

Course Title: Small Ensemble
Ensemble Name: Mingus Tribute Ensemble
Course Number: MUPF864 18
Instructor: Dave Hartl
Semester and Year: Fall '09

Course Objectives:

The Charles Mingus Tribute Group is a performance course dedicated to exploring the many influences upon, different styles, improvisational approaches, and repertoire of the late Charles Mingus. The educational goal of the ensemble is to provide students with an opportunity to learn and internalize Mingus's unique blend of pre-composed and improvised form as well as the improvisation techniques he employed within the compositions.

Topics to be Covered:

The overall plan is to cover original material by Charles Mingus, interpreting and transcribing as many possible explorations of Mingus's rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic strategies as possible within those compositions. We will also compose original works based on these strategies, rehearse the material in a highly flexible way to keep them from becoming too predictable, and perform the results in concert.

Grading Policy: Grading is determined by the following:

- rehearsal attendance
- rehearsal punctuality -- see attendance policy below
- rehearsal preparedness (bring music, instruments, etc.)
- rehearsal participation (suggestions, helping others, enthusiasm, etc.)
- practice of music outside of ensemble meeting time (knowing the parts)
- completion of assignments (required listening, reading, transcribing, research, tests, etc.)
- all aspects of the ensemble's public performance: learned performance competencies including stylistic accuracy, familiarization with material, and memorization (where applicable), dress code compliance, stage manner, and professional presentation

Attendance Policy:

By college policy, there is one unexcused absence. Since the loss of any member of the group severely limits the effectiveness of the rehearsal, you **MUST** cover your position if you miss class, and will receive a "C" for the day in the grade for attendance. Failure to cover the position will result in an "F" for the semester's attendance grade.

Missing three (3) rehearsals will result in an "F" for the course, and you will be replaced in the ensemble.

Failure to appear for an announced public performance will result in "F" for the semester's grade.

Lateness: If you are late up to 10 minutes, you receive a "C" for the day; more than

10 minutes results in an “F” for the day.

NOTE: Rehearsal starts promptly on time. The student is expected to be set up and ready to go at the announced starting time. Failure to be ready to play will be regarded as lateness, conforming to the rules above.

Reading / Viewing / Listening List:

Required reading:

More Than a Fake Book : This is the required text and must be purchased.

It has transcriptions of many Mingus compositions as well as graphics of Mingus’s own manuscript and stories and explanations connected to the works.

Assigned material from the Mingus Web Site

Required listening / viewing (all material available in music library):

Blues and Roots

The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady

Original recordings of the compositions we study in rehearsal. Multiple versions will be made available in the music library and the student is expected to compare and contrast the differences. The student is also expected to transcribe material from the recordings to help him analyze the improvisational techniques.

Triumph Of the Underdog: this video is one of the best sources to get familiar with Mingus

Supplemental reading:

Beneath the Underdog : This is Charles Mingus’s autobiography, a blend of fact and fantasy. Those students easily offended by coarse language and sexual braggadocio may avoid this.

Myself When I Am Real: The Life and Music of Charles Mingus by Gene Santoro. A more objective biography.

Mingus: A Critical Biography by Brian Priestly. Biography with a music criticism orientation.

Tonight at Noon: A Love Story - Sue Mingus. A personal reflection from Mingus’s widow.

Liner notes from all albums containing required tunes

Supplemental listening / viewing:

Any and all albums by Charles Mingus. Recommended strongly: Changes One and Changes Two; Mingus Ah Um; Let My Children Hear Music; Money Jungle; anything with Eric Dolphy

Any albums by The Mingus Big Band

Weird Nightmare - various artists, compiled by Hal Wilner

Peggy’s Blue Skylight - Andy Summers

Mingus - Joni Mitchell

Charles Mingus: Epitaph - video of all-star premiere performance of large-scale posthumous work

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