

NCPP Research Session Proposal.

Teaching formal structure through indefinitely pitched multiple percussion compositions using three concert tom -tom solos.

Lecture with musical examples and audiovisual excerpts.

Abstract:

In the absence of definite pitch and tonal function, numerous composers of indefinitely pitched percussion solo works rely primarily on rhythmic and timbre to delineate phrases, sections, and contrapuntal textures to convey formal cohesiveness. Solo concert tom-tom compositions comprise a small but popular subgenre of unaccompanied multiple percussion literature. Written for four graduated bottomless tom-toms, they are notated using the four staff spaces with the neutral clef. Although limited in sonic resources, pieces for this easily assembled and transported instrumental set-up can be effective in developing technical, interpretive, and kinesthetic skills in student percussionists. Additionally, well-constructed works in this genre may assist in bridging the study of conventional form with performance practice. This can be especially helpful in preparing a student with a limited knowledge of theory for courses such as Form and Analysis.

The three selected works vary in length, complexity, and level of required technique. They include a small-scale single-movement piece with invertible counterpoint, a single-movement work in a larger classical form, and a multi-movement theme with sectional variations. *Piece Number 3* by James Hunt is an intermediate-level work in a modified ternary form with rhythmic motives based on alternation phrases of single eighth-notes, double stops and contrapuntal passages alternating between the right and left hands. Composer Mitchell Peters' *Rondo for Four Tom Toms* is a conventional five-part design characteristic of this form. The refrain and the two episodes are differentiated by changes of rhythm, meter, sticking technique, and rhythmic motives. *Variations for Four Tom-toms* by Ney Rosauo consists of a theme and six variations based on contrasts of rhythm, meter, texture, and striking implements. Each work will be summarized and discussed with an emphasis on its formal design and supported by score excerpts and recorded audio/visual examples.