

LET MY CHILDREN HEAR MUSIC

THE CHARLES MINGUS INSTITUTE

484 West 43rd St. #43-S New York, NY 10036 212-736-4749 mingusmingusmingus.com

Mingus Orchestra Domestic Tour 2010-2011

Program may include:

► **Narrations from Charles Mingus's *Beneath the Underdog*, Langston Hughes or Walt Whitman set to Mingus music**

► **Mingus compositions arranged and conducted by Gunther Schuller, classical trio arrangements by bassoonist Michael Rabinowitz**

► **Mingus interpreted on solo harp**

May 12, 2010 New York - The NEA has awarded an American Masters Chamber Music grant to support a 2011 domestic tour of the Mingus Orchestra in celebration of the broad musical legacy of American composer Charles Mingus. Targeted to classical, jazz, and literary audiences, in keeping with Mingus's sprawling palette, the tour will include clinics and lecture-demonstrations with Mingus musicians and educators and will culminate in a broadcast.

The critically acclaimed 10-piece ensemble was formed in 1999 by Sue Mingus and features a more classical instrumentation not normally associated with jazz, including bassoon, bass clarinet, and French horn. The Orchestra's focus is on the compositional genius of Charles Mingus, and emphasizes ensemble playing over individual soloing. In addition to guitar, the other six instruments are chaired by musicians who play in the Mingus Big Band and Mingus Dynasty. They include drums, bass, trombone, trumpet, alto and tenor saxophone, with additional doublings on flute, soprano and clarinet. Occasionally, a harp is added.

The Orchestra will workshop new arrangements of Mingus music during its residency at the Jazz Standard in New York City, as well as at open rehearsals. The tour may include preshow artist/educator talks and lecture-demonstrations featuring musicians, arrangers, and occasionally Sue Mingus. LMCHM will broadcast at least one Orchestra concert, to reach a wider audience. Multimedia podcasts of rehearsals, talks, special guest appearances and educational materials will be available on the Mingus website to provide context and facilitate a deeper appreciation of the music.



Gunther Schuller conducting the Mingus Orchestra at St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City, 2010

The literary component of this tour includes poetry experimentation in the tradition of Mingus' collaborations with Langston Hughes, Kenneth Patchen, Jean Shepherd, and Kenneth Rexroth. Recent events have featured narrations by vocalist Kumba Frank Lacy, collaborations with Elvis Costello, and the theater performance group Compagnia de' Colombari performing selections from Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself." For this tour, selections from Mingus' autobiography "Beneath the Underdog" (some of them unpublished), Langston Hughes, and Walt Whitman will be set to Mingus music, offering a layered and personal portrait of the history of American music, art, and social activism through the prism of Mingus' powerful compositions.

Since Mingus's death in 1979, the breadth of his composition and vast legacy of 20th Century American music has come into focus far more clearly than during his lifetime and he is now acknowledged as one of our major composers. Mingus endeavored to open up his own music and jazz music as a whole to greater instrumental possibilities—bowing bassists, French horns, English horns, oboes, bassoons—that would allow jazz musicians additional choices that classical musicians take for granted. (He wrote a prescient Grammy Award-winning essay about this issue for the Columbia album "Let My Children Hear Music"—which inspired the name for our non-profit organization.)

Please visit our website or call for more program information:

<http://mingusmingusmingus.com>

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Timeline:

Summer 2010: Rehearsals and workshops begin at semi-monthly residency performances. Preview podcasts posted to website.

July 27, 2010: Washington Square Park, NY. Free concert.

Sat. Oct. 17, 2010: Flynn Center, Burlington, VT in connection with a 4-day Mingus residency

Sat. Feb. 19, 2011: NYC concert, Gunther Schuller conducting Mingus Orchestra in connection with Charles Mingus High School Competition, with Edmar Castaneda as guest harpist. Recorded for broadcast by WBGO for NPR

Tuesday, August 2, 2011 Washington Square Park, NY. Free concert.

Sunday, Sept. 4, 2011 Tanglewood, Gunther Schuller conducting with Edmar Castaneda as guest harpist.



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This project has been made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius.

"The Orchestra upholds the boisterous Mingus legacy while delving even deeper into his repertory."

– **The New York Times**



"The lean, sharp ten-piece band features such uncommon instrumentation as a bassoon and a French horn, but this isn't staid chamber jazz. When the spirit of the late, great one hits them, they steam."

– **The New Yorker**

"Had American symphony orchestras not discriminated against African-American musicians throughout much of the 20th century, Charles Mingus might have led an entirely different career. Mingus was as much a student of Beethoven and Debussy as of Fats Waller and Duke Ellington, and his classical aspirations found their outlet in dozens of compositions written for a sort of jazz-band-plus that included non-jazz instruments like bassoon, oboe, and French horn. It is to this often-overlooked portion of Charles'

legacy that the Mingus Orchestra is devoted."

– **Andy Schwartz**

"If you like Beethoven, Bach or Brahms, that's okay. They were all pencil composers. I always wanted to be a spontaneous composer. I think it is time our children were raised to think they can play bassoon, oboe, French horn, English horn, full percussion, violin, cello. If we so-called jazz musicians who are composers, the spontaneous composers, started including these instruments in our music, it would open everything up."

– **Charles Mingus**, *Let My Children Hear Music* liner notes