

Program Note
Lemurs are Afraid of Fossas (2011)
Robert Greenberg

- I. Predating Game
II. Things That Go Bump in the Night
III. The Shadow Knows . . .

In a musical world filled with self-indulgent titles, *Lemurs are Afraid of Fossas* is right up there. I beg forgiveness and offer this explanation.

My five year-old daughter Lillian and her three year-old brother Daniel are most partial to a kid's TV show created for Nickelodeon called "Go, Diego, Go!" The show features an 8 year old boy, Diego Márquez, who rescues animals around the world. In an episode we watched together, Diego was tasked with rescuing a lemur: a bug eyed, tree hopping primate from Madagascar. During the course of the episode, young Diego made a trenchant observation: "Lemurs are afraid of fossas." (Fossas - pronounced "foosas" - are cat-like carnivores that love to eat lemurs like I love pigs-'n'-blankets.) My daughter Lillian and I began to sing, back and forth, "Lemurs are afraid of fossas." So was born the thematic melody that drives the piece, and the thematic element that underlies the piece.

In the first movement, "Predating Game", two distinct themes pursue and flee from each other amid a harmonic environment featuring tree-like, vertical sonorities.

The second movement, "Things That Go Bump in the Night", is an impressionistic passacaglia based on the tree-like sonorities of the first movement.

"The Shadow Know . . ." is a chasing/hunting game (a musical genre once called a "caccia") in which the piano and violin shadow each other throughout.

Lemurs are Afraid of Fossas was composed between April 29 and June 16, 2011 and was written for and is dedicated to "Martha and Monica", pianist Hadley McCarroll and 'cellist Monica Scott.