

A RUSSIAN RHETORIC OF FORM IN THE MUSIC OF WITOLD LUTOSŁAWSKI*

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There is a richly expressive quality to music that can communicate different formal meanings at different temporal levels. In a Beethoven sonata, for example, the occurrence of an important musical theme in a coda can convey an expository function at the foreground level even while it participates in the larger-scale function of closure (over a longer time span) due to its location in a coda. The capacity to write music that conveys one formal meaning in its immediate context and yet expresses a different meaning in a wider context is one of the most interesting attributes of Beethoven's style. Because of this trait, one can listen to the same Beethoven piece several times and still find something new to appreciate, some new perspective through which to interpret the music afresh. Although such examples by Beethoven will probably be familiar to readers of this journal, it is a more complicated undertaking to seek the same trait in concert music of the twentieth century. How does one find a musical passage that expresses different formal functions at different temporal levels in a composition that does not use a traditional form (and does not sound at all like Beethoven's music)? This article will focus on one composer of this period, Witold Lutosławski (1913–1994), in order to demonstrate how he cultivated multiple temporalities in his own compositional style using the musical language of

* Allen Forte advised my dissertation on Witold Lutosławski (Douglas Rust, "Lutosławski's Symphonic Forms" [Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1995]) and helped me to arrange an interview with the composer that was later published (Rust, "Conversation with Witold Lutosławski," *Musical Quarterly* 79/1 [1995]: 207–223). This interview yielded more than a few valuable insights into the composer and his work and I am grateful to Allen for his encouragement and for his helpful advice during critical points while I was arranging the interview. The present essay, which deals with Lutosławski's relationship to his mentor, is dedicated to Allen Forte.

twentieth-century modernism. In developing these innovations, he was inspired by his Russian-trained composition teacher, Witold Maliszewski, to use metaphors of rhetoric and drama to model the “psychology” of his musical forms on Beethoven’s sonatas.

Lutosławski is one of only a few modern composers who achieved this musical sense of dimension, this hierarchy of formal function, between shorter and longer time spans, through which meaning can change depending upon the scope of the listener’s perspective. By analyzing passages from his music that hold different meanings at different temporal levels, we can attain an answer to the question of how to express formal function in music of the later-twentieth-century modernist style. Such an understanding will be worthwhile not only to those that follow this composer’s music, but also to those interested in the problem of interpreting large-scale closed forms in twentieth-century music.

To learn what originally inspired Lutosławski’s development of different temporalities in his compositions, we begin where he began: in his conservatory classroom. He often remembered a class on musical form that he took with Maliszewski (1873–1939) during his studies at the Warsaw Conservatory in 1933–37.¹ Maliszewski’s class was based on the Beethoven piano sonatas, which he analyzed and performed for his students. Lutosławski said that it was the most important topic he learned at the conservatory, and that it influenced his habits of composition throughout his life.² He recalled how Maliszewski introduced his students to form analysis with rhetorical characters (inherited probably from his studies with Aleksandr Glazunov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, in 1898–1902), and he also introduced a psychological approach to

¹ For a more detailed account of Lutosławski’s years at the Warsaw Conservatory, see Charles Bodman Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), 7–11.

² Lutosławski’s attitude toward this class is documented in his last published interview; see Rust, “Conversation with Witold Lutosławski,” 207.

teaching composition (influenced by Boris Asaf'yev's writings about "symphonism" from the 1920s). As we will see, both of Maliszewski's approaches to musical form emphasize the listeners' perception of time. By developing creative responses to these two Russian conceptions of form, Lutosławski composed music that was capable of expressing different meanings at different temporal levels. We will consider the influence of each approach separately in order to attain a more complete understanding of his achievement.

RHETORICAL CHARACTERS

In the following quotation, Lutosławski recalls how Maliszewski taught musical form using four rhetorical characters:

In analyzing traditional forms like sonata form or rondo form, etc., [Maliszewski] established this term 'character' of music, which has nothing to do with extramusical elements. Character was either introductory, narrative, transitory or finishing—that's four characters. In the sonatas of Beethoven it's so clear, as in a mirror, this division into characters. Of course, such distinctions of musical character were based upon the psychology of the perception of music, because without this psychological factor you couldn't feel whether a passage has finishing character or introductory or narrative. You must feel it. . . . In Beethoven's sonatas there are many ways that the character changes. For instance, only in narrative character is the musical content more important than the role that the section plays in the form. All other characters consist of music whose content is less important than the role—the formal role. For instance, if a passage is introductory, then its content is not as important as the very fact that it suggests the introduction of something, and so on and so forth. The narrative character is just the exposition of the content—nothing more. It doesn't play any role in the form because it is just exposing the content but not the formal function. That's one of the ways to have a little look into this method. Of course, it is more complicated. There is much more to say about it, but I think this is the key that may be enough for you to understand the direction of his way of thinking.³

The four characters that Lutosławski recalled—introductory, transitory, narrative, and finishing (with the more standard term "concluding" used hereafter in place of finishing)—

³ Rust, "Conversation with Witold Lutosławski," 208–209.

resemble an approach to form that was taught in Germany during this time,⁴ but the implied meanings of the terms “form” and “content” distinguish Maliszewski’s ideas from those of his Western counterparts. Rather than defining form as a sort of mold into which the musical content is poured, Lutosławski uses the terms to signify two different ways in which the composer wants the listener to perceive the music. For instance, Lutosławski said that in music with an introductory character, it is most important for the listener to perceive that something is being introduced. The listener’s attention is drawn toward something that will take place in the future. Thus, the term “form,” aligned with introductory, transitory, and concluding characters, signifies the direction toward an immediate goal in the music, and a stronger sense of expectation. In contrast, “content,” aligned only with the narrative character, designates a passage in which the drive toward an immediate goal is perceived less strongly, allowing the listener to lavish more attention on the present. So the terms form and content describe different perceptions on the part of the listener—two different ways of experiencing musical time.

Lutosławski developed his own methods for expressing specific rhetorical characters in his compositions; Symphony No. 1 (1948) provides a good example of this. Its first movement is especially helpful because it is the first sonata form he wrote after his graduation from the

⁴ Maliszewski’s use of four characters to label formal function resembles similar approaches published in several German treatises on form, such as Carl Czerny, *Die Schule der praktischen Tonsetzkunst*, Op. 600 (Bonn: N. Simrock, 1849), trans. John Bishop (London: R. Cocks and Co., 1848) (see 33); Arnold Schoenberg, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, ed. Gerald Strang and Leonard Stein (London: Faber and Faber, 1967) (see 180–181); and, more importantly, Ludwig Bussler, *Musikalische Formenlehre*, 2nd edn. (Berlin: Carl Habel Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1894) (see 153). Maliszewski may have been acquainted with Bussler’s text during his studies at St. Petersburg, as his and Prout’s were the only *formenlehren* translated into Russian and used in the conservatory when Maliszewski began his studies there in 1898 (although Anton Arensky’s text on form, *Rukovodstvo k izucheniiu form* [1893–94], was gaining popularity at this time; see Ellon D. Carpenter, “Russian Music Theory: A Conspectus,” in *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*, ed. Gordon D. McQuere [Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983], 27–28). Bussler refers to character several times in his text, specifying a closing character (*Schlüsscharakter* [146]) and a character of important themes (*Charakter des Hauptsatzes* [161]). Whether or not Maliszewski was directly influenced by Bussler, the similarity between Bussler’s use of the term “*Charakter*” and that of Maliszewski certainly places both within the same pedagogical traditions.

FIGURE 1. Lutosławski, Symphony No. 1 (1948), I: outline of form

Mm.	Description	Character
Exposition Section		
1–2	Introduction	Introductory
3–9	Theme 1	Narrative
10–15	Theme 1 dissolves into transition	"
16–24	Transition	Transitory
25–32	Theme 2	Narrative
33–39	Theme 2 in canon	"
40–54	Transition	Transitory
55–57	Codetta	Concluding
Development Section		
58–112		
Recapitulation Section		
113–19	Theme 1	Narrative
120–24	Theme 1 dissolves into transition	"
125–33	Theme 2 in canon	"
134–38	Transition	Transitory
139–41	Codetta	Concluding
142–53	Coda, Part 1: transition material from m. 16, headmotive of theme, then cadence from mm. 14–15	"
154–59	Coda, Part 2: fragments of Theme 1 and cadence	"

Warsaw Conservatory, and also because he left an annotated copy of the score in which all parts of the musical form are labeled in his handwriting. Steven Stucky based his analysis of the work on this document, an outline of which occurs in Figure 1.⁵

The two leftmost columns in Figure 1 are taken from Stucky's book, and the rightmost column indicates my judgment of the musical character exemplified by each section. The figure shows just how closely this movement conforms to a traditional sonata, and how the four rhetorical characters match formal functions in the exposition and recapitulation sections. Generally speaking, the narrative passages are more tuneful, featuring homophonic melodies that unfold as

⁵ Steven Stucky, *Lutosławski and His Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 27. The annotated score of Lutosławski's Symphony No. 1 remains in Stucky's possession.

FIGURE 2. Examples of gestures from Lutosławski's early works

(a) Symphony No. 1 (1948), I, mm. 1–3:
static-simultaneity gesture followed by
expanding-register gesture

(b) Concerto for Orchestra (1954), III,
3 mm. before R62: expanding-register gesture

(c) Symphony No. 1 (1948), I, before R33: repeated-simultaneity gesture

(d) Symphony No. 1 (1948), I, after R5
(strings only): descending-register gesture

(e) *Bukoliki* (1952), mm. 38–44:
descending-register gesture

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phrases or sometimes as structured pairs of phrases. Latter portions of these narrative sections are destabilized by stretto imitation or by “dissolving into transition” (in this case, by sequencing the theme’s tail motive). The introductory, transitory, and concluding sections feature passage work such as scales or arpeggios and sometimes a sustained or repeated simultaneity, rather than a lead melody.⁶ These busier textures take on the status of gestures that signal specific rhetorical characters. For instance, rising scales and arpeggios (or those that expand in register) tend to occur in introductory passages, while passagework that descends or contracts in register tends to occur in concluding passages. Sustained or repeated simultaneities appear in either introductory or concluding passages (although repeated simultaneities are more often encountered in concluding sections). Passages of transitory character typically combine gestures associated with introductory character with those of concluding character. Thus, gestures express formal function at the smallest temporal level on the musical surface. Combinations of gestures can define the rhetorical character of a musical passage.

Figure 2 displays some examples of these gestures from Lutosławski’s early works. They demonstrate the kinds of gestures that appear in Symphony No. 1, and they show that similar gestures occur elsewhere, such as in the *Bukoliki* and the Concerto for Orchestra. In fact, it is not unusual to find musical shapes that resemble these gestures occurring as an extended upbeat, a closing flourish, or as an ornament to a melodic phrase in any of Lutosławski’s works (particularly in the early period, or in the more “melodic” style period that began in 1979 with *Epitaph* for oboe and piano). The meaning of these gestures remains the same in the late works as in the early works, but the context in which the gestures function changes with the style.

⁶ My description of form and content categories agrees substantially with that of Nicholas Reyland, “Lutosławski, ‘Akcja’ and the Poetics of Musical Plot,” *Music and Letters* 88/4 (2007), 612. However, in the present article, I will contribute more specific descriptions for introductory, transitory, and concluding characters.

Two musical examples from *Chain 2: Dialogue for Violin and Orchestra* (1985) will illustrate how Lutosławski adapted his use of gestures to the post-tonal harmonic language of his late works. This concerto offers a wide variety of ascending and descending gestures in the accompaniments to the solo violinist. The second movement begins with a loud, brash, and sustained simultaneity gesture that creates an effect similar to that of the introductory gesture at the beginning of Symphony No. 1. This simultaneity, played by the orchestral tutti, not only announces the beginning of the second movement, but—unlike the gesture that begins the First Symphony—it also spells out a harmony that is prolonged for the first ten measures; see Figure 3a. The pitches of this passage are displayed in Figure 3b, ordered registrally from lowest to highest; the same set class, 7-7 (0123678), is shown to hold for both the upper and lower registers. Thus, the sustained simultaneity that begins this movement is prolonged—with some octave doubling—by the woodwinds–brass–percussion group, while the strings also prolong the same set class in the lower register, at the inversion that maps $D\flat$ onto $A\flat$ (note that $D\flat$ and $A\flat$ are the only two pitch classes held in common between the two collections). This harmonic continuity makes the music sound as if it flows naturally from the sustained simultaneity.

Another example from the latter part of this same movement shows how expanding-register gestures in the strings introduce the movement's climax at R59 (rehearsal number 59); see Figure 4. Lutosławski used a dramatic contrast of harmony to emphasize the sudden onset of the orchestral tutti at the climax. Scalar motions, consisting mostly of pitch intervals 1 and 2, expand outward to meet the climactic tutti chord, which is organized around the contrasting pitch intervals 3, 4, 5 and 6. The strong timbral contrast that announces the climax is further reinforced by the carefully crafted harmonic contrast. Moreover, these two musical examples (Figures 3 and

FIGURE 3. *Chain 2* (1985), II

(a) two-staff reduction of the opening passage

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system shows the opening passage with a 'tutti' dynamic. The upper staff is labeled 'woodwinds, brass, perc.' and contains multi-measure rests. The lower staff is labeled 'strings' and contains rhythmic patterns. The second system starts at measure 23, indicated by a circled '23' above the first staff. It continues with similar multi-measure rests in the upper staff and rhythmic patterns in the lower staff.

(b) pitch content of above, in order of ascending register

The pitch content diagram shows a sequence of notes on a staff. The notes are arranged in ascending order of register. Brackets above the staff indicate set classes 7-7 (0123678). The notes are: C2, C#2, D2, E2, F2, G2, A2, B2, C3, C#3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, C#4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, C#5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, C#6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, C#7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8, C#8, D8, E8, F8, G8, A8, B8, C9, C#9, D9, E9, F9, G9, A9, B9, C10, C#10, D10, E10, F10, G10, A10, B10, C11, C#11, D11, E11, F11, G11, A11, B11, C12, C#12, D12, E12, F12, G12, A12, B12, C13, C#13, D13, E13, F13, G13, A13, B13, C14, C#14, D14, E14, F14, G14, A14, B14, C15, C#15, D15, E15, F15, G15, A15, B15, C16, C#16, D16, E16, F16, G16, A16, B16, C17, C#17, D17, E17, F17, G17, A17, B17, C18, C#18, D18, E18, F18, G18, A18, B18, C19, C#19, D19, E19, F19, G19, A19, B19, C20, C#20, D20, E20, F20, G20, A20, B20, C21, C#21, D21, E21, F21, G21, A21, B21, C22, C#22, D22, E22, F22, G22, A22, B22, C23, C#23, D23, E23, F23, G23, A23, B23, C24, C#24, D24, E24, F24, G24, A24, B24, C25, C#25, D25, E25, F25, G25, A25, B25, C26, C#26, D26, E26, F26, G26, A26, B26, C27, C#27, D27, E27, F27, G27, A27, B27, C28, C#28, D28, E28, F28, G28, A28, B28, C29, C#29, D29, E29, F29, G29, A29, B29, C30, C#30, D30, E30, F30, G30, A30, B30, C31, C#31, D31, E31, F31, G31, A31, B31, C32, C#32, D32, E32, F32, G32, A32, B32, C33, C#33, D33, E33, F33, G33, A33, B33, C34, C#34, D34, E34, F34, G34, A34, B34, C35, C#35, D35, E35, F35, G35, A35, B35, C36, C#36, D36, E36, F36, G36, A36, B36, C37, C#37, D37, E37, F37, G37, A37, B37, C38, C#38, D38, E38, F38, G38, A38, B38, C39, C#39, D39, E39, F39, G39, A39, B39, C40, C#40, D40, E40, F40, G40, A40, B40, C41, C#41, D41, E41, F41, G41, A41, B41, C42, C#42, D42, E42, F42, G42, A42, B42, C43, C#43, D43, E43, F43, G43, A43, B43, C44, C#44, D44, E44, F44, G44, A44, B44, C45, C#45, D45, E45, F45, G45, A45, B45, C46, C#46, D46, E46, F46, G46, A46, B46, C47, C#47, D47, E47, F47, G47, A47, B47, C48, C#48, D48, E48, F48, G48, A48, B48, C49, C#49, D49, E49, F49, G49, A49, B49, C50, C#50, D50, E50, F50, G50, A50, B50, C51, C#51, D51, E51, F51, G51, A51, B51, C52, C#52, D52, E52, F52, G52, A52, B52, C53, C#53, D53, E53, F53, G53, A53, B53, C54, C#54, D54, E54, F54, G54, A54, B54, C55, C#55, D55, E55, F55, G55, A55, B55, C56, C#56, D56, E56, F56, G56, A56, B56, C57, C#57, D57, E57, F57, G57, A57, B57, C58, C#58, D58, E58, F58, G58, A58, B58, C59, C#59, D59, E59, F59, G59, A59, B59, C60, C#60, D60, E60, F60, G60, A60, B60, C61, C#61, D61, E61, F61, G61, A61, B61, C62, C#62, D62, E62, F62, G62, A62, B62, C63, C#63, D63, E63, F63, G63, A63, B63, C64, C#64, D64, E64, F64, G64, A64, B64, C65, C#65, D65, E65, F65, G65, A65, B65, C66, C#66, D66, E66, F66, G66, A66, B66, C67, C#67, D67, E67, F67, G67, A67, B67, C68, C#68, D68, E68, F68, G68, A68, B68, C69, C#69, D69, E69, F69, G69, A69, B69, C70, C#70, D70, E70, F70, G70, A70, B70, C71, C#71, D71, E71, F71, G71, A71, B71, C72, C#72, D72, E72, F72, G72, A72, B72, C73, C#73, D73, E73, F73, G73, A73, B73, C74, C#74, D74, E74, F74, G74, A74, B74, C75, C#75, D75, E75, F75, G75, A75, B75, C76, C#76, D76, E76, F76, G76, A76, B76, C77, C#77, D77, E77, F77, G77, A77, B77, C78, C#78, D78, E78, F78, G78, A78, B78, C79, C#79, D79, E79, F79, G79, A79, B79, C80, C#80, D80, E80, F80, G80, A80, B80, C81, C#81, D81, E81, F81, G81, A81, B81, C82, C#82, D82, E82, F82, G82, A82, B82, C83, C#83, D83, E83, F83, G83, A83, B83, C84, C#84, D84, E84, F84, G84, A84, B84, C85, C#85, D85, E85, F85, G85, A85, B85, C86, C#86, D86, E86, F86, G86, A86, B86, C87, C#87, D87, E87, F87, G87, A87, B87, C88, C#88, D88, E88, F88, G88, A88, B88, C89, C#89, D89, E89, F89, G89, A89, B89, C90, C#90, D90, E90, F90, G90, A90, B90, C91, C#91, D91, E91, F91, G91, A91, B91, C92, C#92, D92, E92, F92, G92, A92, B92, C93, C#93, D93, E93, F93, G93, A93, B93, C94, C#94, D94, E94, F94, G94, A94, B94, C95, C#95, D95, E95, F95, G95, A95, B95, C96, C#96, D96, E96, F96, G96, A96, B96, C97, C#97, D97, E97, F97, G97, A97, B97, C98, C#98, D98, E98, F98, G98, A98, B98, C99, C#99, D99, E99, F99, G99, A99, B99, C100, C#100, D100, E100, F100, G100, A100, B100, C101, C#101, D101, E101, F101, G101, A101, B101, C102, C#102, D102, E102, F102, G102, A102, B102, C103, C#103, D103, E103, F103, G103, A103, B103, C104, C#104, D104, E104, F104, G104, A104, B104, C105, C#105, D105, E105, F105, G105, A105, B105, C106, C#106, D106, E106, F106, G106, A106, B106, C107, C#107, D107, E107, F107, G107, A107, B107, C108, C#108, D108, E108, F108, G108, A108, B108, C109, C#109, D109, E109, F109, G109, A109, B109, C110, C#110, D110, E110, F110, G110, A110, B110, C111, C#111, D111, E111, F111, G111, A111, B111, C112, C#112, D112, E112, F112, G112, A112, B112, C113, C#113, D113, E113, F113, G113, A113, B113, C114, C#114, D114, E114, F114, G114, A114, B114, C115, C#115, D115, E115, F115, G115, A115, B115, C116, C#116, D116, E116, F116, G116, A116, B116, C117, C#117, D117, E117, F117, G117, A117, B117, C118, C#118, D118, E118, F118, G118, A118, B118, C119, C#119, D119, E119, F119, G119, A119, B119, C120, C#120, D120, E120, F120, G120, A120, B120, C121, C#121, D121, E121, F121, G121, A121, B121, C122, C#122, D122, E122, F122, G122, A122, B122, C123, C#123, D123, E123, F123, G123, A123, B123, C124, C#124, D124, E124, F124, G124, A124, B124, C125, C#125, D125, E125, F125, G125, A125, B125, C126, C#126, D126, E126, F126, G126, A126, B126, C127, C#127, D127, E127, F127, G127, A127, B127, C128, C#128, D128, E128, F128, G128, A128, B128, C129, C#129, D129, E129, F129, G129, A129, B129, C130, C#130, D130, E130, F130, G130, A130, B130, C131, C#131, D131, E131, F131, G131, A131, B131, C132, C#132, D132, E132, F132, G132, A132, B132, C133, C#133, D133, E133, F133, G133, A133, B133, C134, C#134, D134, E134, F134, G134, A134, B134, C135, C#135, D135, E135, F135, G135, A135, B135, C136, C#136, D136, E136, F136, G136, A136, B136, C137, C#137, D137, E137, F137, G137, A137, B137, C138, C#138, D138, E138, F138, G138, A138, B138, C139, C#139, D139, E139, F139, G139, A139, B139, C140, C#140, D140, E140, F140, G140, A140, B140, C141, C#141, 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concluding gestures, lasting just a few seconds. However, in a long coda—such as the three-minute closing section of *Mi-parti* (a single-movement, fifteen-minute orchestral piece from 1976)—an unbroken succession of brief concluding gestures could become tedious for the listener. Therefore, a different strategy is employed, one that does not rely on a succession of gestures.⁸ Longer passages that are not identified by small-scale gestures, such as the *Mi-Parti* closing section, require a wider time perspective in order to interpret them successfully. Lutosławski understood this intuition of formal function on a larger scale as an “action”—another term that he had learned from his composition teacher. Again we will return to Lutosławski’s recollections of Maliszewski, this time to explore ideas about large-scale form that probably have their origins in the writings of the Russian musicologist Boris Asaf’yev (1884–1949).

MUSICAL ACTION

Maliszewski taught Lutosławski to prepare an “action” for every piece that he composed.⁹ This pedagogical strategy—which is a familiar theme in Lutosławski’s lectures, his later interviews, and in the analytical literature about him—continued to influence his methods of composition throughout his life.¹⁰ To compose an action the composer must consider carefully how the audience will perceive its progression through time; then, the composer must sculpt the musical materials to prepare and deliver (among other things) a convincing climax framed by a recognizable introduction and conclusion. This activity led Lutosławski to develop strategies to

⁸ Lutosławski ends *Mi-Parti* with a string cantilena from R43–R53 that gradually ascends to the violins’ high register. This memorable passage is analyzed in more detail in Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, 138 and 140–142.

⁹ Irina Nikolska, *Conversations with Witold Lutosławski*, trans. Valeri Yerokbin (Stockholm: Melos, 1994), 105.

¹⁰ Sources and references to Lutosławski’s term “action” are documented in Reyland, “Lutosławski, ‘Akcja’ and the Poetics of Musical Plot.”

encourage the involvement of the listener in the unfolding of the action. For example, there was the use of mottos (or formal signals such as the octave-leap motives that separate episodes in the first movement of his String Quartet),¹¹ the careful timing of sectional contrasts (the best-known strategy of this type Lutosławski called the “macrorhythmic accelerando”),¹² and his two-movement end-accented form,¹³ which involves a loosely structured first movement, followed by a longer and more significant second movement that drives toward a climax near the end. Martina Homma has shown how this form, commonly associated with Lutosławski’s String Quartet (1965) and Symphony No. 2 (1967), can be adjusted to accommodate most of his one-movement or multi-movement compositions after 1961. She identifies four stages in the form: Introduction, Main Movement (*Hauptsatz*), Climax, and Closure.¹⁴ Their functions come close to matching two or three of Maliszewski’s four character terms, mapping each character onto a larger scale than that of themes and gestures. Lutosławski achieved this two-movement, end-accented formal plan after years of experimentation in his early period; he did not inherit it from Maliszewski. Nevertheless, the concerns that inspired him to develop the form have distant origins in Maliszewski’s class on musical form.

¹¹ For a detailed account of these mottos and their impact on the form of the String Quartet, see John Selleck, “Pitch and Duration as Textural Elements in Lutosławski’s String Quartet,” *Perspectives of New Music* 13/2 (1975), 150–151. Lutosławski sometimes referred to mottos as “once-only conventions” as in his Darmstadt lectures from 1967–68. Excerpts of these lectures are translated in Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, 118.

¹² Lutosławski described macrorhythm in his essay on Symphony No. 2 (Witold Lutosławski, “Witold Lutosławski,” in *The Orchestral Composer’s Point of View: Essays on Twentieth-Century Music by Those Who Wrote It*, ed. Robert Stephan Hines [Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970], 145–147). For a more detailed analysis of temporal proportions in that symphony, see Douglas Rust, “Two Questions of Perception in Lutosławski’s Second Symphony,” *Perspectives of New Music* 42/2 (2004): 190–221.

¹³ The composer’s terms “two-movement form” and “end-accented form” are combined in the valuable study by Martina Homma, *Witold Lutosławski: Zwölfte Harmonik, Formbildung “aleatorischer Kontrapunkt”: Studien zum Gesamtwerk unter Einbeziehung der Skizzen* (Cologne: Bela Verlag, 1996), 117–120, 136–138, 223–228 (see especially 118).

¹⁴ Homma, *Witold Lutosławski*, 145–193.

Lutosławski insisted that his teacher was influenced by the Russian musicologist Boris Asaf'yev, although he never explained why he thought so. Maliszewski probably never undertook formal study with Asaf'yev (who was eleven years younger than he). It is more likely that he encountered Asaf'yev's ideas in reviews and journal articles that began to appear in print around 1914.¹⁵ By the 1920s, Asaf'yev was gaining a solid reputation as a musicologist and critic in Russia, so Maliszewski, who lived and worked in Odessa until 1921, may have been influenced by some of these writings. Possibly the psychological and intuitive components of form, as taught by Maliszewski, owe something to the musical commentaries published by Asaf'yev around the late 1910s and early '20s—especially his writings about “symphonism.” This may explain why Lutosławski insisted that some of his teacher's ideas came from Asaf'yev. Whatever the case, when Lutosławski discusses “action” in interviews, his comments definitely reflect some of the characteristic concerns of symphonism.

In 1917, Asaf'yev coined the term symphonism to explain a unifying process in musical form whereby a sequence of musical disruptions and restorations are perceived by the listener as following a single direction—as forming an organic whole.¹⁶ The perceived disruptions take on a dramatic impact when the listener interprets them as a metaphor for life experiences, and then feels gratified when the composition reaches closure. Thus, symphonism is not a technique or a formula, but—as explained more recently by commentator David Haas—it is a qualitative state.¹⁷

Three elements of Asaf'yev's thinking match convictions about musical form that Lutosławski expressed consistently in his interviews and essays: (1) a reliance upon intuition, (2)

¹⁵ The date 1914 is identified in Larisa Dan'ko, “Asaf'yev, Boris Vladimirovich,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn. (London: Macmillan, 2001), II, 100.

¹⁶ For a good introduction to Asaf'yev's development of the term “symphonism,” see David Haas, “Boris Asaf'yev and Soviet Symphonic Theory,” *Musical Quarterly* 76/3 (1992): 410–432.

¹⁷ Haas, “Boris Asaf'yev and Soviet Symphonic Theory,” 415.

a primary concern about the listener's perception, and (3) the goal of forming each composition into an overall unified shape. Music lacking these traits would be described by Asaf'yev as not "symphonic." Lutosławski's quotation below shares similar concerns with Asaf'yev's early writings on symphonism:

[E]ach large-scale closed form should be composed of some musical events that together—one after another—may be compared to an action, to a plot of a drama, or a novel, or short story, or something. Of course, I don't mean to suggest that in my music one should see the analogy with literature. No! It's purely musical, a purely musical standpoint that the action—that means the plot—must consist of musical events that come one after another in a way that is somewhat similar to the logic in a drama. This is important for all those who want to approach the large-scale closed form. Otherwise, if they compose one section after another and they don't carefully consider how it is perceived during the performance, then it doesn't work and the piece is not a symphony—or not worthy of the title "symphony."¹⁸

In this quotation, Lutosławski explains how he intends for all of the musical events in any one of his compositions to be perceived as an overall unity (an "action"), just as Asaf'yev felt that symphonic writing should form an organic whole. In this same quote, Lutosławski expresses a concern, similar to that of Asaf'yev, for how a listener perceives the succession of musical events. He concludes by judging those works that do not share these traits to be unworthy of the title "symphony," just as Asaf'yev famously wrote that "Not all symphonies are symphonic."¹⁹ At least some of these convictions were received by Lutosławski in Maliszewski's classroom (after all, it was Maliszewski who first taught him to compose an "action"),²⁰ and all of them have points of agreement with the earliest tenets of symphonism. Hence, there is some evidence to suggest an indirect influence between Asaf'yev's symphonism and Lutosławski's thinking about form.

¹⁸ Rust, "Conversation with Witold Lutosławski," 209.

¹⁹ Igor Glebov [Boris Asaf'yev], "Soblazny I preodolenua," in *Melos: Knigi o muzyke I* (St. Petersburg: 1917); trans. in Haas, "Boris Asaf'yev and Soviet Symphonic Theory," 412.

²⁰ Again, this statement is documented in Nikolska, *Conversations with Witold Lutosławski*, 105.

Lutosławski's terms "action" and "plot" do not imply that his compositions follow the extramusical subjects of literature or drama. Instead, they refer to the composer's intuitive consideration of the temporal succession of musical sections. While rhetorical characters may be used to interpret the formal function of musical events from moment to moment, the analysis of an action would involve the combined effect of several contiguous passages—thereby extending rhetorical meanings over longer time spans. Each of these two concepts, character and action, is concerned primarily with shaping the listener's perception of time to recognize a specific formal function. The difference between the two is one of scale. A brief gesture produces a more immediate impression of formal function than a registral shape that unfolds over a longer time span, but it commands a smaller field of influence. Returning to the closing section of *Mi-parti* (discussed earlier), we find a clear example of how Lutosławski used the same registral shape crafted with the same ascending pattern of pitches—over longer and shorter time spans to fulfill different musical functions.

The ascending pitch sequence that structures the string cantilena over the last three minutes of *Mi-parti* occurs not just in the coda; it also governs the brass episodes that separate phrases in the main portion of the form.²¹ This sequence sounds like an introductory gesture in the brass passages of 7–10 seconds at R24, R28 and R35 (fourth bar), while the same sequence sounds like a concluding passage when it is scored for strings and stretched out over a gradual decrescendo at the end of the piece (R44–R52). The thinning orchestration of the coda, along with its ebbing dynamic level, leaves the listener with the distinct impression that the music is losing momentum and possibly drawing to a close as the string instruments quietly retreat into the upper register. Yet at the same time, the ascending sequence of pitches played by the strings

²¹ This nine-note series is published in Stucky, *Lutosławski and His Music*, 192, where I first became aware of it.

implies purposeful motion toward a goal. This goal is attained after R48, where a string pizzicato chord announces the conclusion of the first cantilena phrase; then the second phrase ends the entire piece as first violins sustain the pitch C7 to the soft accompaniment of strings and pitched percussion. The same musical idea produces an intuition of purposeful motion over different spans of time.

Having demonstrated how Lutosławski can apply the same musical idea over different temporal proportions, we now return to the subject that began this article: musical passages that have different meanings depending upon one's time perspective. Understanding how Lutosławski composes on two temporal levels at one time while investing each temporality with its own specific meaning could add a significant new dimension to one's appreciation of his works. The resulting confluence of interpretations can allow the listener to hear a Lutosławski piece several times yet still discover new subtleties of meaning with each listening, all the while never losing sight of the overall picture—the overall expressive shape of the musical form. As an example of form analysis on multiple levels, we will turn to the principal movement of one of Lutosławski's masterpieces, his Symphony No. 3.

DIFFERENT TIME SPANS: DIFFERENT MEANINGS.

Symphony No. 3 (1983) is written in two-movement end-accented form, with an epilogue.²² In keeping with the composer's established pattern, the first movement is an introductory cycle of loosely organized episodes and refrains that lead up to the more substantial second movement. The second movement is organized around two dynamic curves that reach highpoints at R45 and R77 before being superseded by an even longer and louder climax in the

²² Lutosławski gives this description of the form in Nikolska, *Conversations with Witold Lutosławski*, 96.

epilogue, around R97. The second movement also has one design feature in common with traditional sonata form: the two contrasting themes that begin the movement return later, in order, in a manner that resembles a recapitulation. Also significant to the form of this symphony is the presence of a motto: a rapid repetition of pitch-class E four or more times that marks important points in the form, such as the beginning and ending of the entire piece, the start of each new episode in the first movement, and the beginnings and endings of the two themes in the second movement's exposition. An overview of this movement appears in Figure 5.

Rhetorical gestures occur with more frequency near the end of the exposition because, as Figure 5 reveals, thematic materials near the beginning are introduced and concluded by mottos. Both themes dissolve into transitions (as did the themes in Symphony No. 1/I) when the four voices of Theme 1 compromise their independence by conforming to a chromatically rising pattern at R36, and also when the string-ensemble "hymn" of Theme 2 begins to contract in register at R39, accompanied by a gradual rhythmic *accelerando*. Each theme ends with modifications that dissolve the narrative character by refusing to privilege any melodic line as primary or even independent. While both themes end with a slight *crescendo*, the resulting dynamic change is small compared to the powerful *crescendos* that accompany the brass introductory gestures at R40 (after the motto) and R44. The rising line of brass fanfare at R40 initiates a powerful drive toward the climax that is interrupted by a pair of solo melodic episodes: one for clarinet and one for tuba (R41–R43). The rising gesture is resumed by the brass at R44, and this time the expected climax is attained at R45. The unexpected insertion of episodes for clarinet solo and tuba solo creates great dramatic tension by interrupting the louder, more intricate brass fanfares that are building up toward the climax.

FIGURE 5. Lutosławski, Symphony No. 3 (1983), II: outline of form

R	Description	Character
Exposition Section		
31	Motto	
32–35	Theme 1 (“toccata”)*	Narrative
36	Theme 1 dissolves into transition	"
36, m. 7	Motto	
37–38	Theme 2 (“hymn”)*	Narrative
39	Theme 2 dissolves into transition	"
40	Motto	
40–44	Buildup to climax	Transitory
45–46	Climax	Transitory
47–48	Decrescendo and descending gestures	Concluding
Middle Section		
49–61	Canon	
62–65	Introductory gestures leading to the recap	Introductory
Recapitulation Section		
65, m. 3–68	Theme 1	Narrative
69	Theme 1 dissolves into transition	"
70–72	Transition	Transitory
73–76	Theme 2 (builds up to climax)	Narrative
77–80	Abortive climax	Transitory
81–96	Epilogue Part 1: transition material from m. 16, headmotive of theme, then cadence from mm. 14–15	Narrative
97–100	Epilogue, Part 2: principal climax	"
100–102	Closing section: repeated-simultaneity gesture, contracting-register gesture, and motto	Concluding

* Rae, *The Music of Lutosławski*, 176–177, applies the terms “toccata” and “hymn” to these themes to match them with Lutosławski’s notes and preliminary sketch materials for this symphony. Rae’s book includes an excellent analysis of the form of Symphony No. 3, on 165–178.

The tuba solo (R43) offers a very clear example of a passage that has several different levels of formal function operating at one time. The solo itself—which is perceived as the lead melody against the softer accompaniment of bassoons and pianos—is narrative in character. Descending-register gestures in flute, piano 1, and second violins punctuate the beginnings and endings of each tuba phrase. Thus, more than one level of interpretation is taking place simultaneously. The concluding gestures (of the flute, piano, and second violin) imply closure at the end of each melodic phrase, while the tuba solo itself expresses narrative character and its concomi-

tant perception of temporal continuity. At the same time, the listener perceives this solo as an interruption of the brass music that was driving toward a climax. Starting a few measures after the R40 motto and fanfare, the narrative character of this passage is really only part of a larger transition section; in the bigger picture, the transitory function is most significant. The interpretation of this passage yields different meanings at different temporal levels and the conflicting formal functions produce a dramatic tension that can be felt intuitively.

Such tension does not occur at every moment in the piece, however. It is mostly absent from the rising gesture in the brass that immediately follows the tuba solo. A bold crescendo accompanies this passage, which culminates at the loudest moment in the exposition: the fortissimo woodwind, brass, and tympani texture, in ensemble *ad libitum* at R45. There is no conflict here as the ascending register of the brass and the strong crescendo work together to attain the consequent culmination. Likewise, the decrescendo that accompanies descending-register gestures in the strings at R48 contributes to the general intuition of closure that ends the exposition. Interpretations of these passages are the same at different levels, and the cooperating functions lend interpretive weight to the implied functions. Thus, we discover an important principle of form for compositions that combine multiple levels of time: the form interpretation on different temporal levels can either cooperate to strengthen an implied function, or contrast to produce tension in the music.

The differences between the tuba solo and the subsequent brass passage are heightened by their respective harmonic affiliations with Themes 1 and 2.²³ The pitch-class chromatic seg-

²³ My commentary upon pitch organization in this movement relies upon that of Aloyse Michaely, "Lutosławskis III. Sinfonie: Untersuchungen zu Form und Harmonik," *Musik-Konzepte* 71/72/73, ed. Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn (Munich: edition text + kritik GmbH, 1991), 109–169. Our form analyses do not agree, however, as Michaely (55) identifies the second theme as spanning from R37 all the way to R48, whereas I believe that the second theme concludes at R39.

ments played by the tuba solo (also played by the clarinet solo that precedes it) share similarities of pitch structure with Theme 1, while the brass passage has significant traits in common with Theme 2. Just as the melodic lines of Theme 1 fill out pitch-class chromatic segments with their complements in the accompaniment, the clarinet solo plays a seven-note chromatic segment with the literal complement played by accompanying flutes and oboes. The tuba follows suit, playing an eight-note chromatic segment with its pitch-class complement in the bassoons. In contrast to these melodic chromatic segments, Theme 2 uses a chordal texture whose pitch organization forms a hexatonic-sounding harmony in its lower register and, in its upper register, an alternation of voicings drawn from pitch-interval adjacencies 4 and 7, or 5 and 6;²⁴ see Figure 6. These interval adjacencies combine to produce major-seventh intervals in the string voicings of Theme 2, and the same pitch intervals obtain in the brass passages that follow. The first brass passage begins with horns and trombones in canon, outlining the same hexatonic harmony that began Theme 2 (transposed up one semitone), while the last brass passage ends in the hexatonic. At R45, the culmination of the last brass ascent, the instruments play pitch sequences *ad libitum* that combine to produce two distinct hexatonic scales: one in the treble staff and one in the bass;²⁵ see Figure 7.

²⁴ Regarding the lower-register, “hexatonic-sounding harmony,” it consists of a hexatonic collection, {C#,D,F#,A,A#}, with one extra pitch class added. (For an explanation of the hexatonic, see Richard Cohn, “Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions,” *Music Analysis* 15/1 [1996], 18.) Regarding the upper-register voicings, I first became aware of the interval adjacencies when I read about them in Michaely, “Lutosławski III. Sinfonie,” 109–110.

²⁵ In contrast to the frequent major sevenths in Theme 2 and in the brass passages that follow, Theme 1 and its associated clarinet and tuba solo passages emphasize minor ninths in their voicings and gestures. For example, in the rising-line gesture that immediately follows the clarinet solo (at R42), the flutes’ figure is imitated by oboe 3 and clarinets a minor ninth lower. At the same time, the xylophone plays a minor ninth higher than the horns and marimba while the notes of the second violins are answered by those of the violas and cellos at a distance of a minor ninth. The piano-1 part that frames the tuba solo with falling gestures also is voiced in minor ninths, as are the pizzicato string sonorities that punctuate that passage. This contrast of major sevenths and minor ninths was identified by the composer as an important aesthetic concern (see Nikolska, *Conversations with Witold Lutosławski*, 122–123, and Rust, “Conversation with Witold Lutosławski,” 215–216), and I believe that he used it to help associate Theme 1 with the clarinet and tuba solos, and Theme 2 with the brass passages.

FIGURE 6. Lutosławski, Symphony No. 3 (1983), II, R37 (strings only): two-staff reduction

7	4	6	5	5
4	7	5	6	6
7	4	6	5	5
4	5	5	6	6

hexatonic {C#,D,F,F#,A,Bb} +E

FIGURE 7. Lutosławski, Symphony No. 3/II, R45: harmonic reduction

augmented triad

hexatonic {D#,E,G,G#,B,C}

hexatonic {D,Eb,Gb,G,Bb,B}

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The association of Theme 1 with the clarinet and tuba solos, and Theme 2 with the brass passages that culminate this part of the movement, extends the contrast of Themes 1 and 2 beyond the safe enclosures provided by mottos and into a large transitional section where they can be juxtaposed more abruptly. The solos embody a more narrative character because they have a discernible melodic line with accompaniment, while the canonic writing in the brass passages (despite any harmonic affinities with Theme 2) sounds more like one of the rhetorical characters that Lutosławski associated with Maliszewski’s polarity of “form”: the introductory, transitional, or concluding characters. Resuming the previous discussion about the different meanings expressed by different time perspectives of the tuba solo, we can now add another

temporal layer to our understanding of this solo by recognizing its affinity with Theme 1, and its role in formal processes that encompass the entire exposition.

The exposition of Symphony No. 3 follows a principle of large-scale design that one can hear in several different pieces by Lutosławski: that when a climax or culmination point sounds like transitional or concluding character, the narrative passages will gradually become shorter in duration to prepare for this goal. Notice how the brass passages of this exposition grow longer in duration and gradually become louder, while the “narrative” instrumental solo passages become shorter and recede into the lower register. Clear evidence of this principle spans the exposition of the symphony, as the durations of the narrative passages recede from Theme 1 (67 seconds), to Theme 2 (35 seconds), to the clarinet solo (27 seconds) and the tuba solo (15 seconds).²⁶ As a corollary of this principle, the textures of these narrative passages gradually become less intricate than the adjacent passages that express different rhetorical characters. Note how the textures of the themes sound more intricate than the mottos surrounding them, but the clarinet and tuba solos that come later sound less intricate than the double-canon textures of the adjacent brass passages. In sum, the greater density and textural interest (relative to adjacent passages) that was invested at the beginning of this movement in the themes (the narrative passages) passes to music of transitional or concluding character as we draw nearer to the culmination at R45. Durations of narrative passages also diminish in preparation.

Later in the movement, when the two themes return in the recapitulation, each is introduced by a loud transitory passage whose direction toward the next theme is emphasized by an accompanying crescendo. This helps to produce the illusion of building momentum when each

²⁶ These times are measured from a recording of Symphony No. 3 with Lutosławski conducting the Berlin Philharmonic (Phillips CD 416 387-2).

theme recapitulates. The music grows increasingly louder over the course of Theme 2's reprise until the fortissimo orchestral tutti of R76 (which implies introductory character) slowly but forcefully inches up the chromatic scale toward that first climactic chord on the downbeat of R77. Listeners who know Lutosławski's pieces from the 1960s and '70s will probably recognize that R77 of Symphony No. 3 is prepared and executed as the principal climax of the entire composition, and they will be either surprised or disappointed by what happens next.

The surprise is that the climactic passage is cut short. This unexpected turn leaves the listener waiting for another, more substantial musical goal to be attained. That final climactic moment, the principal climax of Symphony No. 3, does not arrive until R97, where we hear a fortissimo melody played by strings (doubled in octaves) to the accompaniment of the entire orchestra. Unlike Lutosławski's other climactic passages of the 1960s and '70s, this one is homophonic in texture and narrative in character. It is not the contrapuntally dense, ensemble *ad libitum* climax that one might expect from this composer. It arrives not as a moment of disruption after a contest of forces,²⁷ but at the highpoint of a long continuous melody. Thus, the narrative character of the climactic moment necessitates a preparation different from other climaxes that are not homophonic in texture. By choosing a specific rhetorical character for the climactic moment, Lutosławski determined several aspects of large-scale design for this composition.



This article has shown some examples of rhetorical characters and formal functions at surface levels (through gestures and texture), across longer time spans (through musical passages

²⁷ Lutosławski described the climax of Symphony No. 2 in this way (Lutosławski, "Witold Lutosławski," 141).

and sections), and over the span of entire compositions (through overall formal designs and dynamic shapes). Considered together, these layers of interpretation constitute the background structure of Lutosławski's compositions, and their confluence witnesses to his remarkably intricate language of musical form. The different temporal levels of form interpretation may conflict to create tension, or they may cooperate to strengthen the intended reading of a specific passage. Awareness of these multi-level formal functions can help the listener to interpret and appreciate one of the more engaging qualities of Lutosławski's music.

While Lutosławski's approach to form is an individual achievement, which he developed over a lifetime of composing, his convictions about symphonic writing had a significant influence upon his artistic agenda. At least some of these convictions were learned at the Warsaw Conservatory, where—as Lutosławski recalled—Maliszewski handed down to his students an approach to form analysis that incorporated ideas from Glazunov and Asaf'yev. These Russian views of musical form and symphonic writing—passed from mentor to student—significantly affected the development of Lutosławski's style; and the student used them to develop symphonic literature of lasting significance.

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ABSTRACT

The capacity to write music that clearly conveys one formal meaning in its immediate context, and yet expresses a different meaning in a wider context, is one of the most interesting attributes in the musical style of Witold Lutosławski (1913–94), who cultivated multiple temporalities in his compositions using the musical language of twentieth-century modernism. In developing these innovations, he was inspired by his Russian-trained composition teacher to use metaphors of rhetoric and drama to model the "psychology" of his musical forms on the example of Beethoven's sonatas. This article will suggest ways in which Lutosławski's manner of composing music in multiple temporalities can be understood as a creative response to the musical training he received at the Warsaw Conservatory. Also, it will explore the significance of the composer's claim that the analytical methods he learned were descended from Russian traditions.

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