

## Curriculum Vitae

Alton Merrell

Pittsburgh, PA

Web: <http://www.altonmerrell.com>

### Education

Ph.D. Music / Jazz Studies (2013)

University of Pittsburgh

Dissertation: *The Life and Music of McCoy Tyner: An Examination of the Social and Cultural Influences on McCoy Tyner and His Music.*

M.M. Jazz Studies, Piano Performance (2002), Cum Laude

Youngstown State University

B.M. Music Education, with emphasis in Classical & Jazz Piano Performance (2000), Cum Laude

Youngstown State University

### Teaching Experience & Courses Taught

National Jazz Workshop, Faculty (2015 & 2016)

Jazz Theory, Jazz Piano, Rhythm Section Coaching

Youngstown State University, Professor (2013 - 2015)

Director of the Jazz Studies Program, Applied Jazz Piano, Jazz Keyboard, Jazz Improvisation, Jazz History, Jazz Ensemble, Jazz Combos, Contemporary Ensemble

West Virginia Wesleyan College, Pianist & Lecturer (2012)

Master Class and Tribute Concert to Blue Note Records with the James Moore Sextet

University of Pittsburgh, Instructor (2011 - 2013)

Basic Musicianship: Class Piano

University of Pittsburgh, Graduate Teaching Assistant (2008 - 2013)

Jazz History

University of Pittsburgh, Lecturer (2009)  
Jazz Composition

Covenant Church of Pittsburgh Fine Arts Academy, Director & Instructor (2005 - 2008)  
Jazz, Classical and Gospel Piano, Music Theory, Improvisation

China, Nanjing Institute of the Arts (2004)  
Jazz Piano Master Class and Lecture Presenter

China, Hangzhou Teachers College (2004)  
Jazz Piano Master Class and Lecture Presenter

Youngstown State University, Adjunct Instructor (2002 - 2005)  
Applied Jazz Piano, Jazz Keyboard, Jazz Improvisation,  
Jazz Theory, Jazz Combo

China, China Conservatory, Beijing, China (2002)  
Jazz Piano Master Class and Lecture Presenter

Youngstown State University, Graduate Teaching Assistant (2000 - 2002)  
Applied Classical & Jazz Piano, Jazz Combo, Jazz Ensemble

Youngstown State University, Adjunct Instructor (2002 - 2005)  
Applied Jazz Piano, Jazz Keyboard, Jazz Improvisation,  
Jazz Theory, Jazz Combo

Private Piano Instruction, Local and Worldwide via Skype (2000 - Present)  
Jazz, Classical and Gospel Piano Instruction

## **Publications**

Book - *Music Theory For The Contemporary Musician*. Pittsburgh: Minstrel Publishing Company (2006).

Media - *Jazz and Gospel Piano Lessons via Instructional DVDs & Digital Download*. Pittsburgh: Minstrel Publishing Company.  
Digital Archive: <http://www.altonmerrell.com/lessons.html>

## Awards and Honors

Presenter at the National Jazz Educator's Network Conference - San Diego, CA. (2015)

Steans Music Institute Program for Jazz at Ravinia, (2012)

Selected Participant: David Baker, Curtis Fuller, Nathan Davis, Rufus Reid - Faculty  
Chicago, Illinois

Arts and Sciences Teaching Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh (2011)

K. Leroy Irvis Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh (2008)

Gospel Jazz Artist of the Year, Urban Gospel Industry Award (2005)

Best New Gospel Jazz Artist & Producer, Urban Gospel Industry Award (2005)

American Gospel Music Performance Award (2004)

Performance of Original Compositions with the YSU Jazz Quintet in Beijing, China  
(2002) and Hangzhou, China (2004)

Selected to perform in a Master Class with Danilo Perez, Tri-C Jazz Fest (2002)

Outstanding Jazz Performance Student Award, DownBeat Magazine, (2000)

Youngstown State University Graduate Assistant Scholarship (2000)

Founces M. Luley Music Scholarship (1996)

## Professional Experience

Performance with the James Moore Sextet	2013
Hosted by the West Virginia Jazz Society and Wesleyan College	

Performance with drummer Cecil Brooks III -	2013
International Pittsburgh JazzLive Festival	

Alton Merrell Group - Performance in the Jazz Crawl as part of the International Pittsburgh JazzLive Festival	2013
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Jazz Vespers Service - First Presbyterian Church, Guest Artist	2013
Concert with Tom Wendt at James St. Pittsburgh, PA	2013
Alton Merrell Group - Performance in the Pittsburgh JazzLive Music Series	2013
Concert with Ken Karsh at James St. Pittsburgh, PA	2013
Tribute Concert to George and Ira Gershwin with Sean Jones, Eli Degibri, Roger Humphries, and Dwayne Dolphin	2012
Alton Merrell Group - Featured Performance at “A Jazzy Christmas” in Columbus, Ohio	2012
Roger Humphries and RH Factor - Concert	2012
Alton Merrell Group - Featured Performance at the Youngstown Jazz Festival	2012
Alton Merrell Group - Performance at Riverview Park as part of the “Stars at Riverview” Series	2012
Alton Merrell Group - Performance in the Jazz Crawl as part of the International Pittsburgh JazzLive Festival	2012
Concert with NEA Jazz Master Benny Golson and the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra - Pianist and Featured Soloist	2012
Alton Merrell Group - Performance in the Pittsburgh JazzLive Music Series	2012
Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation Prayer Breakfast Guest Artist	2012
Billy Strayhorn 4th Annual Suite Life Jazz Quintet - Pianist and Featured Soloist	2011
Rapture Oratorio - Music Director, Arranger, Pianist	2011

Symphonic Celebration of African American Culture featuring Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and Sean Jones - Pianist	2010
Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra - Pianist	2009 - Present
A Tribute To Phyllis Hyman Music Production - Music Director and Pianist	2010
Guest Soloist - The Judah Project	2007
Forgiven Oratorio - Music Director, Pianist	2009
Covenant Church of Pittsburgh - Music Director	2005 - 2008
The Jazz Heritage Orchestra - Pianist	2004
Tour of Beijing, China with YSU Faculty Jazz Group	2002
Guest Soloist - Lakeland Community College	2002
Cleveland Jazz Orchestra - Intermittent Pianist	2000 - 2002
New Jerusalem Fellowship Church - Music Director	1994 - 2004

### **Recording As Leader**

**You're The Reason** [*Minstrel Records* - Alton Merrell (p), Jeff Grubbs, Paul Caffie (b), James Johnson III (d), Sean Jones (tp.), Chris Hemmingway (as)]

### **Recordings As A Sideman**

**Sean Jones' "Kaleidoscope" CD** [*Mack Avenue Records*] - Alton Merrell (p) on "You're The Reason" and organ on "I Come To Thee" both featuring Kim Burrell and Sean Jones.

**Nathan Davis's "Parisian Hoedown" CD** [*Tomorrow International Records*] - Alton Merrell (p) on "Little Sophie."

**Carolyn Perteete "Insomnia" CD** [*Perteete Records*] - Alton Merrell (p) on "Over Again."

**Dan Wilson “Dan Willson” CD** [*Independent*] - Alton Merrell (p) and featured soloist.

**Sound Doctrine “Inspire” CD** [*Soul Food Records*] - Alton Merrell (p) and featured soloist.

**YSU Jazz Ensemble “Lester Left Town ” CD** [*Independent*] - Alton Merrell (p) and a featured soloist.

**YSU All-Star Alumni Jazz Ensemble “The Leonardi Legacy” CD** [*Independent*] - Alton Merrell (p) and a featured soloist.

**YSU Jazz Ensemble “Biddle de Bop” CD** [*Independent*] - Alton Merrell (p) and a featured soloist.

**YSU Jazz Ensemble “Burnin’ ” CD** [*Independent*] - Alton Merrell (p) and a featured soloist.

### **Performances As Sideman**

Jazz: Cecil Brooks III, Benny Golson, Jimmy Heath, Christian McBride, |Jeff “Tain” Watts, Ralph Lalama, Claudio Roditi, Rufus Reed, Sean Jones, Roger Humphries, Dwayne Dolphin, Poojie Bell, Greg Bandy

Gospel: Maurette Brown Clark, Israel Houghton, Martha Munizzi, Donnie McClurkin, Kim Burrell, Dorothy Norwood, LaShun Pace-Rhodes

### **Affiliations / Memberships**

Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI)  
Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society  
Jazz Education Network

### **Computer Skills**

MIDI Technology, Computer Based Recording, Logic, Digital Performer, Reason, Bias Peak, and Finale

### **Languages**

Spanish: reading knowledge