

EDUCATION WORKSHOP

Poetic Hip-Hop: from the Page to the Stage

with Artist-in-Residence
Marcus Amaker



MEET THE ARTISTS



MARCUS AMAKER

Amaker graduated from the University of South Carolina in 1999. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in Journalism. After graduation, he worked at *The Anderson Independent-Mail*. He later moved to Charleston in 2003 to work as a graphic designer at the *Post and Courier*. While at the *Post and Courier*, he became editor of *Preview* and *Charleston Scene*, the paper's entertainment sections.

Marcus Amaker is Charleston, South Carolina's first poet laureate and an award-winning graphic designer. He's published seven poetry books and has been mentioned in *The New York Times* as well as been featured on TEDxCharleston, PBS Newshour, the A&E network, the *Huffington Post*, *Alaska Beyond Magazine*, SC Public Radio and many local media outlets. As a musician, he's created more than 30 electronic music albums. His latest project, *empath*, is a collaboration with Grammy-nominated producer Quentin E. Baxter.

As poet laureate, Marcus visits many schools to conduct poetry workshops and to inspire students to write. Area schools have started poetry clubs after his visits. He also created Charleston's first poetry festival, Free Verse. He is currently the lead graphic designer for the national music journal, *No Depression*. His wife, Jordan Amaker, is an activist and marketing director of Lowcountry Local First. **See his work in the videos below.**

[Marcus Amaker on TEDxCharleston](#)

[A Poem by Marcus Amaker](#)

ABOUT THE SHOW

Students and teachers will be treated to a multimedia interactive experience. Amaker will perform poems while informing the crowd about the history of the poetic art form. Niecy and Cody will also perform, showing the power of local musicianship, mixing in lessons about the history of music. Students will have the opportunity to experience and understand the power of self-expression. Expect a large screen of images and movies, impromptu poetry, laughs, beats and more. The audience will be able to ask questions and meet the artists after the performance.

MEET THE ARTISTS



CODY DIXON

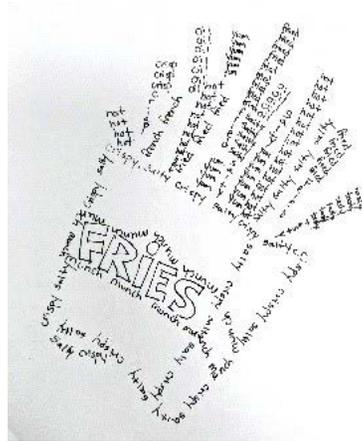
Cody Dixon, (aka Slim S.O.U.L.) is a hip hop producer, musician, and poet. He's also the executive director and founder of Soul Power Productions, a non-profit organization with a mission of arts advocacy and education to underserved areas. Whether it's solo sets with his MPC and keyboard, or a full band with various local artists, Slim S.O.U.L. brings smooth '90s style boom-bap together with eclectic soul and funk samples. With sounds similar to The Roots and De La Soul, Slim S.O.U.L. brings a neo-soul sound to his hip hop music with the help of members of local bands ManChild and Little Bird. Cody is also a teacher at Meeting Street at Burns.



NIECY BLUES

Landing in Charleston first by way of Oklahoma and more recently Columbia, Niecey Blues is a vocalist's vocalist. Her work maintains a unique balance of influence from the R&B canon and an individual voice that falls just left of center. Her dedication to the instrument that is her voice is the the ground on which her resonant songs and performances lift off from, and her poignant lyrics only serve to further elevate that experience. Niecey has collaborated with band known as E.T. Anderson to form their own project, under the name Niecey Blues, to form a vivid wall of sound around her bold, yet vulnerable vocals.

EXPLORE // Classroom Workshops



In this lesson, students will learn about the beginning of hip hop and its relation to poetry. Students will learn and create a Concrete poem, also known as a shape poem and will brainstorm adjectives to describe objects. This is a great lesson to introduce poetry and let students know that poetry can be written in various ways.

[VIEW LESSON PLAN](#) ▶



To begin, students will play a mini game called "Shakespeare or Hip Hop". Students will then create a "Blackout Poem". Students will select a poem or book excerpt as their basis and will search for words that connect in some way. When it makes sense to them, students will add illustrations and will blackout the remaining background.

[VIEW LESSON PLAN](#) ▶

CONNECT // Poetry Competitions



CHECK OUT THE LINKS BELOW:

[Youth Poetry Slam with Marcus Amaker](#)

[Enhance with a River of Words Competition](#)

[Poetry Competitions](#)

[Publish a Classroom Poetry Book](#)

[Free Verse Poetry Festival](#)

ENHANCE // Poetry Units



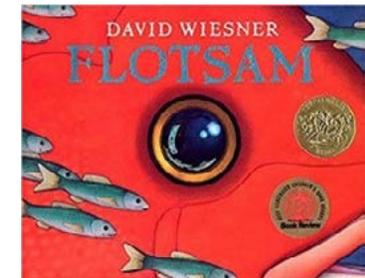
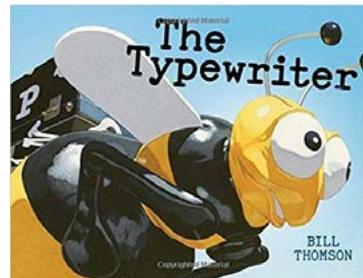
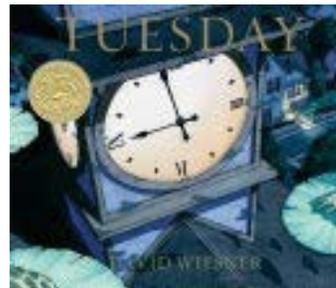
POETRY BASED ON PHOTOGRAPHS

You can ask students to bring in one or several photographs that students find inspiring and interesting or old family photos. Help students brainstorm by asking them to write down words that describe the photograph as well as having them think about how the picture makes them feel. Students can then write sentimental poems or humorous ones based on these images. They could also complete this assignment after taking their own pictures...new ones.

POETRY BASED ON ART

[Burke High School at the Gibbes Museum](#)

[Virtual Tour of the National Gallery of Art](#)



POETRY BASED ON ILLUSTRATIONS

These books can be used to make inferences, to make predictions, and to develop comprehension, reasoning, and sequencing skills. After reading the wordless picture book with the class, a teacher can then ask students to write a poem (any style!) inspired by the book the class just read together. Perhaps students write a couplet or a quatrain to accompany each page.