

## Information for Potential Oral History Contributors

**Research Topic:** The Professionalization of *Dabke* in Modern Lebanon

**Time Period:** Mid Nineteenth Century – Present Day

**Primary Researcher:** Grace Myers—MA candidate in History at University of Rochester; research strategist for Yaraqa; dance educator; choreographer

**Collaborator:** Yaraqa - <https://www.yaraqa.com>

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**Dates:** Grace will be traveling in Lebanon April 1 – May 6, 2026 to interview contributors.

**Purpose:** I will draw on the interviews for my open-access MA Thesis. Interviews may also inform Yaraqa’s applied and public research project “Activating the Ecosystem,” which aims to study the state of Lebanon’s dance ecosystem in service of dance communities and stakeholders in Lebanon, now and for future generations.

\*\*\*Interviews are conversational and exploratory, and contributors will have the right to withdraw or amend their words. More details on consent will be shared throughout the process. Arabic translation will be available for interviews if desired.

### Summary:

I am undertaking historical research on the evolution of *dabke* in late-modern Lebanon, with a particular focus on the versatile artists who have contributed to cultural transmission, transformation, codification, performance, and/or preservation. I am conducting oral history interviews with a range of practitioners who have touched *dabke* at small and large scales and in intersecting social, educational, professional, and/or theatrical contexts. While excellent historical research has been conducted on the influential operettas of the Rahbani Brothers and Caracalla, I hope to produce a historical narrative that goes a layer below... a “history from the middle,” from dancers—one that brings many distinct bodies and voices together to look in aggregate at how the conscious activities of artists have influenced *dabke*’s professionalization. The research looks at how changes in the dancing body were produced, and how transformations in the body both reflected cultural tensions and mobilized cultural possibilities.

I hope to learn about contributors’ experiences, their creative activities, and the perspectives, purposes, and narratives that have motivated their work. These conversations might traipse into the political, emotional, and familial; all collaborators are welcome to remain anonymous or keep some information off the record. Relevant contributors include artists, choreographers, performers, teachers, curators, etc. who have worked with *dabke* in formal/informal theatrical contexts, professionally, and/or socially. I also welcome people to discuss the experiences of a relative, mentor, or elder who worked with *dabke*, or contributions from anyone on the fringes of this work who wants to share their observations or passions. The research spans overlapping contexts—from professional Caracalla dancers to students and *zaffe* troupes; from village dance competitions in the 1950s to the *Jabalna* Festival; from experimental modern *dabke* choreographers to schoolteachers working to reproduce historical dance. Thank you for your interest and I look forward to connecting!