



# **Better Git It in Your Soul: An Interpretive Biography of Charles Mingus**

*Krin Gabbard*

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## **Better Git It in Your Soul: An Interpretive Biography of Charles Mingus** Krin Gabbard

Charles Mingus is one of the most important—and most mythologized—composers and performers in jazz history. Classically trained and of mixed race, he was an outspoken innovator as well as a bandleader, composer, producer, and record-label owner. His vivid autobiography, *Beneath the Underdog*, has done much to shape the image of Mingus as something of a wild man: idiosyncratic musical genius with a penchant for skirt-chasing and violent outbursts. But, as the autobiography reveals, he was also a hopeless romantic. After exploring the most important events in Mingus's life, Krin Gabbard takes a careful look at Mingus as a writer as well as a composer and musician. He digs into how and why Mingus chose to do so much self-analysis, how he worked to craft his racial identity in a world that saw him simply as "black," and how his mental and physical health problems shaped his career. Gabbard sets aside the myth-making and convincingly argues that Charles Mingus created a unique language of emotions—and not just in music. Capturing many essential moments in jazz history anew, *Better Git It in Your Soul* will fascinate anyone who cares about jazz, African American history, and the artist's life.

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