

EDUCATION
WORKSHOP

RAISING THE VOLUME

with Marcus Amaker & Charlton Singleton

Raising the Volume Episode I

*A Conversation
on Music, Racism,
Art, Activism,
and More with
Marcus Amaker
and Charlton
Singleton.*



Grades 6th and Up

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CHARLESTON
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CENTER

CORE SUBJECTS AND 21ST CENTURY THEMES

Mastery of core subjects and 21st century themes is essential for all students in the 21st century. Core subjects include English, reading or language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history and government, and civics. In addition to these subjects, schools must move forward to include not only a focus on mastery of core subjects, but also an understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving 21st century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects.

Global Awareness

1. Use 21st century skills to understand and address global issues.
2. Learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work, and community contexts.

Civic Literacy

1. Participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes.
2. Exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national, and global levels.
3. Understand the local and global implications of civic decisions.

Work Creatively with Others

1. Develop, implement, and communicate new ideas to others effectively.
2. Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work.
3. Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work, and understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas.
4. View failure as an opportunity to learn; understand that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small successes and frequent mistakes.
5. Implement Innovations.
6. Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur.

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OVERVIEW

Everyone has a story. It's our place to take a moment to listen. Once you listen, your eyes open. You can put yourself in someone else's shoes and try to comprehend their experiences. You may be inspired, you may come away with more knowledge, or you may find a bit of yourself in someone else.

Raising the Volume is a series of Black stories. Stories about Black entrepreneurs, judges, authors, artists, and leaders in our community. Stories that need to be heard. Led by the Gaillard Center's Artists-in-Residence, Charlton Singleton and Marcus Amaker, Raising the Volume gives a platform to Black community members and opens us all up to honest discussion.

As you introduce this series to your students, follow the bullet points below for discussion. Your students will find that they are challenged to think about uncomfortable things. Those conversations are what will help us change our world. In the words of Judge McFarland, "To break down racial barriers, start where you are." So, let's start where we are and see what change we can bring to our community.

For each lesson, split your class into small groups for discussion or discuss as a whole. Choose the model that is the most comfortable for your students so they feel free to discuss opinions openly.

Teachers, if you are interested in scheduling a cross-school discussion on Raising the Volume Episode I, please email Sterling deVries at sdevries@gaillardcenter.org. Through cross-school Zoom calls, we can offer students from one school a different perspective on the video with students from a second school. We will schedule class-to-class meetings where whole groups can discuss various topics covered in Episode I.

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EPISODE I VIDEO



(CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH EPISODE I)

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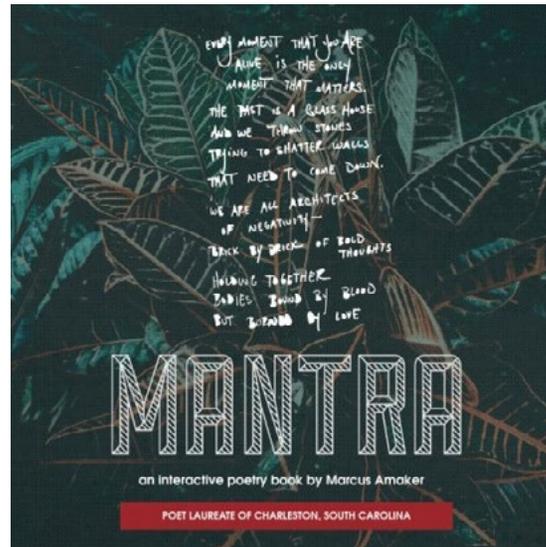
LESSONS

In Episode I, Marcus refers to finding his voice with social issues. **What does he mean? Have you found your voice, are you in the process of finding it, or is it still hidden?**

Marcus also states he has experienced an elevation of consciousness. **What does he mean by this? Unpack these words.**

After unpacking these words, read through the poem “The Last Word” by Marcus Amaker taken from his book, *Mantra*.

What is the meaning behind the poem? Take each stanza and discuss the meaning with your group.



THE LAST WORD

by Marcus Amaker

*One day,
Someone will write
The last poem about injustice
And it will become
Our new national anthem.
Only history books
Will hold the memory of hatred
And museums will be built
For the artifacts of our awakening.*

*One day,
Someone will have
The last conversation about politics
Because we realized
There were problems
That our politicians couldn't fix
Policies not built
To cure our addiction to division
No governing body
That compared to the bodies
Of enlightened.*

*One day,
This poem won't be
A manifesto for dreamers
We will wake up from nightmares
Of our own making
And reject our attraction
To darkness;
Our love affair
With conflict.*

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LESSONS

Charlton discusses songs throughout history that address social change. **What is a song you listen to that refers to social change? What is the message of the song?**

Charlton discusses a piece of music written by saxophone legend, John Coltrane. Coltrane wrote the song *Alabama* in response to a eulogy given by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

King gave the eulogy at a funeral for four little girls murdered at their own church during Sunday school in 1963. A bomb was placed at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama by the Ku Klux Klan and killed the girls and injured dozens. It was a hate crime, for simply being Black.

After listening to the eulogy by Martin Luther King, Jr., Coltrane composed and played *Alabama* as a way to share his voice for civil rights. [Listen to the song here.](#)

How does the song make you feel? Does the sound of the music feel like the sound of a eulogy?

Now, listen to Dr. King's eulogy from 1963 and see if the feeling of sadness is portrayed in the music. Does the music encompass the feelings that spread throughout the country following the massacre in Birmingham? [Listen here.](#)

You will notice that the clip of Dr. King's 1963 eulogy was from a news story from the Charleston church massacre in 2015 at Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Fifty years later, a white supremacist walked into a Charleston, SC church and killed 9 church members in bible study. The eulogy by Dr. King and the music by Coltrane are still relevant fifty years later.

What does this say about our society? Has there been a shift in our nation in the past fifty years?

Can you hear any similarities in the song and the actual eulogy?

How is Dr. King's eulogy and John Coltrane's musical response in 1964 still relevant today?

Where do we go from here? Watch the next videos and have your students discuss an action plan. How can we contribute to change?

Learn more about Alabama by John Coltrane [here](#). Learn more about the Birmingham Church Bombing [here](#).

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ABOUT MARCUS AMAKER



Marcus Amaker was named Charleston, SC's first Poet Laureate in 2016. He's also an award-winning graphic designer, an accomplished electronic musician, the creator of a poetry festival, and a mentor to hundreds of students. His poetry has been featured by PBS Newshour, SC Public Radio, Huffington Post, A&E Network, *Charleston Magazine*, and more. In 2019, he won a Governor's Arts award. His poetry has been studied in classrooms across the country and has been interpreted for ballet, jazz, modern dance, opera and theater. Marcus has recorded three albums with Grammy Award-winning drummer and producer, Quentin E. Baxter. His latest book is *The Birth of All Things* (Free Verse Press).

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ABOUT CHARLTON SINGLETON



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 a new 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 2020 Grammy Award for “Best Regional Roots Music Album”.

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 most talented entertainers in the world, including Bobby McFerrin, 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 and D’Marcus, as well as their pets...Sassy, Jango, Mojo, Kota Bear, Pumpkin, and Ginger.

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