

BIOGRAPHY

Ranky Tanky released their eponymous debut on Oct. 20th, 2017. By December of that year, the group had been profiled on NPR's Fresh Air with Terry Gross and their album soared to the #1 position on the Billboard, I-Tunes, and Amazon Jazz Charts.

"Gullah" comes from West African language and means "a people blessed by God." "Ranky Tanky" translates loosely as "Work It," or "Get Funky!" In this spirit this Charleston, SC based quintet performs timeless music of Gullah culture born in the southeastern Sea Island region of the United States. From playful game songs to ecstatic shouts, from heartbreaking spirituals to delicate lullabies, the musical roots of Charleston, SC are "rank" and fertile ground from which these contemporary artists are grateful to have grown.

South Carolina natives Quentin Baxter, Kevin Hamilton, Charlton Singleton, and Clay Ross first came together in 1998, fresh out of University, to form a seminal Charleston jazz quartet. Now, united by years apart and a deeper understanding of home, these accomplished artists have come together again, joined by one of the low-country's most celebrated vocalists Quiana Parler, to revive a "Heartland of American Music" born in their own backyards.

The soulful songs of the Gullah culture are brought to life by this band of native South Carolinians who mix the low country traditions with large doses of jazz, gospel, funk, and R&B. Fresh out of college, trumpeter Charlton Singleton, guitarist Clay Ross, bassist Kevin Hamilton, and drummer Quentin Baxter originally worked together as an in-demand jazz quartet on the Charleston scene in the late 1990s before splitting off to each make their way as freelance musicians, working with names like Houston Person, Freddy Cole, Cyro Baptista, and René Marie. Gaining years of valuable experience while developing a deeper appreciation for the South Carolina Gullah tradition they came from, the band reformed with the dynamic vocalist Quiana Parler to celebrate the bone-deep mix of spirituals and gutbucket blues that mark the low country mainland and Sea Islands – music made by a self-contained culture of descendants of enslaved Africans that introduced such indelible parts of American songbook as "Kum Bah Yah" and "Michael Rowed the Boat Ashore." The word "Gullah" comes from West Africa and means "a people blessed by God," and "Ranky Tanky" translates loosely as "Work It," or "Get Funky!"

THE BAND

Kevin Hamilton (Bass) is a celebrated artist in Charleston's vibrant jazz scene. He has performed internationally with diverse ensembles such as The Charleston Jazz Orchestra, Houston Person, Gregory Hines, and Rene Marie. Kevin Hamilton joined the

U.S. Dept. of State's OneBeat program in 2012 and holds a degree in music theory and composition from the College of Charleston.

Quiana Parler (Vocalist) has one of the most sought after voices in the South Carolina Low-Country and has graced some of the most prestigious stages in the nation. Through a top placement on the hit TV show "American Idol," she was discovered by Clay Aiken, with whom she toured nationally for seven years. Quiana has performed with Kelly Clarkson, Ruben Studdard, and Miranda Lambert, worked with producers David Foster, Adam Anders, Phil Ramone and Walter Afanasieff and appeared on national television shows The View, Good Morning America, and Jimmy Kimmel Live among others. Currently based in Charleston, SC she performs locally and nationally with her 10 piece party band, "Quiana Parler & Shiny Disco Ball Band."

www.quianaparler.com

Clay Ross (Guitar, Vocals) has established himself as an in-demand sideman and innovative bandleader on the international music scene, winning multiple grants through the U.S. State Department and touring worldwide as a Cultural Ambassador. Now signed to the Motema Music label, he currently tours worldwide, leading his NYC based band Matuto. "Mr. Ross is a very deft guitarist with a rich vocabulary of folk, blues, and jazz at his disposal..." – Wall Street Journal
www.clayross.com

Charlton Singleton (Trumpet, Vocals) is the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Charleston Jazz Orchestra; a 20 piece jazz ensemble of some of the finest professional musicians in the Southeast and the resident big band in Charleston, SC. He has toured across Europe and throughout the United States and has also shared the stage with and/or worked with some of the most talented entertainers in the world. Outside of music and entertainment, he is a devoted husband and proud father of two.

www.charltonsingleton.com

Quentin E. Baxter (Drums) is a Grammy-nominated musician/producer currently on tour with Freddy Cole and Rene Marie. A prominent figure in the jazz community of his native Charleston, he is the Co-Principal of Charleston Jazz Initiative, a founding board member of Jazz artists of Charleston, and an Adjunct Professor of Jazz Studies at the College of Charleston.

www.baxtermusic.com
