

Mama Africa and Her Sisters: Eighty Years of Songs by African Women

A Brief Outline by Caleb Mutch

Women singers have been among Africa's most prominent—and compelling—musical ambassadors. This course explores iconic songs by such singers as Miriam Makeba, Umm Kulthum, and Angélique Kidjo, alongside newer songs by emerging performers from across the continent. Each week will be dedicated to the music of a different female-identifying artist. Close analysis of songs will be supplemented with frameworks drawn from anthropology, ethnomusicology, and feminist music theory aimed at illuminating the performer's work within its broader contexts. Students will engage with each song in many ways, and will learn to apply a variety transcriptional styles and analytic methodologies.

Kofi Agawu's *The African Imagination in Music* (Oxford University Press, 2016) will serve as a through-line over the course of the semester, with weekly readings complementing the song-based topical approach. Additional readings will include chapters and articles by scholars such as Nomsa Mwamuka, Austin Emielu, Onwuegbuna Ikenna Emmanuel, and others. Assessment will center on written responses to listening assignments that will call upon a range of analytical and descriptive skills. The capstone analysis presentation will focus on a piece of the student's choosing of a song performed by an African (or Afro-diasporic) musician.

Singers of the week:

1. Miriam Makeba (South Africa - Marabi)
2. Umm Kulthum (Egypt - Egyptian national song)
3. Asnaketch Worku (Ethiopia - Kirar song)
4. Irene Mawela (South Africa - Mbaqanga)
5. Khadija Qalanjo (Somalia - Balwo)
6. Angélique Kidjo (Benin - Afrobeat)
7. Yemi Alade (Nigeria - Afropop)
8. Mzbel (Ghana - Hiplife)
9. Titica (Angola - Kuduro)
10. Manal (Morocco - Arabic pop)
11. Nandy (Tanzania - Bongo Flava)
12. Oumou Sangaré (Mali - Wassoulou)
13. Sha Sha (South Africa - Amapiano)
14. Kadilida (Tanzania - Singeli)