

Jazz and West African Aesthetics: Traditional Ghanaian Drum Ensemble Concepts Applied to Jazz Drumset

A Boulos-Vercelli-Wolfe Collaboration

2023 WVU CCA Faculty/Student Mentored Research Award.

Joe Boulos's research project traces the performative connections between jazz drumming and traditional Ghanaian percussion. Collaborating with Brian Wolfe and Mike Vercelli, Joe examines how influential jazz drummers such as Art Blakey, Max Roach, and Ed Blackwell, explore and represent West African performance practice. The resulting project provides insight into the West African influence of jazz, a lineage of African-inspired drumset artists, and pedagogical resources for future performance study. Joe developed the written and ethnographic component of this work with Mike Vercelli, while creating the pedagogical and performative aspects of this project with Brian Wolfe.

-Mike Vercelli and Brian Wolfe