



The Life of Charlie Burrell: Breaking the Color Barrier in Classical Music

Charlie Burrell, Mitch Handelsman

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Charlie Burrell was the first black person to break the color barrier in classical music.

In 1949 he was the first black person under contract with the Denver Symphony Orchestra.

In 1959 he became the first black person to play in the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and the San Francisco Opera.

In addition to being a classical music pioneer, he was a jazz musician as well, playing alongside many world-renowned jazz artists.

He has great stories to tell about critical times in his life. How many people can tell stories about Dianne Reeves, Lionel Hampton, Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday—at the same time telling about Arthur Fiedler, Pierre Monteux, and Isaac Stern? *Only Charlie Burrell!*

The Life of Charlie Burrell is no simple story of the triumph of will over oppression, or of an angel who always did the right thing in the face of unending adversity and evil. Burrell's stories weave a more complex tale of inner strength borne in the crucible of an amazing family, fired by intense ambition and hard work, and catalyzed by a series of mentors—both black and white—from whom Charlie learns important lessons, both intended and unintended.

Charlie's life story provides insight into the character of a man who spent almost 30 years pursuing his dream but sought neither fame nor fortune.

If you love stories of overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles, tragedy and triumph, please click on the cover and begin to read Charlie's incredible journey!

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