

CHARLTON SINGLETON BIO

Charlton Singleton was born on January 7, 1971, the youngest of the three children of the Rev. Charles and Jeanette Singleton, both in education, of Awendaw, South Carolina. He is a true child of the Lowcountry in that he grew up in a close-knit village and was heavily influenced by the forces he was exposed to in his community's church, Greater Zion AME Church where his late grandfather, Edward Singleton, also known to everyone there as Big Daddy, was a stalwart member and spiritual leader.

Charlton attended Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary, Laing Middle and Wando High schools. He went on to attend the Berklee College of Music and South Carolina State College from which he graduated in 1994 with a degree in music performance.

His life has always been awash in music. It was always present in his home growing up. His grandfather sat him on his knee and sang to him, just like he did his other 54 grandchildren. Once again, Charlton is the youngest.

“It was the ‘Jump, Baby Jump Song’,” he told writer Jack McCray. “Ask anyone of my relatives that are close to my age or older if they remember that, and they WILL start singing it.”

By the time he was in middle school, he was a multi-instrumentalist. He had mastered the piano, violin, and cello and trumpet, his primary instrument today.

Charlton has emerged in the last several years as the face of jazz performance in the Lowcountry. After long stints in various small ensembles playing many styles of popular music, he became conductor and artistic director of the Charleston Jazz Orchestra, a 20-piece aggregation at the vanguard of jazz in South Carolina today that arose from the

prototypical Charlton Singleton Orchestra in March of 2008.

He enjoys tremendous stature and fame as a result. His likeness is emblazoned on promotional materials everywhere all the time and he is among the most widely covered performers by media outlets. His high energy, music-in-motion image graced the cover of Charleston Magazine's November issue, its first-ever edition devoted to music.

Thousands have seen him perform in churches, concert halls, clubs, on recordings and in films where he delights them with a magical, versatile artistry that dazzles like a diamond in the sun.

He is also a prominent educator, providing private lessons and having taught in local school districts where his reputation is legendary.

Charlton's presence, on and off the stage, is luminescent. It shines brightly everywhere, all the time.

He lives in North Charleston with his wife, Mary Jo, and two children Shalamar Boyd and D'Marcus Boyd.

No other individual has done more in the Lowcountry recently than Charlton to further the history and legacy of jazz music in South Carolina.

His work, the light of his life, burnishes the lives of all who encounter him and it appears to be poised to go on forever.