Raising the Volume
Episode XVIII
Michael Brown discusses community traditions, inspiration, and conflict resolution.

Sixth Grade and Up

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Mastery of core subjects and twenty-first century themes is essential for all students in the twenty-first 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 twenty-first century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects.

**Global Awareness**
1. Use twenty-first 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; 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. These are stories about Black entrepreneurs, judges, authors, artists, and leaders in our community. These are stories that need to be heard. Led by the Gaillard’s Artists-in-Residence Charlton Singleton and Marcus Amaker, “Raising the Volume” gives a platform to Black community members whose lives matter.

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 XVIII, please email Sterling deVries at sdevries@gailardcenter.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 XVIII.
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(CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH EPISODE XVIII)
Charlton Singleton and Michael Brown discuss the communities in Charleston that they grew up in. Even though they are all in Charleston, the community culture is vastly different. Each community brings its own traditions, churches, language, arts, etc., that are passed down through generations. Michael Brown started playing music at a young age and was influenced by the churches he attended. He currently plays in a band called Mike Brown and F.O.C.U.S. *Think of your family, church, and community around you. What type of influence do they hold on you? Are there certain traditions you follow?*

In addition to being a city councilman and a well-known organ/keyboard player, Michael is also a very talented music composer. When composing music, he relies on poetry, groovy tunes, and nature for his source of inspiration. He says, “If you really want to get inspiration, just sit outside and look at the trees or water. Anything in nature will inspire you.” *Where do you find inspiration to create art? Go outside with a notebook and find inspiration. You can either sketch, write, brainstorm, or create music.*

Michael is an active advocate within his community. He wanted to get involved at the policy level and is now the councilman for District 1 of North Charleston. You can view his Facebook page here.

Charlton and Michael discuss the tragic Emanuel AME Church shooting and how the community reacted positively rather than retaliating. In a phone conversation, Michael was told to bring his weapons to downtown to help protect the churches. Mayor Joe Riley requested that instead, they try to maintain peace. Wendell Gilliard, the South Carolina State Representative, said, “We are passionate, we are frustrated, we don’t know what is happening, but we are willing to put our lives in front of the churches, but we have to maintain order. What we are going to do is pray every thirty minutes.” With this act, they were able to maintain the peace, and no riots in Charleston occurred. *How do you deal with conflict? What are some peaceful ways to deal with conflict? Has there been a time in your life where your actions have spoken louder than violence? Does this story remind you of any other event in history?*

**LESSONS**

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Listen to Mike Brown and F.O.C.U.S.

*Photos of the victims at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C. are held up by congregants during a prayer vigil at the Metropolitan AME Church June 19, 2015 in Washington, DC.*

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Mike Brown is connected to the people of North Charleston and the challenges they face every day. Mike grew up in public housing before moving to three interdependent communities (Union Heights, Howard Heights, and Windsor); he not only understands the struggle of many of the constituents in North Charleston, he’s lived it. Those experiences have fashioned his perspective and will assist him in serving the constituents of North Charleston.

Mike has over 19 years in leadership experience as well as over 20 years in public service. Mike has transcended from the obstacles of a failing public school system, crime plagued neighborhoods and limited resources, to running a successful small business and being self employed by age 23.

Mike’s focus is on addressing crime, academic engagement and improving economic opportunity for all. To read more, please visit Michael Brown’s District One page.
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.
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