

JOHN S. O'SHEA MD, with help from many others

I plan to offer the following music classes in Emory's OLLI adult ed program for January and February of 2024 through 2026. These would focus as usual mostly on the fabulous **jazz of the 1920s and 1930s, although a few artists/composers from the more distant past and even from the present** will also be included.

These classes will be available to students both in-person and remotely, with my presentations coming virtually from my home.

Here is the proposed slate for 2024:

—**FIRST, Bria Skonberg** will join me in offering a course in **January and February 2024** on seven Thursdays, for 90 minutes starting at 11:15am. Featured will be "**Female Composers: Eight of the Early Twentieth Century, Plus Three Predecessors and Three Successors**". As you may recall, Canadian New Yorker Bria made a star appearance at Emory's OLLI in December 2019, with more than a hundred hearing her lead a concert of her own stellar compositions plus some from almost a century ago, with her fabulous voice, trumpet, and demeanor.

Mostly in the order of their births, these stellar female composers will be:

Thursday 1/11, 2024, 11:15 am-noon — Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729): The sole official composer for the French kings Louis XIV — the 'Sun King' — and Louis XV. She prolifically composed many types of always-gorgeous music, and may still actually be the most successful female composer ever — at least in Western music. She starred in the Boston Early Music Festival's Celebration of Women in June 2023.

Thursday 1/11/2024, noon-12:45 pm—Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-47): Renowned pianist and composer of 460 piano works, chamber music, songs, and a masterful piano trio, suggested by star Atlanta cellist Charae Krueger. In numerous respects, it may well be fair to call Ms. Mendelssohn the female version of composer and pianist Thomas ("Fats") Waller of a century later.

Thursday 1/18/2024, 11:15 am-noon —Clara Schumann (1819-96): Ms. Krueger and top-notch violinist Helen Kim inspired me to include this composer after featuring her in a Kennesaw State University concert.

Thursday 1/18/24, noon-12:45 pm —Lil Hardin Armstrong (1898-1971): An early jazz pianist, small band leader, and the composer of "Struttin' with Some Barbecue" and "You Run Your Mouth, and I'll Run My Business", she also was Louis Armstrong's second wife and early business manager. She actually died a month after him, while being televised playing piano during his memorial concert in their former adopted hometown of Chicago. Her compositions were often more commercially successful when performed by other pianists, probably because she concentrated more on being a small band leader than a soloist. We will study her compositions handled in both ways, especially since many believe that when composers are performing, they often insert un-written but melodically inventive variations that do not occur to other improvisors.

Thursday 1/25/24, 11:15 am-noon —Dorothy Fields (1904-74): Perhaps the best lyricist of the 20th century, competing with Irving Berlin, Oscar Hammerstein II, Andy Razaf, Ira Gershwin, and Johnny Mercer, she wrote the words of "On the Sunny Side of the Street", "I Can't Give You Anything but Love", "Pick Yourself Up", and a dazzling "I Won't Dance", for which Ms. Fields was actually brought in by composer Jerome Kern to replace the lyrics originally supplied by the usually fabulous Oscar Hammerstein II after the first release of the tune failed. Her version of the lyrics actually made the tune

a super-hit, one of the biggest Fred Astaire ever had — thanks especially to his perfect dance-partner Ginger Rogers.

Thursday 1/25/24, noon-12:45 pm —Ann Ronell (1905-93): While a student at Radcliffe College, she interviewed and befriended George Gershwin who persuaded her to simplify her name. Dedicated to him, her “Willow Weep for Me” was so rhythmically advanced that only Irving Berlin was willing to publish it. Bill (“Count”) Basie’s major hit “Taxi War Dance” is a derivation.

Thursday 2/1/24/2024, 11:15 am-noon —Mary Lou Williams (1910-81): Perhaps the best of all of these composers, she wrote “Froggy Bottom”, “Steppin’ Pretty”, and “Walkin’ and Swingin’ “

Thursday 2/1/2024, noon-12:45 pm —Billie Holiday (1915-59): Primarily a favorite singer, but also a fine composer of “God Bless the Child” and “Fine and Mellow”. She collaborated extensively with Irene Higginbotham (1918-88), especially in composing “Good Morning, Heartache”. Ms. Higginbotham’s compositions were often actually presented as being by a white man named Glenn Gibson.

Thursday 2/8/2024, 11:15 am-noon —Marian McPartland (1918-2013): An ultra-modern composer of “Twilight World” and “In the Days of Our Love”, also known for her multi-decade hosting of radio’s “Piano Jazz”.

Thursday 2/8/2024, noon-12:45 pm —Peggy Lee (1920-2002): Best known as a singer, she also composed frequently, including “I Don’t Know Enough About You” and “It’s a Good Day”.

Thursday 2/15/2024, 11:15 am-noon —Alice Coltrane (1937-2007): The famed composer of “Journey in Satchidananda” and “Isis and Osiris”, she was also the wife of John Coltrane.

Thursday 2/15/2024, noon-12:45 pm —Geri Allen (1957-2017): Miranda Agnew inspired me to include this famous composer of “For the healing of the nations” after the September 11th 2001 attacks. Ms. Allen was also a superb pianist and music educator. Ms. Agnew will discuss some of Ms.Allen’s quite modern work.

Thursday 2/22/2024, 11:15 am-noon —Laura Kaminsky (1956-): After Ms. Kaminsky provides opening comments, Atlanta star tenor Jonathan Blalock will discuss her acclaimed opera “As One” plus some beautifully melodic orchestral works. A very special treat at the end of this year’s course.

Thursday 2/22/2024, noon-12:45 pm —Miranda Agnew (1998-): A masterful composer and trumpeter, as well as a former star for three years in Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Essentially Ellington program for top high school bands, Ms. Agnew graduated from the dual-degree program between Harvard and the New England Conservatory of Music. Now based in New York City, she is a 2023 Next Jazz Legacy semifinalist. She will show how her quite original compositions relate to those of prior female composers. Another very special treat at the end of this year’s course.