

Pianist/vocalist Champian Fulton grew up with music in her home. Her father (jazz trumpeter and educator Stephen Fulton) and mother quickly recognized their daughter's interest in music at an early age. The presence of her father's musician friends, including Clark Terry and Major Holley, also served to stimulate her focus on music. She began studying piano with her grandmother at the age of five, while she later took up singing, drums, and trumpet before eventually settling on piano and vocals. The family moved to Lemars, IA, in 1994 after Stephen Fulton became director of the Clark Terry Institute for Jazz Studies. Champian participated in the summer camp jazz program there, where she met other young jazz musicians from her area and formed the Little Jazz Quintet. They would get together to perform a couple of times annually for the next few years, playing shows consisting exclusively of Terry's repertoire, including Terry's 75th birthday party.

One of Fulton's first vocal influences was Dinah Washington, especially her album *For Those in Love*, which she played repeatedly. She admired Nat King Cole (one of the earliest jazz artists to show equal chops on piano and vocals), while she devoured Art Tatum, Red Garland, Wynton Kelly, Bud Powell, Hampton Hawes, Sonny Clark, and Thelonious Monk. In 1999 Champian's family relocated to Norman OK, where Champian continued to play with her new band while attending high school, appearing at a number of regional jazz festivals. After graduating as valedictorian of her high school in 2003, Fulton moved to New York to pursue a degree in jazz piano performance at SUNY Purchase Music Conservatory. One of her favorite professors was trumpeter Jon Faddis, who taught with the wisdom of one who had been actively involved in recording and touring for decades and tailored his instruction to his students' interests.

Fulton graduated in 2006 and moved to New York City. Since then, Fulton has performed in many New York City venues, including Birdland, Lincoln Center, Smalls, Dizzy's Club Coca Cola, and Shanghai Jazz, while she has played with jazz masters such as Jimmy Cobb, Frank Wess, Lou Donaldson, and Louis Hayes, among others. She recorded her debut CD in 2007 with David Berger & the Sultans of Swing, an opportunity that arose after Berger was introduced to her while she was playing at Birdland. Her follow-up CD for Venus, "Sometimes I'm Happy", was issued in 2008, featuring Fulton leading her trio with bassist Neal Miner and drummer Fukushi Tainaka. Her third CD "the breeze and I" was released in 2010 with the same trio.

Champion has been involved in Jazz education from an early age, starting first with assisting her father at Birch Creek Music Academy and then teaching private lessons of her own. Since moving to New York Champion has been involved with LEAP NYC (Learning through An Expanded Arts Program), teaching Jazz appreciation to New York Public School students, and participates with Lincoln Center's Meet the Artist Program, where she presents concerts and master classes to visiting schools. Champion strives to perpetuate the language of Jazz with her teaching and through her performances.