RAISING THE VOLUME
with Marcus Amaker & Charlton Singleton

Raising the Volume
Episode XIV
Dr. Bernard Powers analyzes life and Black history.

Sixth Grade and Up
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.
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.” 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 XIV, 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 XIV.
EPISODE XIV

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(CCLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH EPISODE XIV)
LESSONS

Our interview opens with Dr. Powers sharing a time he marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a young man in Illinois. They marched for open housing and protested against racial discrimination in homeowner’s loans.

Recall a time when you had to stand up for something you believed and knew to be right. **How were you part of the change? Is there something you currently believe to be unjust? What can you do now to bring forth change?**

Dr. Powers and Charlton Singleton discuss the influence of Jazz Ambassadors, musicians hired by the US State Department following the Cold War to improve the worldwide opinion that the United States did not treat Black Americans with respect. Read the quote from *TIME Magazine* below:

“The first ambassador, Gillespie, was a black man who had grown up in the South, who had no illusions about the irony of promoting America’s ‘freedom’ abroad whilst remaining a second-class citizen at home. He refused to be briefed by the State Department before a performance. ‘I’ve got 300 years of briefing,’ he said. ‘I know what they’ve done to us and I’m not going to make any excuses.’”

Dr. Powers explains the purpose of the Jazz Ambassadors was to improve public opinion of the United States. Dr. Powers states, “The US and the Soviets were in competition, racism had become a liability. Soviet regime told countries whose inhabitants were black, brown, yellow...you can’t believe in American democracy, look how they treat Black people.”

Unpack the quotes above with your group. Questions for discussion: **Why did the US establish Jazz Ambassadors? Why did musicians agree to participate? Read through the quote from Dizzy Gillespie. How does he feel about his participation as an ambassador? What is he referring to when he says, “I have 300 years of briefing”?

“The racism and violence within the U.S. was getting international exposure,” says Von Eschen. “For President Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, this was a great embarrassment.” By sending bands comprised of black and white musicians to play together around the world, the State Department could engineer an image of racial harmony to offset the bad press about racism at home.”
Dr. Powers states, “Black history absolutely is central to understanding American History.” He believes that the International African American Museum here in Charleston, SC will be huge benefit to educating our world. Learn more here.

What do you believe will be the most significant impacts of the International African American Museum? List three points for discussion with your group.

Dr. Powers names numerous African American leaders and events throughout history. Listed on the right are the links to learn more. Choose three links, research, note three facts from each, and discuss with your group.

Who/What event did you read about? What are the three things that stood out for you? How is this person/event a relevant part of history?

LESSONS

Septima Clark
“Educator and civil rights activist”

James Campbell
Educator, civil rights activist, WWII Veteran

Haitian Revolution
“Largest and most successful slave rebellion in the Western Hemisphere” (1791-1804)

Louisiana Purchase and African Americans
Land purchase from France that doubled the size of the US, instigated by slave rebellions (1803)

Denmark Vessey
“A carpenter who bought his freedom after winning the lottery and then secretly plotted a slave rebellion in Charleston, S.C., in 1822”

Migration to Haiti
“Haiti’s Painful Evolution from Promised Land to Migrant-Sending Nation”

African Americans in Charleston, SC
“Discover Charleston’s unique African American historical and cultural traditions, past and present”

Taken from International African American Museum website.
About Dr. Bernard E. Powers Jr.

Dr. Powers earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in American history at Northwestern University and in 2018 retired as professor emeritus of history from the College of Charleston after twenty-six years. Currently Powers is the founding director of the College of Charleston’s Center for the Study of Slavery in Charleston. He has presented papers on various aspects of African American history at conferences and reviewed books and manuscripts for journals and presses. His work appears in book chapters and in scholarly and popular periodicals. He edited the 1999 Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) Black History Month Kit entitled “The Legacy of African American Leadership for the Present and the Future.” His article “Community Evolution and Race Relations in Reconstruction Charleston, S.C.” was included in the Century of Excellence Centennial Volume 1900-2000 of The South Carolina Historical Magazine (July, 2000). A recent book chapter is “Churches as Places of History: The Case of Nineteenth Century Charleston, South Carolina,” in Interpreting African American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites (2015). Powers is the author of Black Charlestonians: A Social History 1822-1885, (1994) a Choice Magazine Outstanding Academic Book for 1995. He was an associate editor of the Encyclopedia of South Carolina (2006). He co-authored We Are Charleston: Tragedy and Triumph at Mother Emanuel (2016) which contextualizes the city’s 2015 racially motivated murders. Most recently he has edited 101 African Americans that Shaped South Carolina (2020) published by the University of South Carolina Press. His current research examines African Methodism in South Carolina. Bernard Powers has appeared in documentary films, including the PBS production, “African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross” and “Emanuel: The Untold Story of the Victims and Survivors of the Charleston Church Shooting.” Powers has been extensively involved in public history and has served as a consultant for historic sites. He is the founding past president of the Charleston Branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. He was also president of the South Carolina Historical Association and of the Advisory Board of the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture. He is an emeritus trustee of the Historic Charleston Foundation and a former member of the City of Charleston Tourism Commission. Powers has also served as the interim president of Charleston’s International African American Museum (IAAM).

In 2019 the Association for the Study of African American Life and History recognized Powers' lifetime commitment to “research, writing, and activism in the field of African American life and history” with the Carter Godwin Woodson Scholars Medallion.

Bernard Powers is a member of Morris Brown A.M.E. Church in Charleston, where he also serves on the Board of Stewards. He is married to Lorraine O. Powers who is a retired school administrator.
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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CITATIONS

- https://time.com/5056351/cold-war-jazz-ambassadors/
- https://iaamuseum.org/museum/
- https://www.africanamericancharleston.com/