**Reading Questions for “Overture”** **Excerpt from *Gaviotas***

**Directions:** You don’t need to write down answers to these questions as homework, but be prepared to discuss them and maybe write about them in class.

1. **Themes:** The title of the piece, “Overture,” suggests that all the themes of the longer work (the book it introduces, in this case) will be introduced here, briefly. Consider as you read how these themes appear and intertwine. Mark the themes when they appear (maybe with a number?) so we can find them for discussion. Here are some themes I picked out:
   1. how music fits into Columbian culture
   2. how the forces of violence work against the desire for peace and prosperity
   3. how creativity in the arts relates to innovation in more pragmatic endeavors, such as technology and agriculture
   4. how hopes and dreams are related to images of regeneration
   5. how the impulse toward a utopian society on earth intertwines with our conception of a heavenly hereafter.
2. **Profile of a person:** Consider the description of Belisario Betancur in the opening scene. What specific descriptive details help you “see” him? What does the dialog add to this characterization? What are some of your favorite lines? We also get straight background about Betancur. What are some details that stand out to you? Why?
3. **Sensory details/ figurative language:** Find a scene where the sensory details are strong, such as when the opera singer gives the moonlit concert in the forest, and cite some uses of figurative language (metaphors, similes, personification) that you thought were particularly effective. Consider what dominant impression these sensory details and imagery create.
4. **Dialog:** Consider what the dialog adds to the piece. What are some of the best lines? Why? How do they help bring the piece to life?
5. **Overall effectiveness:** Consider how the discussion of utopia plays against the picture of Gaviotas that emerges in contrast with the violence and destruction in the urban center of Bogata. Does Gaviotas seem like a model to “reinvent the world,” from what you can tell? Would this “overture” motivate its target audience to read more of the book?