

Dr. Alton Merrell: Piano Teacher

*Dr. Alton Merrell is an internationally acclaimed pianist, Hammond B-3 organist, composer, and educator who has performed and taught across the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean. His artistry blends lyrical melodies, rich harmonies, and fluid technique, spanning jazz, gospel, classical, pop, and rhythm and blues. Merrell has performed with jazz greats including Antonio Hart, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Curtis Fuller, Benny Golson, Jimmy Heath, Hubert Laws, Delfeayo Marsalis, Christian McBride, and Jeff "Tain" Watts, also collaborating with Pittsburgh's leading jazz artists. A member of the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra, he has also appeared with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Jazz Orchestra, Cleveland State Jazz Heritage Orchestra, and Warren Philharmonic Orchestra. In gospel music, Merrell has shared the stage with Kim Burrell, Israel Houghton, Donnie McClurkin, Maurette Brown Clark, and others, and was featured multiple times on the nationally televised Bobby Jones Gospel Show. He leads The Alton Merrell Trio and released his latest album, *Withholding Nothing* on the Grammy-winning MCGJazz label. As an author and educator, he has published five instructional books with companion online courses, including *30 Modern Bebop Licks*, *Music Theory for the Improvising Musician*, and *The Complete Piano Technique Course*. He earned a PhD in Jazz Studies from the University of Pittsburgh, where his dissertation explored the life and music of McCoy Tyner, along with degrees in classical and jazz piano from Youngstown State University. Currently, he serves as lead teacher at his Minstrel School of Music and as Adjunct Professor at the Community College of Allegheny County, having previously directed jazz studies at West Virginia University and Youngstown State University. Through performance, teaching, and writing, Merrell continues to inspire and uplift audiences worldwide with music that communicates love, hope, and healing.*