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## **Lutosławski's Twelve-Note Chords and the Renewed Exploration of Harmony in the Twentieth-century**

Marking the beginning of Witold Lutosławski's middle period, the compositional output of the second half of the 1950s—*Musique funèbre* (1954–58), *Five Songs* (1956–57), and the *Three Postludes* (1958–60)—brought about a shift in the composer's harmonic practice and "sound language" with lasting implications for his work in the ensuing four decades (Nikolska 1994). This compositional path was opened by Lutosławski's intense explorations of (what he felt were) overlooked potentialities of the chromatic scale, resulting in new sensuous and expressive harmonic possibilities of twelve-note arrangements. Lutosławski rejected dodecaphonic practices and principles, thereby affiliating his own renewed understanding of the dormant harmonic potentialities of the aggregate into the "empirical tradition" of composers as Debussy, Bartók, and Messiaen (Lutosławski 1962) grounding his new harmonic practice on a phenomenology of interval quality of aggregate arrangements. Much of the analytical attention concerning the pitch organization in pieces of this period has focused on inventorying the various intervallic arrangements of individual twelve-note chords, including the use of register and observing structural properties such as inversional symmetries and pattern transpositions, and the preference for certain partitions and interval-class pairings (Stucky 1981, Bodman Rae 1999, Homma 1995, 2001). However, because Lutosławski's sensuous responses to harmony have primarily been examined through individual chordal configurations, we still do not appropriately understand how chordal properties impact inter-chordal relations (including harmonic succession) and underlie processes of global harmonic space. In particular, it is not yet clear how the restriction and ordering of interval qualities, while ensuring the unique character of twelve-note chords, might also shape strategies of chordal progression and principles of harmonic relatedness or self-referential syntax. Building on theoretical work of interlocked interval cycles and pitch nets and fields (Perle 1996, Nauert 2003, Gollin 2007, Martins 2011, 2015), my approach to Lutosławski's mid-century harmonic explorations argues that twelve-note chords are often inscribed into larger pitch-space orderings or networks framing inter-chordal relations. Specifically, certain "sensuous" properties of individual chordal arrangements provide the structuring impetus for a series of theoretical referential constructions that both efficiently integrate a large number of individual chordal patterns and act as extended fields for chordal possibilities. The constructions are portrayed here as geometrical representations of non-octave repeating cyclic groups or as various types of transpositional networks. The modeling of harmonic relations reconciles chordal construction and chordal succession, and provides a framework for analyzing the interplay between harmony and form in a number of pieces of this transformative period for the composer.

Keywords: Lutosławski; Harmony; Networks; Musical Space

## **Biography**

José Oliveira Martins (Ph.D. University of Chicago, Music History and Theory) is currently FCT-Principal Researcher (eq. Associate Prof.) and Vice-Director at CITAR, the Research Center for Science and Technology of the Arts at Universidade Católica Portuguesa. Previous faculty appointments include the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester and the University of Iowa. His research explores the conceptualization of musical systems and the analytical modeling of multi-layered pitch organizations in music of Bartók, Stravinsky, Milhaud, Casella, Falla, Lutoslawski, Kurtág, and others. A co-organizer of the 2016 Porto International Conference on Musical Gesture as Creative Interface (PT), his publications appear in the *Journal of Music Theory*, *Perspectives of New Music*, *Theory and Practice*, *Mathematics and Computation in Music*, *Bridges*, *Portuguese Journal of Musicology* and others. Currently writing two books: on multi-layered harmony in twentieth-century music, and on the music of Carlos Paredes, a Portuguese-guitar virtuoso.