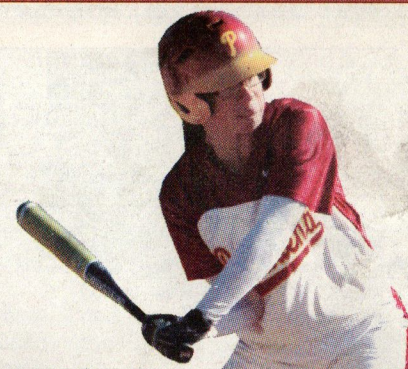


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Native instruments make Middle Eastern music class unique

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Staff Writer

Students interested in Middle Eastern music have found a new outlet on campus in which they have the opportunity to learn to play traditional Middle Eastern instruments.

The Middle Eastern Music Ensemble at PCC is made up of students of all ages and ethnicities who are interested in learning how to play Middle Eastern music, as well as learning about the culture.

The most common instrument used in this class is the 'ud (meaning "wood" in Arabic).

The 'ud, or Arabic lute, is similar to a guitar, but has a different shape and sound, and has no frets.

The darabukkah, a goblet-shaped hand drum, is a percussion instrument that many of the students in the class are interested in learning.

Although the 'ud is not an easy instrument to play, Instructor Wael Kakish is very encouraging.

"You normally don't end up giving up and smashing your instrument. It takes a little time but starts to get easier," said Kakish.

Along with playing Middle Eastern music, students are encouraged by the professor to sing the Arabic lyrics while play-

ing the music.

"I know singing and playing at the same time might not be easy sometimes, but I know you can do it," said Kakish to his students.

During the second class, students are already learning how to play a song called "Banat Eskindiriya Uskudara."

While Kakish assists the students playing the 'Ud, students playing the drums keep a steady beat, making it easier for the others to follow.

"The whole thing is to feel the beat," said Kakish. "Music is like meditation, sometimes".

Kakish enjoys teaching this class. "It's another window open for them. Students always use the new things they learn to add to their own music," he said.

Students recommend this class to others, as they really enjoy it.

"The atmosphere of this class is really different from any other class," says student Amanda Chao.

"I'm totally enjoying it, I love it," says another student, Susan Jekarl.

As this class is enjoyed much by the professor as well as the students, they together will continue in their journey of learning Middle Eastern music and culture.