

Dr. Alton L. Merrell

PIANIST - EDUCATOR – MUSIC DIRECTOR – MUSIC PRODUCER

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Dr. Alton L. Merrell is a pianist, educator, music director, and music producer. Alton earned a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and Classical Piano Performance graduating Cum Laude, and a Master of Music in Jazz Piano performance. From the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Merrell received his Ph.D. in Jazz Studies with a research focus on jazz piano performance and pedagogy.

Dr. Merrell leads his own group, “Dr. Alton Merrell & Impact,” an instrumental and vocal ensemble combining diverse musical styles in its repertoire. This group is known to produce music that evokes love, healing, joy and peace to people throughout the world. Alton’s latest award-winning CD “You’re The Reason” embodies this vision.

Dr. Merrell has ministered with gospel artists Kim Burrell, Israel Houghton, Donnie McClurkin, Maurette Brown Clark, Martha Munizzi, Alvin Slaughter, Dorothy Norwood, LaShunn Pace, Parkes Stewart, and the late Rev. Timothy Wright. He has also been seen several times on the nationally televised Bobby Jones Gospel Show. Dr. Merrell has also performed with jazz artists Benny Golson, Christian McBride, Jeff “Tain” Watts, Sean Jones, Rufus Reed, Jimmy Heath, Curtis Fuller, Jimmy Owens, Slide Hampton, and Roger Humphries. Dr. Merrell is a current member of the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra and has performed with the Cleveland Jazz Orchestra, Cleveland State Jazz Heritage Orchestra, Pittsburgh Concert Chorale, YSU All-Star Alumni Jazz Ensemble, and the Warren Philharmonic Orchestra.

Dr. Merrell has received numerous honors including Gospel Jazz Artist of the Year Award, American Gospel Music Award, Best New Gospel Jazz Artist & Producer, Capital Jazz Festival Competition Finalist (2008), YSU Jazz Quintet Member of the Cultural Exchange Group performing in Beijing, China (Summer 2002), YSU Jazz Quintet Member of the Cultural Exchange Jazz Group performing in Shanghai, Nanjing, and Hangzhou, China (Summer 2004) where a number of Alton’s compositions and arrangements were performed. Dr. Merrell has also been a recipient of K. Leroy Irvis Fellowship and Founces M. Luley Music Scholarship.

Above all, Dr. Merrell’s life is dedicated to being a godly husband to his wife Geida, a godly father to his son Jaden and daughter Zion, and an instrument in the Lord’s hand to minister the love of Jesus to people everywhere through music and the word of God.