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Charles Mingus is among jazz's greatest composers and perhaps its most talented bass player. He was blunt and outspoken about the place of jazz in music history and American culture, about which performers were the real thing (or not), and much more. These in-depth interviews, conducted several years before Mingus died, capture the composer's spirit and voice, revealing how he saw himself as composer and performer, how he viewed his peers and predecessors, how he created his extraordinary music, and how he looked at race. Augmented with interviews and commentary by ten close associates—including Mingus's wife Sue, Teo Macero, George Wein, and Sy Johnson—Mingus Speaks provides a wealth of new perspectives on the musician's life and career.

As a writer for Playboy, John F. Goodman reviewed Mingus's comeback concert in 1972 and went on to achieve an intimacy with the composer that brings a relaxed and candid tone to the ensuing interviews. Much of what Mingus shares shows him in a new light: his personality, his passions and sense of humor, and his thoughts on music. The conversations are wide-ranging, shedding fresh light on important milestones in Mingus's life such as the publication of his memoir, *Beneath the Underdog*, the famous Tijuana episodes, his relationships, and the jazz business.