

Rhythms of Lebanon  
A Boulos-Vercelli Collaboration  
2022 WVU CCA Faculty/Student Mentored Research Award

Faculty Statement  
Michael B. Vercelli

Joe Boulos came to West Virginia University with a wealth of traditional, performance-based knowledge of the Lebanese darbaki drum. For the Spring 2021 semester, we created an ensemble as a means for Joe to develop a focused pedagogical method for teaching the darbaki in a classroom setting and to provide WVU student with an opportunity to learn a new musical tradition not previously offered. As the world music ensembles are comprised of both music and non-music majors, I worked with Joe to develop an inclusive classroom accessible to students of diverse backgrounds. Through our team teaching, I provided regular feedback, and helped provide scaffolding strategies in presenting Joe's performance-based knowledge. I assisted Joe with the day-to-day activities in the class, but essentially gave Joe the autonomy to develop the class/ensemble as he wanted. Joe's connections within the Arab music community provided a unique virtual exchange with oud player, Ziyad Marcus. Building upon the virtual exchange model we were using with guest artists in the African Ensemble and Brazilian Ensemble, Joe organized Mr. Marcus's workshops and coordinated the recording process allowing our students to "perform" with Mr. Marcus on our Spring World Music Showcase. The enthusiastic student response to this collaboration encouraged us to offer the Darbaki ensemble again in the Spring 2022 semester.