



ROYAL  
COLLEGE  
OF MUSIC  
*London*

# RCM Sparks Springboard: Lutoslawski Composition Challenge

RCM Sparks is the Royal College of Music's learning and participation programme.  
To find out more and get involved visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/sparks](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/sparks)

**This activity pack written by Fraser Trainer, guides you through making your own compositions using elements from Lutoslawki's Concerto for Orchestra as inspiration.**

Listen to the opening 3 minutes of Lutoslawski's Concerto for Orchestra [here](#)

Listen out for:

- The opening section which is built over a repeating F# pulse.
- Folk-like melodies which are played by the strings above it.

You will need the following accompanying resources for this task:  
Lutoslawki Composition Materials (sheet music)  
Pulse Click Track

## Part 1

### CREATE A RIFF/OSTINATO

*A riff/ostinato is a repeating pattern/idea*

Create a riff that is in 3 beats in a bar.

The riff could be one, two or three bars long.

Choose a small selection of pitches (notes) from the mode (DEFGABbC / clarinets & trumpets - EF#GABCD French horn in F - ABCDEFG) to make the riff.

You don't need to begin or end on the first note of the mode.

Experiment, improvise and spend time working on the idea until you like the idea enough to keep it. Practise looping the chosen idea over and over again.

Record it to the pulse (click track).

## Part 2

### MAKE A MELODY THAT IS 9 BARS LONG

*A melody is an idea that goes on a journey. It doesn't have a repeating pattern (like a riff/ostinato) as it has a sense of growth, development and variety.*

It should be 9 bars of 3 beats (total length 27 beats).

Use the pitches (notes) from the mode.

The melody can be contrasting to your riff/ostinato.

## Part 3

### INVENT A PUNCTUATING RHYTHM, SOUND or SOUNDS

The idea should appear intermittently anywhere throughout the 9 bars and not be continuous.

For example it could appear only in bars 2 and 7 of the 9 bars.

Please note this is still 3 beats in a bar!

### CHECKLIST!

Can you imagine your three ideas layered on top of each other?

Is each task 3 beats in a bar?

Are you using notes from the mode?

Have you recorded to the click track? The click track gives a 2 bar introduction.

If you have access to editing software, try layering your ideas on top of each other.

## Part 4

### LUTOSLAWSKI BASS LINE CHALLENGE

If you'd like to challenge yourself further, now listen to an extract from the 3rd movement [here](#) (14:27-19:15). Listen out for the repeating bass line.

You will need the following accompanying resources for this part of the task:

Bassoon bass line track

Bass click track

Invent your own musical material to go over the Lutoslawski bass line. The bass line is 8 bars long. There are 3 beats in each bar. You can use any pitches or any rhythmic material that you like. Be inventive, be creative, try not to do the obvious thing. You don't need to play all the way through the 8 bars.

You can practise along to the accompanying bass line track played by the bassoon.