

Andrew Waggoner: *Elle s'enfuit* (2008)

Program Notes:

Elle s'enfuit (*She Flees*) was composed in the spring of 2008 for Melia Watras, who had asked for something showy, wild, over the top. The title is both a joke (Melia never flees from anything, much less a piece like this) and an attempt to get down to the roots of fugue: the word, of course, means “flight”, with lots of ancillary connotations, most of them culturally formed, like “hunt”, and “chase”; at the same time, early fugues grew out of the genre known as *ricercare*, or “research”, or just “search”. Early composers of fugue will clearly be looking for something, whether animal, vegetable or metaphysical. Add to all this the psychotic state known as *fugue* (the *fleeing* from oneself) and the word becomes a veritable Rohrschach test. *Elle s'enfuit* is for me, in some way or another, reflective of all the above. The title is in French only to distance most of us from our immediate associations with fugue as a genre (in France perhaps we'll just call it *She Flees*). The piece is a double-fugue in which both subjects are themselves polyphonic, acting more as blocks of sound than as distinct melodic motives. There's a debt to Lutoslawski here, and his masterful *Preludes and Fugue*; he created a world of sinewy, shifting energies, of plaintive voices. I wanted *Elle s'enfuit* to be more a matter of irresistible force, of something pushing, desperately, to get somewhere, *anywhere*.

--Andrew Waggoner