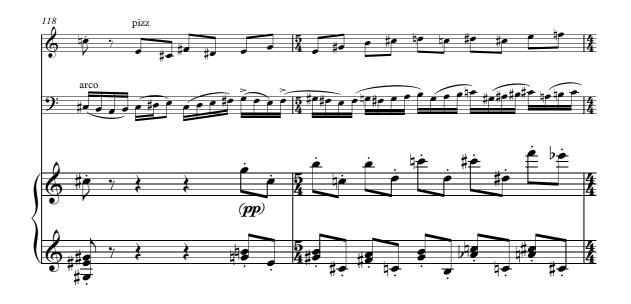
















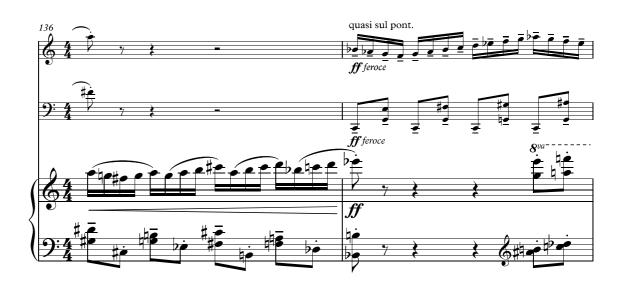






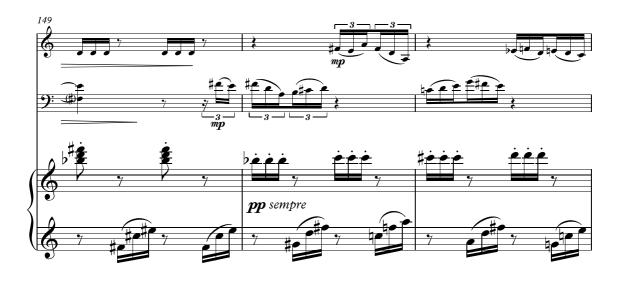
























## Navarra

## Terras do Nahar

## Lento. Molto libero e rubato J = 55-60





**p** ma sonore

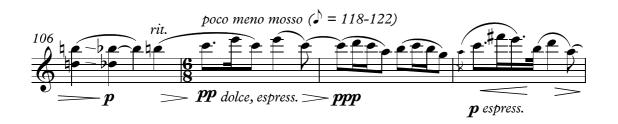
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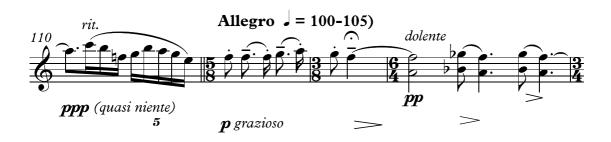


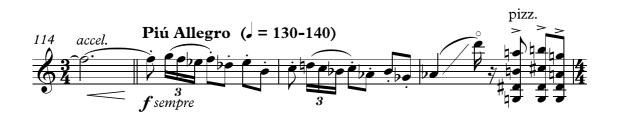












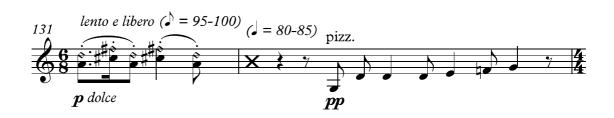














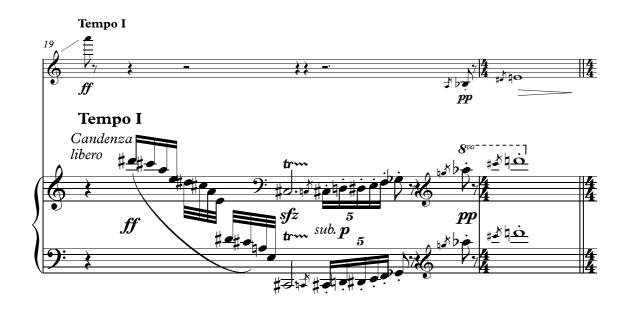
## Encuentro caballeresco





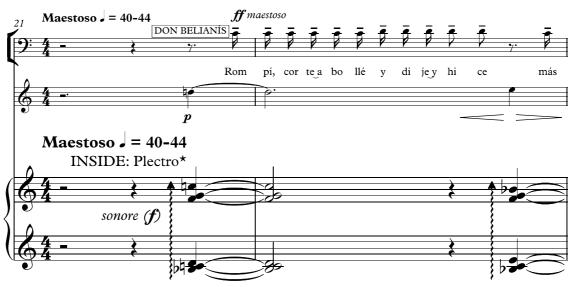






## NARRATOR:

Imaginemos. Imaginemos. En algún lugar, reservado a los héroes literarios. Un encuentro magnífico. Don Belianís de Grecia. Don Quijote de la Mancha. Caballeros andantes, artífices de famosísimas hazañas. En tal encuentro, hay música. Don Belianís de Grecia, a Don Quijote de la Mancha:

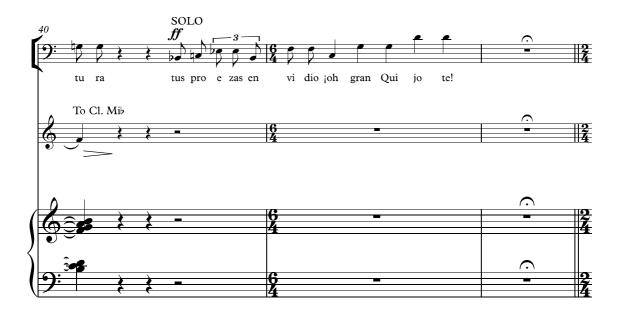


\*Use middle pedal to sustain the approppriate notes and damp the others









## NARRATOR:

Mucho agradaron a Don Quijote estas palabras. Pero poco duró este agrado. Pues un misterioso personaje aparece. Su patria, desconocida. Su verbo, elocuente. Su nombre: Solisdán.





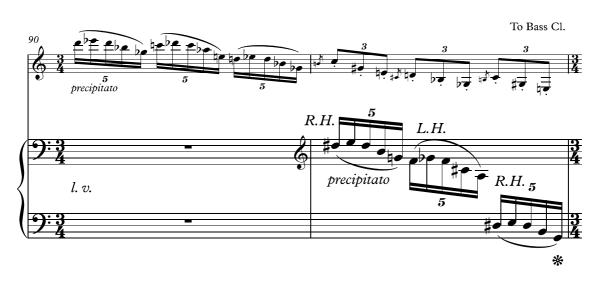




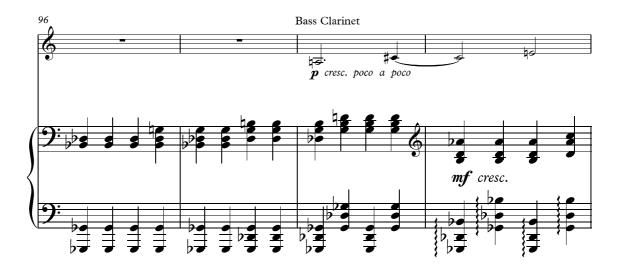
















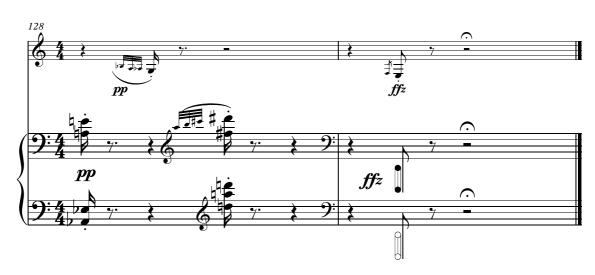












For my parents

A Far un día irei, madre, se vos prouguer rogar se verría meu amigo, que mi ben quer e direilh'eu entón a coita do meu coraçón.

Far

Johan de Requeixo











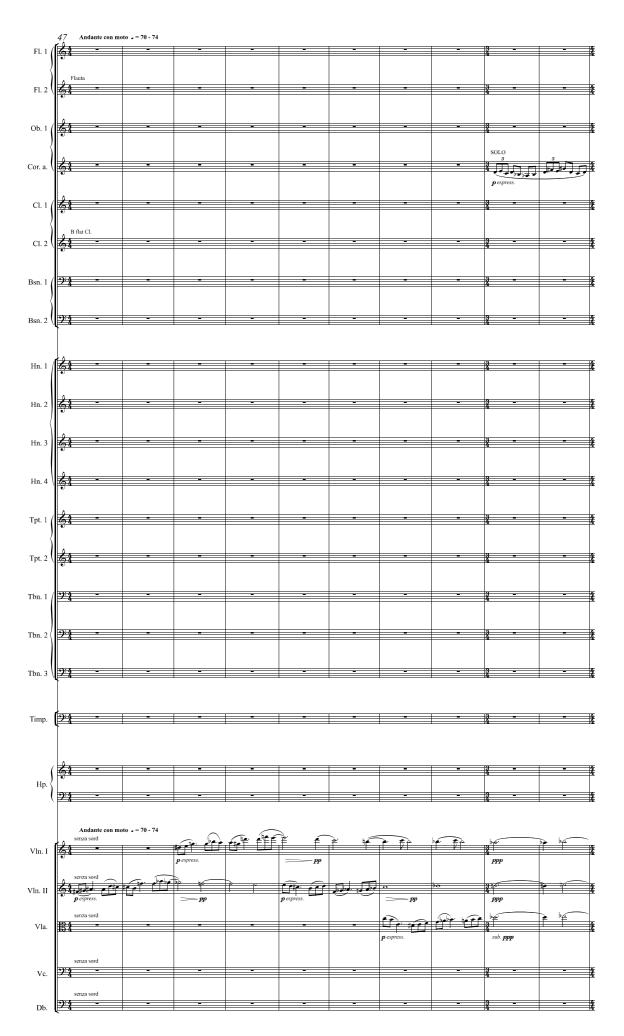
























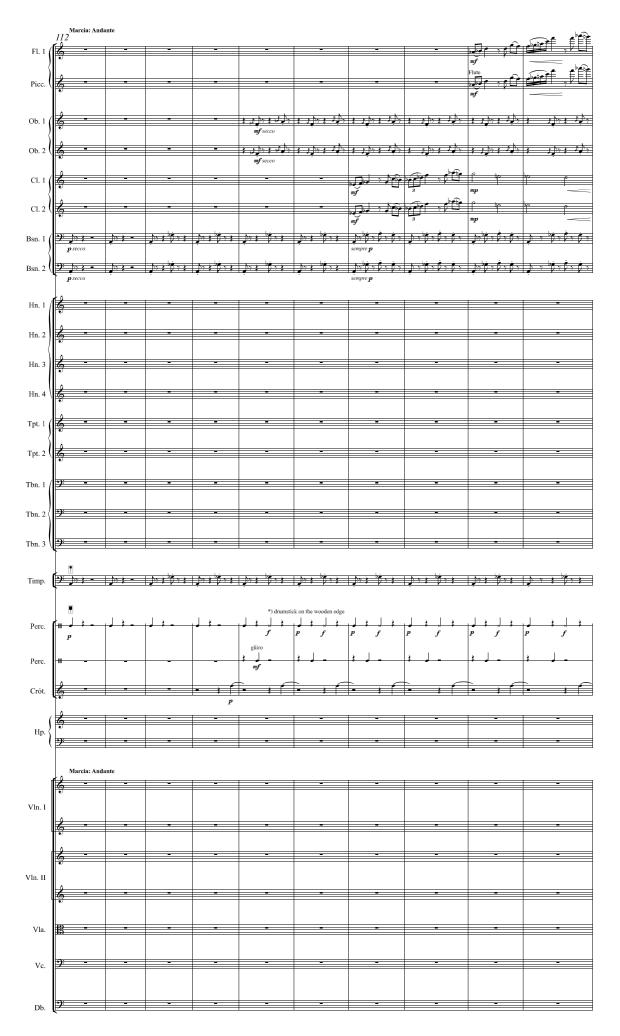










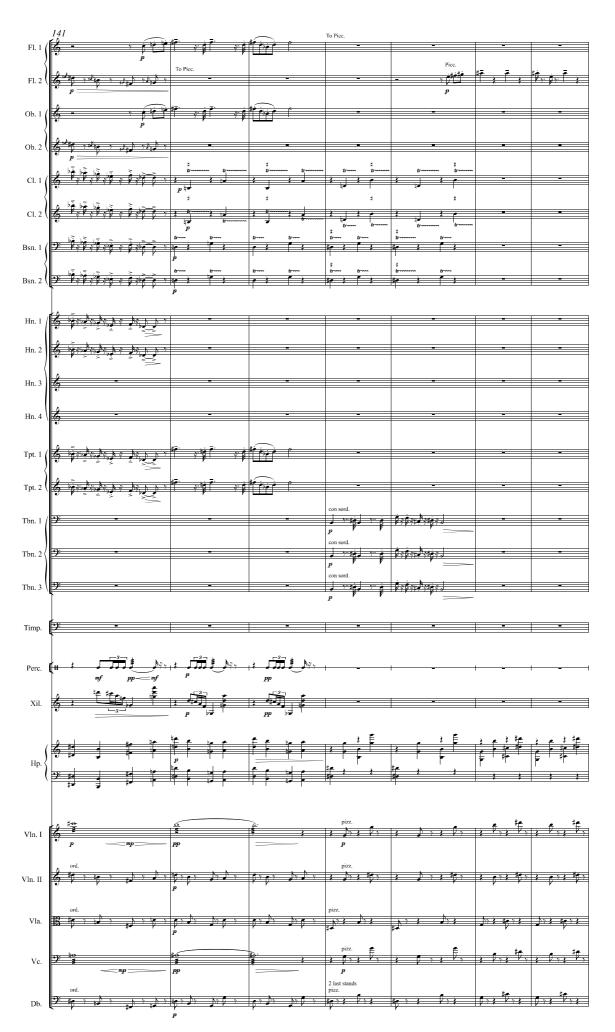














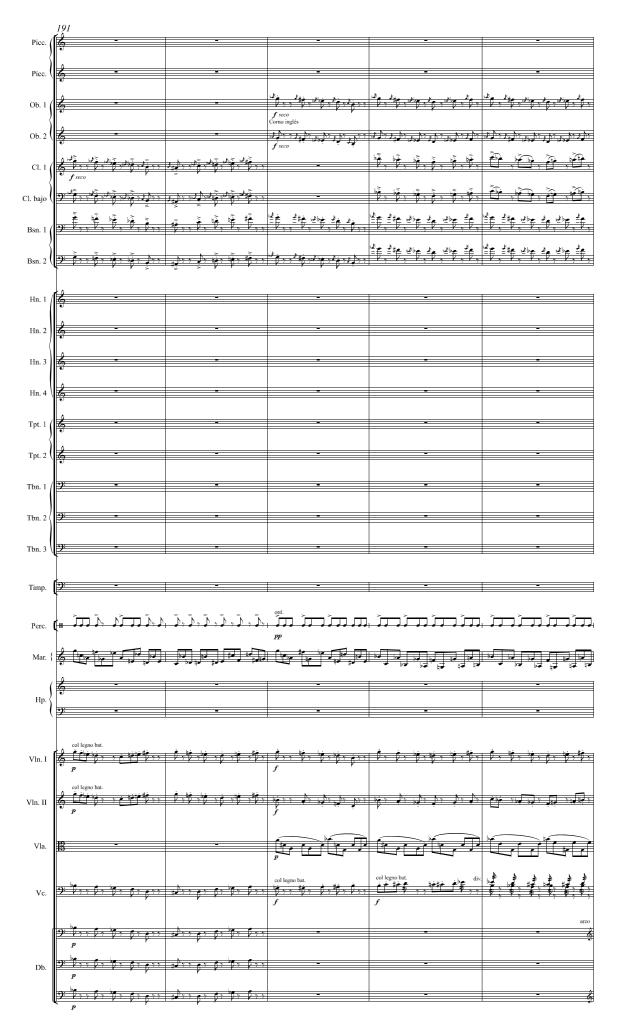


















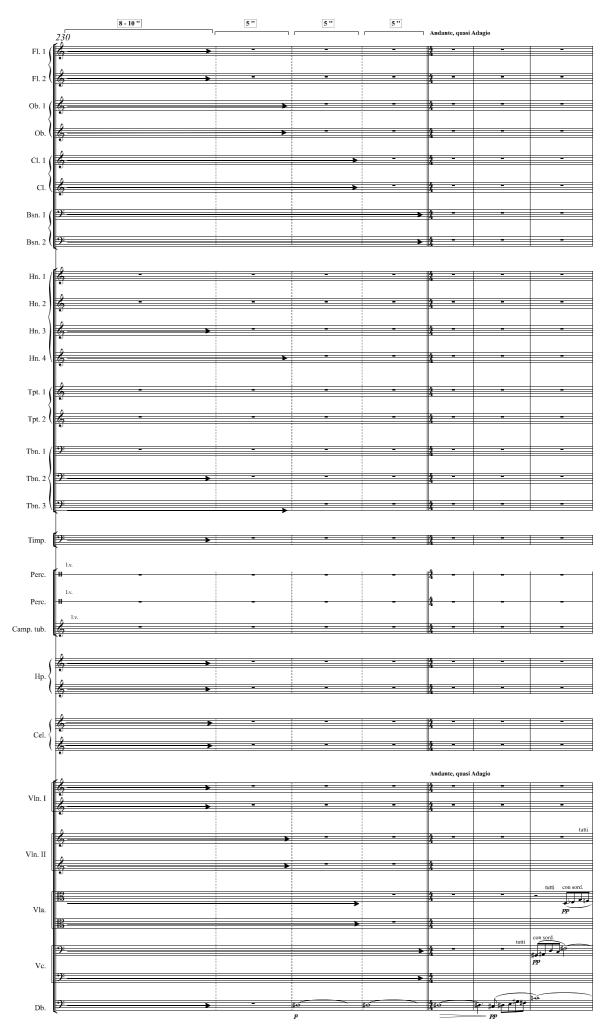










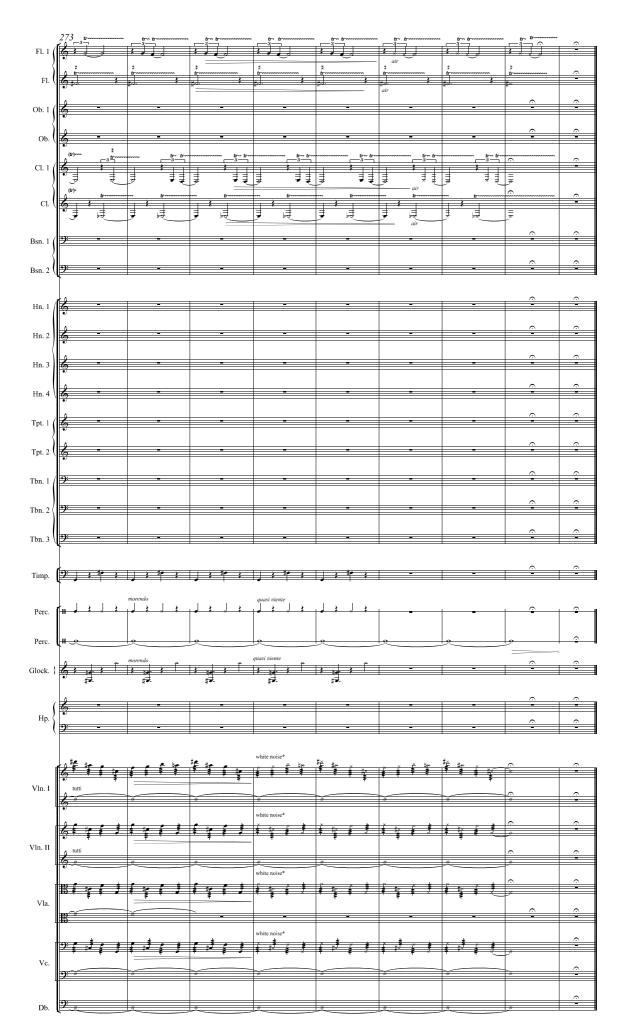












# Programme notes

## Piano sonata no.1 "Formas e simetrías"

I. Vivo; II. Tema: Andantino; III. Rondo. Allegro

The initial impulse for the composition of this work developed from an idea of interdisciplinary connection between musical form and architectural form, focusing particularly upon connections between classical music and neoclassical architecture. A reflection upon the possible links between the layout of sonata structure (Exposition – Development – Recapitulation) and the volumetric layout of a neoclassical building façade (symmetrical, with a central body that functions as a hinge between two equal outer bodies) inspired the creation of a piano sonata that unfolded in a very balanced and clear structure. The formal idea emerged from the reflection described above, combined with an exploration of possible imaginary connections between spatial perceptions (that occurred when travelling around architectural spaces) and sensorial sonic perceptions (that occurred when listening to music). Imagined spatial perceptions provided a framework of emotions, images and movements that affected compositional choices. Qualities from an imagined spatial experience, such as stability/instability, speed of motion, intensity of light, shape and texture of surfaces, narrowness/broadness of spaces, and more, have been a matter of reflection, inspiring the creative process.

The first movement, Vivo, unfolds in a well-proportioned sonata form. The first and second subjects are genuine examples of opposition between stability and instability. A sense of anxiety, velocity and unsteadiness is conveyed by the rapid figurations and irregular time signatures of the opening theme. This idea contrasts with the second subject, which presents less angularities and more wavy lines, a stable time signature and a contemplative character and pace of motion. The second movement comprises a theme and four variations. The theme draws the listener into a dark and mysterious space which is travelled in an exploratory manner. Every detail is important, as each will have its homologue moment in every variation. Each variation represents a different way of travelling through the initial imagined space, therefore various imagined moods, kinaesthetic perceptions and visual images map a variety of musical outputs. Sonic scenarios vary from the chaotic and stumbling second variation, to the dreamy and airy mood of the fourth variation. Finally, the third movement presents a rondo-sonata which opposes sparkling structure. a and rhythmic exposition/recapitulation (sections A-B-A' and A"-B'-A") with an evocative and lyrical middle section (C). Again, an aim for proportions in structure led to a wellbalanced rondo-sonata form. A moto perpetuo of constant quavers evokes fast and unstoppable forward motion. Further, this constant pace has many edges, bumps, angles, lifts and falls due to several changes in time signature and accentuation. Section B contrasts with this feeling, as the 6/8 time signature conveys a much steadier and calmer sense of motion. Section C brings the listener into a new world, with warm tonal harmonies enveloping a more *dolce* version of the melody presented in section B.

#### Sendeiros imaxinarios

## I. Claroscuro; II. Natureza e arquitectura

Divided into two contrasting movements, this work for violin and piano was inspired by two imaginary journeys, hence its title (Imaginary Paths). The first movement, *Claroscuro* (light and dark), unfolds in a very peaceful and calm tempo, and the main source of musical transformation is the harmony. A sense of stillness and infinity of time influenced the temporal behaviour. The slow pace that opens the piece barely changes, with other very smooth accelerations and decelerations that bring plasticity to the music. The texture is characterized by long melodic lines, lyrical, poetic and reflective. As mentioned above, harmony is the main source of musical development in *Claroscuro*. The evolution of chords is inspired in imaginary transitions between different light intensities and shades of colour. The contrast between dark and bright light intensities is metaphorically associated with the contrast between two groups of chords: bright (based on the intervals of perfect 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) and dark (based on the intervals of major/minor 3<sup>rd</sup>). The title of the piece comes precisely from this opposition of harmonies that are metaphorically linked with light intensities.

The second movement, *Natureza e arquitectura*, is very contrasting with the first one. However, some compositional processes are approached in similar ways. Again, this movement is inspired by an imaginary journey through a natural space dominated by a wild and dense forest. At a certain point, the imaginary traveller comes out of the forest to face a broad, open landscape, only altered by a piece of architecture. The architecture is imagined as being resonant with the landscape in terms of form and is therefore presented by wavy lines and surfaces. The aforementioned programme affects the structure of the music: The first section conveys anxiety, darkness and velocity. The main theme played by the violin metaphorically represents the piece of architecture, while other musical elements such as tempo and texture induce broadness, solidity and stability. The two 'characters' described above (nature and architecture) influence each other in a process of interpenetration and musical symbiosis that is inspired by an image of architecture formally matching its natural environment. *Natureza e arquitectura* ends in a bustling and stormy coda that recollects the different musical ideas appeared during the piece.

The imagery inspiring the second movement differs completely from the one inspiring the first movement. However, harmonic processes involving metaphorical connections with light intensities and colour remain the same. The contrast between harmonies happening at the beginning of the second movement (conceived as submerged into the darkness of a dense forest) and the chords accompanying the violin theme (embedded into an image of sudden openness, broadness and brightness) is representative of the harmonic process undertaken when composing this work.

#### **Jakobsland**

Between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries, six Viking attacks happened in Galicia (northwest Spain). Some years before these invasion attempts, the remains of St. James had been discovered in Santiago de Compostela, and its magnificent new cathedral held a substantial amount of gold and treasures. The Vikings referred to the Galician territory as 'Jakobsland' (land of St. James). Even today, the name 'Jakobsland' is used in Scandinavian countries as part of colloquial expressions.

This work was inspired by an imaginary walk through the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (Galicia) and the urban spaces around it. This imaginary journey was preplanned and directly affected the structure of the composition. The characteristics of the different urban spaces travelled during the journey led to a piece which presents a variety of musical scenarios. The piece unfolds in three contrasting sections, plus a recapitulation of the first section and a final coda. The imaginary journey starts from the narrow, medieval streets surrounding the cathedral. These are characterized by stonemade buildings and pavements, uneven surfaces, narrow and winding streets, small and dark squares and a general irregular and chaotic shape. The music aims to translate many of these characteristics. It presents a remarkable degree of temporal instability, conveyed through the release of time signature and the flexibility of tempo and rhythm. The flute and harp go on an imaginary wild chase, performing fast runs and gestures that generally depict rounded shapes. This initial section must transmit a sense of restlessness and urgency. On the contrary, the following section (marked Adagio) presents a musical scenario that resembles stillness, stability and tranquillity, influenced by an image of the broad symmetrical square in front of the cathedral. Repetitive motifs and rhythmic gestures create a cyclical chain of similar sonic events that draw the listener to a meditative mood. The following section of Jakobsland is very energetic and includes rhythmic and melodic elements taken from the Galician folklore. A wave of optimism and happiness lifts the music to its peak of emotional intensity. Finally, the imagined travel comes back into the narrow streets. Finally, the first section of the piece is recapitulated and leads to a majestic coda that closes the work.

The acoustic sound of flute and harp is accompanied at times by two pre-recorded soundtracks featuring music played by a Galician bagpipe and a hurdy-gurdy. These are not only instruments pertaining to the Galician folklore, but are also part of the imaginary journey described above: bagpipe players use to play at present times in the streets and hurdy-gurdies are featured in some of the stone-made sculptures from the famous *Pórtico de la Gloria*, the Romanesque entrance of the cathedral. The manipulation of pre-recorded sound by the flautist and harpist adds a theatrical component to the performance of the piece.

#### Lembranzas de Jakobsland

The title of this piece, "Memories from Jakobsland", points directly to its thematic idea: a musical translation of a set of memories from my previous composition *Jakobsland*, for flute and harp. During the composition of *Lembranzas de Jakobsland*, I let myself be permeated by memories from the flute and harp piece, which had been finished just a few months before. No pre-compositional plan was attempted; therefore this resulted in a very flexible and almost unpredictable piece in terms of form and development. Emotionally, the work is imagined as if it happened in a vague dream. This image led to a set of abrupt changes of mood that take place without apparent structural reason. In terms of performance, this unstable framework of moods should not be hidden, but on the contrary should be brought out with conviction and bravery. The opening of the piece illustrates the mood-shifting character of the piece: very fast and nervous gestures from the violin, which move upwards in the manner of sound gushes, interlock with moments of stillness that seem to be directionless and fuzzy.

Several motifs and themes from *Jakobsland* are used in the piece, but slightly transformed. The motivation for this transformation comes directly from the image of the piece being a vague dream featuring memories of *Jakobsland*. Memories and dreams do not convey exact replicas of the reality; hence the thematic transformations intend to metaphorically translate this idea into music. As the work moves forward, the blurred atmosphere gradually clears out and the melodies and harmonies become more solid. This becomes noticeable in the middle section of the piece, when harp and flute perform a dialog using melodic cells under a stable tempo and a clear harmonic progression that leads to a climax. After the climax, the music starts to vanish and the vaporous atmosphere dominates the texture again. The sound of the enormous bell hanging at the top of Compostela cathedral, commonly known as Berenguela, is metaphorically quoted twice during the piece through a series of repeated chords played by the harp in a *fortissimo* dynamic.

In a similar way to *Jakobsland*, two tracks of pre-recorded sound played by a Galician bagpipe and a hurdy-gurdy interact with the two acoustic instruments. Bagpipes and hurdy-gurdies are frequently used in folkloric music from Galicia, therefore the intervention of these instruments reinforces the connection of this piece with *Jakobsland*, both musically and in terms of mental imagery.

## Un afogado

Inspired by a short narration by the Galician writer Alfonso Rodríguez Castelao (1886-1950), this work for piano trio explores a broad palette of emotions and moods derived from the story. Castelao's narration describes a scene in which a villager from a seafaring town has disappeared in the sea. The evolution of feelings experienced by the rest of his neighbours is conveyed with a beautiful poetic style, portraying their anxiety full of hope at the beginning, their despair and extreme sadness when the dead body is found, and finally the return to the bustling and energetic normal life after the burial.

The clearly defined structure of the story induced a plan for the musical form: the trio is divided into three defined and closed sections or episodes. The first one comprises abrupt and violent shifts of expression and mood, enhanced by the use of rapid crescendos and *subito pianos* that set up a framework of emotions dominated by anguish and despair. Piercing musical gestures coexist with more rounded and wavy motifs that metaphorically represent the bouncing of a boat on the sea surface. The second episode of this work musically describes the burial of the villager. A polyphonic funeral march opens the section, which later adds folk-style melodic lines and quotes from a genuine Galician folk tune. The music gradually fades away into a timeless, airy and reflective passage that is sharply broken by the last episode of the trio. The final section conveys vitality and energy. Two folk rhythms (*polka* and *muiñeira*) provide the base for a bustling outburst of renewed life.

Narration by Castelao (From his book *Things*):

There was a drowned man in the sea and the seafaring town had sunk into silence and sadness.

The wind had died down, the sea had become still, the sun had triumphed in the heavens. And the town was not waking up or warming up, as if it were still night, as if the seafaring people were rejecting God's gifts. Daylight obscured by the anguish of tragedy.

On the calm sea boats were coming and going in search of Ramón's body. In the church a woman and a little boy were weeping before the miracle-working Christ.

A week went by in silence and sadness.

And one morning the boat carrying Ramón's body moored at the quay.

The town wept dreadful tears, and with deep grief they buried the drowned man's body in the churchyard.

And once Ramón had been left in the company of all the parish dead, the town took a deep breath, it revived in hope, and the people started singing again as they went about their daily work.

The earth does not want to lose the body it lends us and fishermen too obey its laws, because they too are of the earth. If it were not so, what better bed for a seafarer than the bottom of the sea!

Alfonso Daniel Rodríguez Castelao, Things.

## Navarra, Terras do Nahar

The commission of this piece was made from Victoria Jericó, a violinist from Navarre, a northern region of Spain. Navarre has a rich folklore, very diverse, ranging from the zortzico (typical from the North) to the jota (typical from the South). The only given that I had when the commission was made was to include a very particular piece of folklore, a Navarrese jota entitled Mirando el mapa lloró ('He cried when seeing the map'). Sections from this jota are quoted during the piece, but featuring different characters and moods achieved by the use of a variety of violin techniques. The first quote appears in pizzicato, in the manner of a lontano chant. Shortly afterwards, a longer quote of the folk tune is given in a much faster tempo and with a dance-like rhythm, including some double-stops in order to reinforce the folk-like sonority. Finally, the ending tune of the jota is quoted using artificial harmonics, which intend to resemble a distant whistle sound.

But the use of a pre-existing folk tune was not the only source of inspiration that affected the composition of this piece. The main source of inspiration was the personality of the violinist that commissioned the piece: a series of moods and emotions, inspired by Victoria Jericó, were imagined in the first place. These were then internalized and mentally absorbed in order to affect my compositional decisions and therefore condition musical outcomes. The result was a piece that unfolds in the manner of a fantasy, with several motivic and thematic ideas that shift from one to the other in a flexible way. An image of Victoria Jericó remembering her homeland, Navarra, catalysed the flow of musical ideas. These memories induce a series of emotional states and moods that are used in order to plan a mapping of musical moods in the composition.

The piece starts from a very subtle, inexpressive melody that conveys a sense of nostalgic remembrance. This opening sets up an attitude of dreaminess that remains for the rest of the work. Imagined qualities such as tenderness, happiness, despair, optimism/pessimism and home-sickness are metaphorically translated into music. The several musical ideas developed from each kind of imagery feature very different characteristics: Angularity, instability and urgency in order to refer to despair; lightness, dance-like rhythm to refer to happiness; *cantabile* lines and clear tonal harmonies to describe tenderness. The piece was conceived as flexible and fluent, in connection with the flexibility and fluency of memories and emotions. It should be played aiming for great contrasts of mood and with a general freedom of pulse, conveying a flexible sound body that is able to expand, shrink and flow with great plasticity.

#### **Encuentro Caballeresco**

This work, written for baritone, clarinets (B flat, E flat & Bass) and piano, was commissioned by the Cervantes Institute in Budapest (Hungary) to be premiered at a concert celebrating the 400th anniversary of the publication of Don Quijote de la Mancha. The commission implied a pre-compositional condition: to base the piece on a fragment of the Spanish novel. The fragment chosen pertains to the prologue, a section of the novel in which a set of poems (mostly sonnets) praises the figures of different characters of the novel. These poems talk about very serious matters and use a noble language; however most of them are tremendously ironic. They are satirical poems that make fun of both the characters of the novel and the common tendency of writing serious prologues like these in the novels of that time. The fragment chosen as a precompositional given for this piece comprises two sonnets. The first is fictitiously put in mouth of Don Belianís from Greece, a popular hero from the romances of that time, and praises with intensity the figure of Don Quixote. The second sonnet is fictitiously recited by a character that even today remains to be a mystery: Solisdán. It is the only sonnet that does not praise Don Quixote's adventures but tells realistically what readers think: Don Quixote is completely mad and his adventures are not glorious but ridiculous.

Using these two sonnets, the work offers a semi-theatrical performance in which the baritone represents three characters at the same time: In order of appearance, Don Belianís of Greece, Solisdán and Don Quixote. An imaginary encounter between Don Belianis and Don Quixote propitiates the words that Don Belianis dedicates to Don Quixote (first sonnet). Suddenly, Solisdán bounces into the scene and tells Don Quixote what he thinks (second sonnet). After such an affront, Don Quixote gets furious, blames Solisdán and tries to attack him without success. The work opens with an instrumental prologue that sets up the ironic character by using glissandi and acciaccatura in the clarinet while the piano provides a bustling polytonal accompaniment. The first song is musically archaic, as the accompaniment from piano and clarinet intends to imitate the medieval lute and hornpipe. Harmony is mostly consonant but includes some semitone clashes in the manner of piercing shocks. Solisdán's song contrasts enormously with the mood of the first song, as it presents an ironic and mocking character. The E-flat clarinet, with its much more shrilling sound, helps to create a delirious and frantic sonic world. The music is now much more edgy, piercing and angular, full of sudden changes of dynamic, mood and articulation. The end of the piece features a final shift of character from the baritone: Don Quixote appears on the scene furious and aiming for revenge. The bass clarinet provides a dark atmosphere, building up tension from its low register up to a climax that leans on several big chords from the piano. The singing line from Don Quixote is emphatic and violent, representing an emotional state close to madness.

#### Far

This work for symphony orchestra was inspired by a very old traditional celebration that takes place every 8<sup>th</sup> of September at the small village of Chantada, in Galicia. During the celebration, people from the village walk together, from the early hours of the morning, to the top of a mountain nearby: mount Faro. The festivity has a religious significance. The last 500 metres of the climb are done in procession, and several religious services are offered to the public throughout the morning. At the top of the mountain people also gather together and celebrate with food and folk music. The title of this work refers to the name of the mountain (Faro) as it appears written in some medieval poems: "Far".

When composing this piece, inspiration was found in imagining that I was taking part in the celebrations mentioned above. The imaginary journey towards the top of mount Faro affects the structure of the piece, leading to a five-section form. Each section has its own emotional framework, which is conditioned by imagery. The first section conveys a nascent and rising brightness and an incipient energy that gradually builds up, inspired by the image of dawn and expectation for the events to come. Music then moves into a heavily polyphonic and winding section, full of new thematic materials that feature mostly undulated melodic shapes. The choice of polyphony and undulated melodic lines was influenced by an image of multiple winding trails and paths that cross each other. Intensity and tension dramatically increase leading to the first big climax of the work, which immediately dissolves into a processional march, with its typical accompaniment from wind band and percussion. A rhythmical base from the percussion section of the orchestra holds the homophonic texture, with the woodwinds playing a more edgy and angular version of the previous themes. After the bombastic processional march, the piece enters a much more reflective, calm and meditative episode featuring a string quartet. The melody played by the first violin was composed by putting music to a stanza by the medieval poet Johan de Requeixo, which is shown below. The poem from which the stanza is taken makes reference to the celebrations of mount Faro during medieval times. Finally, the piece explodes with a final section of bustling energy, influenced by images of folkloric feast, dancing and cheering. At the end, the piece gradually vanishes and finally disappears into complete silence. This ending stands as a metaphor of the party gradually calming down and finishing.

A Faro un día irei, madre, se vos prouguer, rogar se verría meu amigo, que mi ben quer, e direilh'eu entón a coita do meu coraçón.

Johan de Requeixo (s. XIII)

To Faro one day I'll go, mother, if you please, to pray for the return of my friend, who loves me much, and then I'll tell him, the grief of my heart.

Johan de Requeixo (13<sup>th</sup> Century)