Charles Mingus: Double Bassist, Composer and Outspoken Political Voice

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This class will examine the fascinating life and selected works of the influential jazz composer and double bassist, Charles Mingus. We will explore key musical concepts and esthetics that distinguished his personal compositional style and bass playing throughout the various periods of his musical career, and examine how this was shaped by his impassioned character and life experiences. The instructor will utilize slides, audio and video recordings, and live demonstrations by renowned jazz artists. While elements of basic music theory will be discussed, musical training is not a prerequisite. The objectives of this course are to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the rich music of one of jazz music’s greatest composers and to gain insights into how his music and career was shaped by his personal politics, activism and legendary temperament.

Schedule

1. Early Life and Early Albums
2. Bringing in the Church and Taking a Stand
3. Experimentation, Personal Struggles and Bouncing Back
4. Late Career, Death & Lasting Legacy