Jazz Day for Kids with the Charleston Jazz Orchestra & Charlton Singleton
Kindergarten to Grade 8
A native of Awendaw, SC, Charlton Singleton began his musical studies at the age of three on the piano. He would then go on to study the organ, violin, cello, and the trumpet throughout elementary, middle, and high school. In 1994, he received a Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance from South Carolina State University. Since that time, he has taught music at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, as well as being an adjunct faculty member at the College of Charleston. In 2008 he co-founded and became the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Charleston Jazz Orchestra; an 18-piece jazz ensemble of some of the finest professional musicians in the Southeast and the resident big band in Charleston, SC. Mr. Singleton is also the organist and choir director at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Charleston, SC. In November of 2016 he was named the inaugural Artist in Residence at the recently renovated Gaillard Center in downtown Charleston. He remained in this position until July 2019; at that point he was named Artist in Residence Emeritus. In this position he continues to lead the Summer Youth Jazz Orchestra Camp as well as lead the “Jazz Through the Ages” assembly, which attracts a capacity crowd of students at the Gaillard Center.
As a performer, Charlton leads his own ensembles that vary in size and style. He has performed in France, Great Britain, Scotland, Spain, Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Norway, Canada, The Netherlands, as well as many great cities throughout the United States. He is a founding member of an ensemble called Ranky Tanky. The group is a quintet that interprets the sounds of Gullah from the Southeast Coast of the United States. In 2017 Ranky Tanky reached the top of the Billboard, iTunes, and Amazon Contemporary Jazz charts with their self-titled debut recording. In 2019 they accomplished the same feat with the release of their sophomore effort, “Good Time”, which recently won the 2019 Grammy Award for “Best Regional Roots Album”. Ranky Tanky was also recognized and honored with a resolution by the South Carolina House of Representatives for their achievements in the music industry. In 2021, Charlton was the recipient of the SC Governor’s Award, which honors arts organizations, patrons, artists, members of the business community, and government entities who maximize their roles as innovators, supporters, and advocates for the arts. It is the highest individual honor for the arts in the state of South Carolina.

In addition to performing, he is in demand as a speaker, clinician, composer, and arranger. He has also shared the stage with and/or worked with some of the most talented entertainers in the world, including Bobby McFerrin, Ruby Dee, Jimmy Heath, Slide Hampton, Houston Person, Darius Rucker, Fred Wesley, and Cyrus Chestnut to name a few. Outside of music and entertainment, he, and his wife, MaryJo, are the proud parents of Shalamar, D'Marcus, and K'Leb, as well as their pets...Sassy, Jango, Mojo, Pumpkin, and Ginger.

Watch
Charlton Singleton Quintet

Charlton and Ranky Tanky on PBS News Hour
ROBERT LEWIS // Director of the Charleston Jazz Orchestra

A lover of music since childhood, Lewis began playing saxophone in middle school. He went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in saxophone performance from the University of Idaho and a master’s degree in saxophone performance from Western Michigan University.

In 1998, Lewis began teaching in the College of Charleston School of Music as an adjunct instructor, before taking the helm of the jazz studies program in 2002. His love of jazz runs deep, which is evident in his wide-ranging interests of teaching, performing and composing within the genre. Since 2019, he has been the Music Director of the Charleston Jazz Orchestra.

“I first of all just love the sound of jazz,” he says. “The melodies, harmonic language, and, most importantly, the rhythmic language has captivated me since I was very young. Also, the improvisation that is a requisite part of a jazz performance is extremely satisfying. To compose and perform simultaneously is one of the great joys I find in music, and since the entire group is often improvising there is really a conversation (in music) happening all the time.”

About Charleston Jazz Orchestra

“Founded in 2008, Charleston Jazz is a non-profit organization whose mission is to build a local and global community for jazz through performance, education and outreach while celebrating Charleston’s rich history in jazz.”

“Our Mission: To grow and cultivate a local and global community for jazz through performance, education and outreach while celebrating and preserving Charleston’s rich history in jazz.”

“Our Vision: To positively impact lives through music within a collaborative community that celebrates and perpetuates jazz.”

EXPLORE // Classroom Workshops

BeBop with Louis and Ella
In this activity, students listen to the story *When Louis Armstrong Taught Me Scat* by Muriel Harris Weinstein and listen to Ella Fitzgerald scat sing. [Click Here to Watch Ella Fitzgerald](#).

Students explore scat phrases and come up with their own scat song. They can work as partners, small groups, or independently. For guidance, they can use the beat of nursery rhymes to scat to. [Click Here for the Classroom Workshop](#).

Evolution of Jazz
In this activity, students travel through jazz time and will explore three different styles: ragtime, cool jazz, and hard bop. As they listen to the music, students will create a collage work of art using colors and images that represent that specific jazz style. [Click Here for the Classroom Workshop](#).

This Jazz Man and Rhythm and Beat
In this activity, students will listen to *This Jazz Man* and practice clapping to the beat and rhythm. Students explore nursery rhymes to practice the difference between beat and rhythm and will apply this practice to a jazz nursery song and one of Charlton’s songs. [Click Here for the Classroom Workshop](#).
Learn About Musicians Native to S.C.

**James Brown**
Listen: “Blues For My Baby”
Learn: James Brown’s Biography

**Dizzy Gillespie:**
Listen: “A Night in Tunisia”
Learn: Dizzy Gillespie’s Biography

**Freddie Green:**
Listen: “Them There Eyes”
Learn: Interview with Freddie Green
Hey Charleston! The True Story of the Jenkins Orphanage Band by Anne Rockwell

Hey, Charleston! is the story of the kind man who gave America “some rag” and so much more. What happened when a former slave took beat-up old instruments and gave them to a bunch of orphans? Thousands of futures got a little brighter and a great American art form was born.2

Harlem Renaissance Party Written and Illustrated by Faith Ringgold

Faith Ringgold’s bold and vibrant illustrations capture the song and dance of the Harlem Renaissance while her story will captivate young readers, teaching them all about this significant time in our history. A glossary and further reading list are included in the back of the book.3

Visit the Sites of the Jenkins Orphanage:

In the link below, students can see one of the original Jenkins buildings, the current location, the historic marker, and the Bell of Hope. Click Here to View.

Samples of Jazz Music

“What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong

“Cheek to Cheek” by Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald

“It Don’t Mean a Thing” by Duke Ellington

“Oop Bop Sh’ Bam” by Dizzy Gillespie

Jazz: A Film by Ken Burns
**ENHANCE // Read**

**Doin’ the Charleston written by Mark R. Jones**
For the first time, here is the stirring story of the Jenkins Orphanage Band and its role in American popular music. From slavery to freedom, follow the inspirational rags-to-riches story of some of America's greatest jazz musicians brought together by the determination of one man, a freed black slave named Rev. Daniel Jenkins. His “Jazz Nursery” revolutionized the music world!  

**Charleston Jazz written by Jack McCray**
Charleston Jazz sets out to reveal the rich, untold story of the evolution of American jazz in one of its major cradles: Charleston, South Carolina. The text and images show that what happened on the Gullah coast of South Carolina in terms of history, culture, and entertainment had a huge impact on jazz as we know it today.  

**The History of Jazz written by Ted Gioia**
Gioia brings the story up-to-date, drawing on his latest research and covering the full spectrum of the music’s past, present, and future in a survey that is a must-read for all jazz musicians, educators, and fans.

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THE CHARLESTON JAZZ INITIATIVE

“The Charleston Jazz Initiative is a multi-year research project that documents the African American jazz tradition in Charleston, the South Carolina Lowcountry, and its diasporic movement throughout the United States and Europe between the late nineteenth century through today.”

For more information go to: http://www.charlestonjazz.net/about-main/

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


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EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

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Dance Conservatory of Charleston
Dance Laugh Learn
ECM Power-On Your Imagination
Free Verse Charleston, SC Poetry Festival
Kulture City
Storytree Children's Theatre
Theatre Teacher