

LOUIS VALENTINE JOHNSON

INNOVATIVE GUITAR

ASCAP



GOODBYE TO MEXICO

FOR SOLO GUITAR



Goodbye to Mexico

Louis Valentine
Johnson

This composition is in memory of those who died in the “Devil’s Path” after crossing the border on May 23rd 2001: Julian Ambros, Heriberto Badilla, Reyno Bartolo, Mario Castillo, Amulto Flores, Efrain Gonzalez, Lorenzo Hernandez, Enrique Landeros, Alejandro Marin, Edgar Adrian Martinez, Sergio Ruiz, Raymundo Barreda and his 15 year old son.

Goodbye to Mexico tells a human story which is about much more than Mexico, and is re-enacted each night along the 2000 mile long border between Mexico and states of Texas, New Mexico, California and Arizona. Men, women and children, many desperately poor, separate into different groups and begin their border crossing in the blackness of night. They hope for better jobs and lives for their families. They have paid money to a “coyote” who leads them through trails and ravines of the remote desert. They are entering the USA illegally and they risk serious consequences. Tonight, some will survive this dangerous journey while tomorrow others will perish in an inferno of desert sun. They pray for no moon and silently travel in the night, away from Mexico, full of hope, on a journey to a mythical new homeland in El Norte.

The Music

The devil pensively observes, then opens his path with a furious scale passage. After an arpeggiated introduction, I portray the fears and sadness of twenty-six people leaving their lives, parents, family and friends on May 19, 2001. Their destination was North Carolina. The next section speaks to the tension and danger of hiding and running to evade border guards, which was nothing compared to what they would encounter the next day.

My central section illustrates the merciless searing furnace of southern Arizona sun as it ends thirteen lives in the 115-130 degree midday heat. Lengthy slow-motion moments pass while lives end, one by one. Calls of desperation echo. Death stops heartbeats among the cactus in a scorching desert. Although their deaths occurred separately, I have collectively painted each moment with a single major second and tritone chord, which rings until there is no more resonance and no more life. Their spirits slowly depart suffering, desperation, dehydration, and blinding sun.

Postlude

In a poem by Octavio Paz: “The final shadow may close my eyes, carry me off from white of day, unchaining my soul at the hour...” The impact of tragedy was intensified by the dangerous web of a coyote’s careless and possibly purposeful deception. These people died because they voluntarily took a serious risk into the unknown. Their coyote, Jesus Lopez-Ramos, was said to have erroneously told them to walk north for one hour to reach a highway and a town. Lopez-Ramos went to trial and was sentenced to sixteen years in prison. That amounts to a little over a year for each death.

Carlos Fuentes in his book *Inez* writes, “We know how to silence death. We do not know how to quiet sorrow.” In the last section, I have thematically restated these sorrows with a return to the initial arpeggiation motif.

A soft breeze moves slowly through the heat in an homage to those who perished. Tall saguaros guard a tableau horizon of sagebrush and sand.



Goodbye to Mexico

for Solo Guitar

I

Tempo rubato

♩ = c. 100 *The Devil's Path awaits ...*

Louis Valentine Johnson, ASCAP

mp *vib.* *accel.* *rit.*

5 *poco pont.* *ord.* *mp*

7 Harm. XII Harm. XII V *vib.* *Andantino misterioso* *V* ♩ = c. 68 *departure in darkness* *mf*

9

11

13

15

1 2 1 2 1 2

17

3/4

19

V

3/4

22

rit. Tempo Primo *desolate contemplation*

3/4

25

3/4

27

3/4

29

attacca...

3/4

II

Andante quasi recitativo

♩ = c. 116 *The Coyote Speaks ...*

3

musical notation for measures 1-4, including dynamics *poco pont.*, *mf molto espr.*, and *(2nd X poco pont.)*, and the instruction *sul tasto*.

musical notation for measures 5-8, including the instruction *ord.* and dynamic *mf*.

musical notation for measures 9-13, including the instruction *III* and dynamic *mf*.

musical notation for measures 14-18, including dynamics *pp / (mf 2nd x)*, *f*, and the instruction *fear abounds*.

musical notation for measures 19-21, including a *vib.* instruction.

musical notation for measures 22-24, including a *vib.* instruction and triplet markings.

musical notation for measures 25-28, including the instruction *Più mosso*.

LOUIS VALENTINE JOHNSON COMPOSITIONS

FOR SOLO GUITAR

Walking the Yuba River

Remembrance

White Bird Pass

(A Message To Mama)

Two Boys¹

To the Poets

Snake River Sunset

Wapello Morning

A Winter Day

Saigon - 1965

One

The Journey

Ragdoll

Lament at Fort Hall

September Eleventh¹

Reflections 911³

Twenty One Years²

Monkey Mind

Valentine Waltz²

Goodbye To Mexico

Pandemic Phantasma¹

The Devil's Path

A Christmas Carol (*after Dickens*)

On The Nature of Things (*after Epicurus*)

Valentine Voluntary²

Arrangements also available for

¹Guitar Duo, ²Guitar/Cello, ³Guitar/Violin/Cello
Guitar/Viola, Guitar/Violin/Cello

TRES PENSAMIENTOS LATINOS

Snowfall in El Escorial

Lullaby of Love

Malagueña California!

Arrangements also available for

Guitar Duo, Guitar/Cello, Guitar/Viola,
Guitar/String Quartet, Percussion
and Castanets

THREE PASTORALES

A Soldier in Paradise

Dark Honey

The Ferris Wheel

Arrangements also available for

Guitar/Cello, Guitar/Trombone

TWO HAIKUS

If Only

Water Wind & Stone

Arrangements also available for

Guitar/Violin

FOR SOLO GUITAR

THE PEACE CONCERTO

Portraits

Song of Peace

The Question

Arrangements also available for

Guitar Duo, Guitar/Violin, Guitar/Flute,
Guitar/String Quartet, Guitar/String Orchestra,
Guitar/Viola, Guitar/Cello, Guitar/Piano

SOLSTICE

Summer

Shadows from the North

Winter

Arrangements also available for

Guitar/String Quartet, Guitar/Piano

TWELVE MOMENTS

from the Peace Concerto

Valiantly Running with Fire

Sad the Death

Song of Peace

A Boy's Tears Play the Guitar

I Am Here

A Photograph of Love

A Little Boy Runs

The Journey Begins

Thoughts of the Dark Fire

Happy with Mama and Daddy

Without My Daddy

Always in My Heart

Arrangements also available for

Guitar Duo, Guitar/String Quartet,
Guitar/Violin, Guitar/Viola, Guitar/Cello,
Guitar/Piano, Guitar/Flute, Guitar/Clarinet,
Guitar/Trombone

FOR THE CHILDREN

Heidi's Song

Children Dancing

The First Night

Graduation

Arrangements also available for

Guitar/Viola, Guitar/Clarinet,
Guitar/String Quartet,
Guitar/String Orchestra

FOR GUITAR AND HARPSICHORD

THREE MEMORIES

I

Allegro Appassionato

II

Andante Espresso

III

Allegro

ARRANGEMENTS

La Hora Azul

(Elorriaga)

A Day in the Country

(Mexican Trad.)

Plegaria - (Gomez)

Mazurka - (Fortea)

Evocacion - (Merlin)

Romanza - (Anon.)

Mi Noche Triste

(Castrita)

Moderato - (F. Sor)

Estudio/Lagrima^{1,4}

(Tarrega)

Song of the Birds¹

(Casals)

Minuets I & II

Gavottes I & II

(J.S. Bach)

Allegretto in B Minor,

Opus 35 - Number 22^{2,3,4}

(Fernando Sor)

Toccata, Evocation, and Fandango^{1,3,5,6}

(Mark A. Radice)

J.S. Bach Prelude BWV1007

La Folia de Espana¹

(Arcangelo Corelli)

Jácaras¹

(Antonio de Santa Cruz)

Fantasia X¹

(Alonso Mudarra)

Arrangements also available for

¹Solo Guitar, ²Guitar/Cello,
³Guitar/String Quartet, ⁴Guitar/Viola,
⁵Guitar/Piano, ⁶Guitar/String Orchestra



INNOVATIVE GUITAR

LouisValentineJohnson.com

Cover: Lou's Guitar | Back cover watercolor by Jerianne Van Dijk, JerianneIllustrations.com

Music Engraving by Richard Altenbach, RichardAltenbach.com | Graphics by Kim Rogers, KIM ART Graphics