

Carlos Alvarado's Fugue "A Happy Escape" - Explanation.

The fugue is written in a Colombian-Venezuelan rhythm called "Jorópo" (Horópo) which is a style of music originated in the Oriental Planes of Colombia (Llanos Orientales de Colombia).

Exposition: Bars 1 - 34

The Viola introduces the Subject in A minor (notes coloured Red). Subsequent entries of the Subject (also in Red) are in E minor (Violin II), A minor (Violin I), E minor (Cello) and finally A minor again (Viola and Double Bass). These answers are tonal, meaning that the Subject is played slightly differently each time in order to match the harmonies, finally modulating back to the main key (A minor).

There is also a Countersubject (notes in Blue), contrasting with the Subject.

Episodes: Bars 35 - 88

At Bars 35 – 42 we have the first episode, (notes in Green), based on a motive from the Subject. The four notes of the third bar are repeatedly inverted, that is, the same intervals are used, but going up instead of going down. Towards the end the motif reverts to the original downwards movement.

In Bars 43 - 60 a sequenced section (notes coloured Pink) shows the rhythmical character of the folk music (Horópo).

Bars 61 – 62 form a Connection (notes coloured Yellow) of just two bars moving the tonality through G major to C major in preparation for the next section.

Bars 63 – 88. The whole of the Subject is inverted (notes coloured Brown) and is introduced by different instruments at rapid intervals – a new instrument every two bars rather than every eight bars, in a device known as Stretto. This comes in two sections, (Bars 63 - 74 and Bars 72 - 83), each rising in pitch and intensity from Cello to Violin I, through the keys of C and A-minor respectively. At Bar 83 the key changes to F for a final short stretto, lowering the intensity and announcing the next section of the music.

Recapitulation: Bars 89 - 104

The Subject (Red notes) and Countersubjects (Blue notes) are restated. This time the Subject is real, which means that the answers (the other Subjects) are identical to the first one. So, the Exposition is in A minor but the Re-capitulation starts in A minor, then moves to E minor, B minor, F# minor, C# minor, the intensity of the music increasing with each key change.

Coda: (Bars 113 - 121). This section emphasises the rhythms of the Horópo, returning via E major to the original key, A minor, with a splendid final flourish.