

THE WORLD OF MUSICAL SATIRE



Screenwriter David Misch (“Mork and Mindy”, “Saturday Night Live”, “The Muppets Take Manhattan”, “Funny: The Book”) presents a course on music which uses one of the oldest forms of humor; satire is a way to set boundaries of behavior as well as chide malefactors without violence. And music only seems to make it more powerful; in early Germanic and Celtic societies, people who were mocked in songs would break out in boils and even commit suicide.

This multimedia course explores the art of musical satire in a variety of genres, cultures and eras, especially America since 1950. We’ll cover Horace and Juvenal, opera (the first surviving comic opera was written by a pope – Clement IX, if you’re keeping score), “Yankee Doodle”, slave satire, Gilbert & Sullivan, the Gershwins, the Beatles, Randy Newman, Monty Python, Spinal Tap, “Saturday Night Live”, “Avenue Q”, “Spamalot,” “South Park,” “Crazy Ex-Girlfriend,” Bo Burnham and Bugs Bunny.

Best of all, we’ll look at the Crown King of caustic cultural commentary, Tom Lehrer, who once said “If, after hearing my songs, just one human being is inspired to say something nasty to a friend, or perhaps to strike a loved one, it will all have been worthwhile.”

Because satire is often dependent on social and historical events, this course is as much cultural history as music appreciation. However, while words are preeminent in musical satire, we’ll also discuss the music and its interactions with lyrics. But please – no students who are prone to boils.

Includes (brief) exclusive interviews with “Weird Al” Yankovic, Michael Palin (Monty Python), Country Joe McDonald, Mike Stoller (Lieber & Stoller), and more.

**“A fantastic lecturer; knowledgeable, fun and entertaining,
perfect for the subject” – Michelle Camacho, The Grammy Museum**

“A true satire scholar” – The Houston Chronicle

In addition to his screenwriting, David’s a playwright, songwriter, blogger, teacher and recovered stand-up comic, and has spoken at Yale, the Smithsonian, Austin Film Festival, the Grammy Museum, Oxford University, Actors Studio, the University of Sydney (Australia), Raindance Film Festival (London), VIEW Cinema Conference (Torino, Italy), Burbank Comedy Festival, USC and UCLA. Too much more at davidmisch.com, not to mention (yet here I am mentioning) funnythebook.com.

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EVALUATIONS: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute; UCLA

*“Fascinating, unique and delightful;  
I never considered satire the way David presents it.”*

*“A wonderful, wide-ranging selection of material. I loved the course!”*

*“Fantastic. I learned so much and had such a good time.”*

*“One of the best classes I’ve ever taken.”*

*“David is brilliant, funny, and a scholar of his subject.”*

*“David is a marvelous instructor –  
knowledgeable, articulate, funny and insightful.”*

*“Mr. Misch couldn’t be more open, interesting  
and amusing. I would take this course again.”*

*“Better than I had imagined. Very  
well-organized; an exceptional presentation.”*