

Curriculum Vitae

Dr. Alton L. Merrell

Pittsburgh, PA

Artist Website: <http://www.altonmerrell.com>

School Website: <http://www.minstrelschool.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

West Virginia University, Professor (2021 - Present)
Applied Jazz Piano, Advance Improvisation, Beginning Improvisation, Jazz History,
Pop and Jazz Piano Keyboard Class, Jazz Harmony, WVU Gospel Choir

Minstrel School of Music, Director & Instructor (2016 - Present)
Jazz Piano, Gospel Piano, Pop Piano, Music Theory, Improvisation, African-
American Music History, Consulting, Empowerment Coaching

Doctoral Research Residency in Sacred Jazz Composition (2023)
Dr. Alton Merrell (mentor/composer); Reggie Bowens (mentee/student)
Eastman School of Music

Guest Artist & Lecturer at the Steinway & Sons Piano Factory (2023)
Performance & Presentation on uses of Spirio R Technology in Jazz Piano Education
Astoria, New York

Concert and Masterclass at the University of Toledo (2023)
Performance and Jazz Improvisation Masterclass

Concert and Masterclass at Duquesne University (2023)
Presentation on the Role of the Piano in the Jazz Ensemble and Performance with the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra as part of the Summer Band Symposium for Western Pennsylvania Music Educators

Guest Artist & Lecturer (2023)
Concert Performance & Lecture on McCoy Tyner & His Music
Homewood Library, Pittsburgh PA

Guest Clinician and Performer at the University of Rhode Island (2022)
Jazz Piano Masterclass and Guest Artist with the URI Big Band

Guest Clinician and Performer at Southeast Missouri State University (2022)
Jazz Improvisation Masterclass and Guest Artist with the Student Big Band

West Virginia University Honor's Jazz Group, Faculty (2021, 2022, 2023)
Piano Technique, How To Navigate a Lead Sheet, How to Learn a Jazz Standard Jazz
Piano Masterclass

Geneva College Pittsburgh / Center for Urban Biblical Ministry, Panelist (2020)
Regional and Nationally recognized panelists presented on the
State of Music in the Black Church and associated aspects.

National Jazz Workshop, Duquesne University, Faculty (2015 & 2016)
Jazz Piano, Jazz Theory, Improvisation, 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)
Masterclass 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 Masterclass and Lecture Presenter

China, Hangzhou Teachers College (2004)
Jazz Piano Masterclass 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

Books - *30 Modern Bebop Licks*
Pittsburgh: Minstrel Publishing Company (August 2021)

The Complete Piano Technique Course: Book 1, 2 and 3
Pittsburgh: Minstrel Publishing Company (August 2021)

Music Theory for the Improvising Musician
Pittsburgh: Minstrel Publishing Company (August 2021)

Music Theory For The Contemporary Musician
Pittsburgh: Minstrel Publishing Company (2006)

Media - *Jazz, Gospel, Pop Piano Video Lessons and Courses* via www.minstrelschool.com
Pittsburgh: (Present)

Dissertation - *The Life and Music of McCoy Tyner: An Examination of the
Social and Cultural Influences on McCoy Tyner and His Music* (2013)

Awards and Honors

Contracted as Music Director and Pianist of “Sugar Hill” off Broadway Show (2022)
Spotlighted Duke Ellington / Billy Strayhorn piano chair

Pianist in the Netflix series “Archive 81” (2021)
Produced by Denzel Washington

Piano Coach in the Netflix movie “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom” (2019)
Produced by Denzel Washington

Featured Performer in the East Central Jazz Educators All-Star Big Band (2018)
Slippery Rock University

Featured Performer at legendary saxophonist Phil Wood’s last concert (2015)
with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

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

Selected Participant: Steans Music Institute Program for Jazz at Ravinia (2012)
Faculty: David Baker, Curtis Fuller, Nathan Davis, Rufus Reid
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 Youngstown State University Jazz Quintet in
Beijing, China (2002) and Hangzhou, China (2004)

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

Outstanding Jazz Performance Student Award, DownBeat Magazine (2000)

Youngstown State University Graduate Assistant Scholarship (2000)

Fouces M. Luley Music Scholarship (1996)

Key Professional Experiences

Pianist - Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra w Ann Hampton Callaway Pittsburgh Playhouse	2023
Pianist and Music Director: "Suite Life: Kelly Strayhorn Theatre, Pittsburgh, PA	2023
Featured Performer with Jim Snidero Cleveland Bop Stop & Con Alma, Pittsburgh, PA	2023
Pianist - Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra w/ Sean Jones & Kim Nazarian Pittsburgh Playhouse	2022
Pianist - Tia Fuller Quartet University of Pittsburgh	2022
Pianist - Antonio Hart Quartet Alphabet City, Pittsburgh, PA	2022
Pianist - Antonio Hart Quartet Slippery Rock University, Pittsburgh, PA	2022
Pianist - Kenny Washington Alphabet City, Pittsburgh, PA	2022
Pianist - Pianist on the NewStream Brass Recording	2022
Pianist - Alton Merrell & Impact at the Monroeville Jazz Festival	2022
Pianist - Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra - "Pittsburgh Jazz Greats"	2021
Pianist - Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra w/ Sean Jones	2021
Featured Performer with Jim Snidero Con Alma, Pittsburgh, PA	2021
Featured Performer with Dan Wilson Alphabet City, Pittsburgh, PA	2021
Covenant Church of Pittsburgh - Pianist & Music Director	2020 - Present
Alton Merrell & Impact - Featured Group Kente Arts Alliance Music Series	2021

Alton Merrell & Impact - Featured Group Pittsburgh Jazz Live Music Series	2021
Alton Merrell & Impact - Featured Group Eastminster Church	2021
Alton Merrell Quartet - Featured Group Con Alma Jazz Club	2021
Firm Roots - Featured Group Con Alma & Alphabet City	2021
Featured Performer at the Westsylvania Jazz Festival Performed with Don Aliqo, and the group Firm Roots Indiana, PA	2021
Featured Performer: The Music of McCoy Tyner Alphabet City, Pittsburgh, PA	2020
Featured Performer: The Music of Benny Carter Alphabet City, Pittsburgh, PA	2020
Featured Performer at the Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival Jam Session with Sean Jones	2020
Featured Performer at the Allegheny County Special Projects TV Concert Series with the Lynn Speakman Group Sponsored by the Manchester Craftsman's Guild	2020
Featured Performer at the Pittsburgh Jazz Live Concert Series Alton Merrell Piano Trio	2020
Featured Performer at the Three Rivers Arts Festival Virtual Jazz Concert	2020
Featured Performer with Roger Humphries & RH Factor Kingfly Spirits, Pittsburgh, PA	2020
Featured Performer with the Firm Roots Group The Westmoreland Museum of American Art, Greensburg, PA	2020
Featured Artist: The Music of Billy Strayhorn Kelly Strayhorn Theatre, Pittsburgh, PA	2019
Featured Artist at the Highmark Blues Festival Dr. Alton Merrell & Impact	2019

Featured Artist at the Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival Dr. Alton Merrell & Impact	2019
Featured Performer at the West Virginia Jazz Festival Performance with Kenny Rittenhouse	2019
Featured Performer with the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra Performance with Sachal Vasandani at FallingWater	2019
Featured Performer with Marcus Printup Lynn Speakman Live Jazz Recording	2019
Featured Performer and Arranger with the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra Monroeville Jazz Festival, Pittsburgh, PA	2019
Featured Performer with Jakem Jorner and Steve Cole Blue Jazz Club, Akron, OH	2019
Featured Performer: The Music of Duke Ellington Alphabet City, Pittsburgh, PA	2019
Music Director, Pianist, Arranger - Forgiven Oratorio	2019
Featured Performer with Delfeayo Marsalis	2019
Featured Performer with the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra Keith David featuring the Music of Joe Williams Manchester Craftsman's Guild	2019
Featured Performer at the Lift Every Voice Concert with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra	2018
Featured Artist at the Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival Dr. Alton Merrell & Impact	2018
Featured Performer at the Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival with the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra	2018
Featured Performer with the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra Featuring Hubert Laws	2017

Recordings As Leader (Artist, Producer and Engineer)

Withholding Nothing [MCG Jazz]

You're the Reason [Minstrel Records]

Instrumental Piano Music: Music for Worship and Prayer [Minstrel Records]

Above All (Single) [*Minstrel Records*]

Alton's Shout #1 & #2 (Singles) [*Minstrel Records*]

Recording As a Sideman

Jason Kush "Jazz" CD (Finally Friday) [*MCG Jazz*] - Jason Kush(ts), Alton Merrell(p), Jeff Grubbs(b), David Glover(d)

Erika Johnson (Rx Melodies - prescription melodies) - Alton Merrell - Piano

NewStream Brass - Alton Merrell (p) Trumpet - Derek Ganong (Trumpet Professor/ Director of Jazz at Boise State University) Trumpet - Eric Siereveld (Trumpet Professor at the University of Louisiana at Monroe) Horn - Dakota Corbliss (Horn Professor at Appalachian State University) Trombone - Connor Frederick (DMA student at Miami Univ) Trombone - Austin Seybert (New Trombone Professor at University of Texas at Tyler) Trombone - Michael Wilkinson (Trombone Professor at University of South Carolina) Tuba - Brett Copeland (freelance in Texas).

Adam Brock's "A Thrill of Hope" CD – Alton Merrell(p)

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: Antonio Hart, Tia Fuller, Mike Phillips, Kim Nazarian, Bob Reynolds, Dan Wilson, Jim Snidero, Freddy Cole, Delfeayo Marsalis, Hubert Laws, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Cecil Brooks III, Benny Golson, Jimmy Heath, Christian McBride, Jeff “Tain” Watts, Ralph Lalama, Claudio Roditi, Rufus Reed, Sean Jones, Roger Humphries, Dwayne Dolphin, Poochie Bell, Greg Bandy, Sachal Vasandani, Benny Benack III, Fostina Dixon, Su Terry, Virginia Mayhew, Erica Lindsay, Laura Dreyer

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

Affiliations / Memberships

Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI) Jazz Education Network

Computer Skills

MIDI Technology, Computer Based Recording, Logic, Digital Performer, Reason, Mastering Software, and Finale

Languages

Spanish: reading knowledge