



# Piano Richard Alston

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Complete artist information including video, audio and interviews are available at [www.pricerubin.com](http://www.pricerubin.com)

## Richard Alston – Program Biography

Richard Alston is a masterful concert pianist, having appeared in recital and as soloist with orchestras throughout the United States and Europe. A native of East Orange, NJ, after earning both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Juilliard School of Music, Richard was poised for a career in both classical piano performance as well as performing arts education. His performance credits range from recitals, guest soloist with orchestras, live opera to radio and television broadcasts as well as CD recordings.

He is Associate Professor and Performing Arts Coordinator at Essex County College in Newark, NJ. As the coordinator of the Music, Dance and Drama departments, he selects and oversees the faculty and curriculum, mentoring and advising all music majors and non-music majors. He is also Host and Producer of the "Performing Arts Showcase" cable TV show. This new program recorded at the Essex County College television studio features singers, instrumentalists and actors from the New Jersey/New York metropolitan area, broadcast over the Cablevision Network.

Richard Alston serves as Minister of Music at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Montclair, NJ, where he conducts the Senior Choir and coaches all vocal and instrumental soloists.

He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. His teacher and coach is Prof. Paul Hoffmann.

Richard Alston has brought to light the great contributions to classical piano repertoire by composers of African descent. At age 15, Alston received a standing ovation for his performance of the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 at the Brevard Music Festival in North Carolina, becoming the first student to win the Young Artist Competition for three consecutive years.

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## Richard Alston – Program Biography

Seventeen year old Alston made his New York debut performing Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Symphony Of The New World conducted by Maestro Everett Lee at Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center. As the winner of the Aldredge Piano Competition of the Chautauqua Institution, he was given a full scholarship to the Chautauqua Music Festival and performed with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra. This performance was broadcast over National Public Radio. Additional broadcasting credits in New York City include FM stations WQXR and WNYC, and various appearances on New Jersey public television.

Venues of Alston's live performances in New York include Weill Recital Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and the Metropolitan Opera House in the revival of "Porgy and Bess" where he performed the role of Jasbo Brown with the opening piano solo, depicting the legendary charisma of the man after whom the "Jazz" genre is believed to be named. He was asked to repeat his portrayal of Jasbo Brown in the production of "Porgy and Bess" by the New Jersey State Opera at the historic Symphony Hall in Newark, NJ.

As a guest artist with the New Jersey Symphony, Alston performed in a special concert in commemoration of the birth of William Grant Still.

He served as the pianist and consultant in the PBS documentary "Classically Black," which celebrates composers of African descent. He has performed a lecture/performance of "Classically Black: Composers Of African Descent" at many colleges and universities throughout the United States, including Westminster Choir College in 2012, and Boston University for its symposium "African American Music in World Culture" in 2014.

Alston recorded the Arensky Piano Concerto in F minor, Op. 2 with the Czech National Orchestra conducted by Maestro Paul Freeman for Centaur Records. The CD, released in 1996, also includes the premier recording of "Etudes for Solo Piano, Op. 74" by Arensky.

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Richard's deep love for music was instilled by many mentors and teachers, including Mr. Ovid Lewis. He enjoys passing on his piano skills to his friends, protégés and students. He describes a formative experience as follows:

"Ever since I saw the film Song Without End (The Franz Liszt Story) when I was 11 years old, I was a fan of the music of Franz Liszt. When I heard Jorge Bolet and Earl Wild, I really developed a GREAT love for this piano repertoire. The late Jorge Bolet and Earl Wild will always be my heroes when it comes to the performance of Liszt's piano works!"

Among his other musical influences, he cites pianist Anton Rubinstein and the Anton Rubinstein Akademie, Barbara Hendricks, the New York Philharmonic, Jessye Norman, Maria Callas, Richard Smallwood, spirituals, gospel music, Anna Moffo, Frederic Chopin, Opera Noire of New York, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Vladimir Horowitz, Leontyne Price, Arthur Rubinstein, North Jersey Philharmonic Glee Club, Sigismund Thalberg, George Shirley, Emil Gilels, NYAHO, New Jersey State Opera, Leslie B. Dunner, Wynton Marsalis, Maria Callas, The Harlem Chamber Players, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Andre Watts, Rudolph Nureyev, Beverly Sills, Puccini's Tosca, and Kathleen Battle.

As a college instructor, he has skills and expertise in piano, vocal coaching, music theory & composition, orchestral music, chamber music, choral music, opera, musical theatre, conducting, music industry, recording, music education and Finale.

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## Richard Alston – Full Biography

Richard Alston is a masterful and exciting African American classical pianist who has garnered praise for his passion and technical mastery at the keyboard, his charismatic personality and charming stage presence, and his progress from prodigy to mature artist.

Performing throughout the US and Europe, this Juilliard graduate (earned bachelors and masters at Juilliard) has captured audiences through his solo recitals, as guest pianist with orchestras, through live opera performance, radio and television broadcasts, as well as his CD recordings.

Alston has particularly drawn the attention of the musical world, educators, and college and university students in recent years for bringing to light the great contributions to classical music by composers of African descent. Alston not only performs exquisite works of these composers that remain to this day relatively unknown to the larger public, but has also delighted audiences with lectures and master classes on the colors of music, “Classically Black: Composers of African Descent.”

Alston enjoys the art of research and takes great pride in unearthing marvelous works by great composers as well as lesser known artists who deserve greater recognition. This eclectic pianist thus goes beyond performing the traditional classics of the “greats” to mastering the unique contributions of US and European composers.

Alston has carved for himself a career in both classical piano performance and performing arts education. He is Associate Professor and Performing Arts Coordinator at Essex County College in Newark, NJ. Under his direction an associate degree program in music at Essex County College has flourished into a full-fledged performing arts department of Music, Dance, and Drama. Highlights of Professor Alston’s contributions to the department include a High School Music Advancement Initiative program allowing high school students to audition for and earn opportunities to study at the collegiate level, and the development of courses in musical computer technology (MIDI, Pro – Tools, and Sound Engineering, etc.) marked by the construction of a new technical music lab. He is

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also the producer and host of the cable television show “Performing Arts Showcase at Essex County College. Alston has also served as a faculty member of Rutgers University, Newark Campus, on the Board of Music Advisors for Westminster Choir College’s Education Opportunity Program and, formerly, as a member of the Juilliard School of Music’s "Music Advancement Program" faculty.

Alston is also on a mission to raise awareness of the beauty of classical music in the community through his current role as Minister of Music at Trinity United Presbyterian Church in Montclair, NJ and his involvement in a variety of volunteer community programs. Alston is the founder of the Crossroads Music Academy.

Alston’s remarkable versatility emanated in part from the confidence he gained through piano performances starting at a very early age – so early that he was hailed by many as a child prodigy.

A native of East Orange, NJ, Alston received his first instruction from Dorothy Earley, and by the age of eight, was playing organ and piano for the First Baptist Church in Vaux Hall, NJ. He later continued with Sylvia Rabinof of New York and received his Bachelor of Music degree from the Juilliard School of Music, in New York City, where he studied with Irwin Freundlich and Josef Raieff. He was later awarded the highly prestigious Maria Guerra Judelson Scholarship in piano to return to Juilliard for his Master’s degree as well.

At age 15, Alston received a standing ovation for his performance of the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 at the Brevard Music Festival in North Carolina, becoming the first student to win the Young Artist Competition for three consecutive years. Seventeen year old Alston made his New York debut performing Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Symphony Of The New World, under the direction of Everett Lee at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall. As the winner of the Aldredge Piano Competition of the Chautauqua Institution, he was given a full scholarship to the Chautauqua Music School and performed with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra under Verujan Kojian. This performance was broadcast over National Public Radio. Additional broadcasting credits

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## Richard Alston – Full Biography

include WQXR (NY), WNYC (NY) and various appearances on New Jersey public television.

In the Metropolitan Opera's revival of *Porgy and Bess*, Alston brought an unforgettable sense of well-researched authenticity to his debut role of Jasbo Brown; the choreography included his opening solo depicting the legendary charisma of the man after whom the "Jazz" genre is believed to be named. He was invited to repeat his portrayal of Jasbo Brown in the historic production presented by The New Jersey State Opera at Symphony Hall, Newark, NJ. Live performances of this caliber included concerts at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space, Town Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York City.

At the personal request of renowned music educator and composer, Denes Agay, Alston recorded an album of the composer's piano works which was released on the Educo label. Also on the Educo label, Alston has recorded a set of piano works by African-American composers, becoming the source of a commonly sought-after lecture series, "Classically Black" that he offers. He has performed "Classically Black" at many universities and colleges and offered a master class on the subject to piano students of Westminster Choir College. With the interest he generated, Public Television made him the musical advisor/consultant of a PBS documentary "Classically Black" in which he has performed piano compositions by composers of African descent.

Alston was recognized in Europe as well by the famed Maestro, Paul Freeman who invited him to record the Arensky Piano Concerto with the Czech National Orchestra. The CD recording, which also included "Etudes for Piano, Op. 74" by Arensky, was released by Centaur Records in 1996.

As a guest artist with the New Jersey Symphony, Alston performed in a special concert in commemoration of the birth of William Grant Still. As a guest artist with the Harlem Chamber Players, Alston performed in two separate concerts: Arthur Foote's *Sarabande and Rigaudon* for Flute, Viola and Piano; Saint-Saens's *Septet* for Trumpet, Piano and Strings; Prokofiev's *Overture* for Clarinet, Piano and Strings; Shostakovich's *Piano Trio No. 2*, in E Minor; and Schumann's *Piano Quintet*.

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Alston is the recipient of several awards: “Award for Excellence” from the New Jersey Education Association; “Community Leaders Fostering Change in Education Award” from the New Jersey Unit of the National Association of Negro Business and Women’s Clubs, Inc.; “Achievement Award” from the National Association of Negro Women; “Musician of the Year” from the National Association of Negro Musicians Inc. , Newark, NJ Chapter; special proclamation from the office of the mayor of the city of East Orange; and honored by the Historical Society of East Orange, NJ Inc.

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## Richard Alston – Reviews

“...Alston’s performance has a beautiful sound, sensitivity and solid technique...”

**-Cinco Dias, Spain**

“...lyricism as well as virtuosity.”

**-Betty Allen, famed NYC Opera mezzo-soprano**

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# Richard Alston – Concerto Repertoire

## CONCERTO REPERTOIRE

Richard Alston, pianist

Concerto in F minor	Arensky
Concerto in D minor	Bach
Choral Fantasy	Beethoven
Rhapsody In Blue	Gershwin*
Concerto in F	Gershwin
Grand Tarantella	Gottschalk*
Concerto in A minor	Grieg
Yamekraw - Negro Rhapsody	James P. Johnson**
Concerto No. 1	Liszt*
Hungarian Fantasy	Liszt*
Concerto No. 2	Rachmaninoff
Concerto in C# minor	Rimsky-Korsakov
Concerto in D minor	Rubinstein
Concerto No. 2	Saint-Saens
Concerto No. 1	Tchaikovsky

**\*AS OF 11/1/2014 I can perform these 4 concertos & compositions for Piano & Orchestra on 24 hours notice**

## PROGRAMMING POSSIBILITIES

- 1. An American Evening for Piano & Orchestra: Gottschalk & Gershwin**
- 2. An Evening of Liszt: Concerto No.1 & Hungarian Fantasy**
- 3. Two Classical/Jazz Rhapsodies: Gershwin & James P. Johnson**

**\*\* I own the conductor's score and all the orchestral parts to "Yamekraw"**

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## Richard Alston – Sample Lecture & Recital Programs

### **(Talk Title) Classically Black: Piano Compositions by Composers of African Descent**

Compositions by Theme

#### *Slave Songs and Negro Spirituals*

“Troubled Water” by Margaret Bonds (1913-1972) – This is a piano transcription of the Negro spiritual “Wade in the Water,” coded with two meanings (for slave owner and slave). It is composed in the 19th century style of the piano transcription that was used by Franz Liszt.

#### *African Americans and Classical Music*

“Adagio in F Minor” by Chevalier de Saint George (1745-1799) – This is a richly expressive work in the tradition of Haydn and Scarlatti.

“Basso Tuba Waltz” by Blind Tom (1849-1908) – Thomas Greene Bethune, known as “Blind Tom” was the first Black concert pianist to gain recognition.

“Valse” by Billy Strayhorn (1915-1967) – This classical piece was composed by Strayhorn when he was only 15. He would later go on collaborate with Duke Ellington and compose great jazz compositions.

“Fantasie Negre” by Florence Price (1887-1953) – Composed in 1929, this is a piano transcription of the spiritual “Sinner Please Don’t Let This Harvest Pass.” It is composed in the 19th century style of the piano transcription that was used by Franz Liszt and dedicated to Price’s student Margaret Bonds.

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## Richard Alston – Sample Lecture & Recital Programs

### **Pianist with The Harlem Chamber Players**

*Program #1: April 2012 – Guest artist, Season finale*

Arthur Foote: Sarabande and Rigaudon for Flute, Viola and Piano

Saint-Saens: Septet for Trumpet, Piano and Strings

*Program #2: September 23, 2012 at 3:00 pm at St. Mary's Episcopal Church,  
Harlem, New York City*

*Guest artist, Season opening concert*

Prokofiev: Overture for Clarinet, Piano and Strings

Shostakovich: Piano Trio No. 2 in E Minor

Schumann: Piano Quintet

### **William Warfield Concert**

*1991 program highlights*

Franz Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6

Richard Strauss: "Morgen", with Marvis Martin, soprano

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## Richard Alston – Video Links

2013 Richard Alston PBS Documentary (broadcast interview with the pianist):  
Concert/Lecture “Classically Black: Piano Compositions by Composers of African Descent” and Master Class footage at Essex County College

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzUyzQ-uLEc>

Additional footage from 2013 Richard Alston PBS documentary, available online but not broadcast:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QMW4a1UsA&feature=share&list=UUSfNHbe8evrvMKVlsoowZeg>

Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6 (Richard Alston, piano)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XB0R0zQUgHI>

Margaret Bonds: Troubled Water (Richard Alston, piano)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvRHkAylKCY>

Gottschalk: The Union (Richard Alston, piano)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lli2DL2oAPE>

Gottschalk: Grand Tarantelle (Richard Alston, piano; with orchestra)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHb\\_o--a3Nw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHb_o--a3Nw)

James P. Johnson: Yamekraw—A Negro Rhapsody (part 1); Richard Alston, piano, with orchestra

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbXyxg1Ssal>

James P. Johnson: Yamekraw—A Negro Rhapsody (part 2); Richard Alston, piano, with orchestra

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq-9ANEssvw>

Andre Crouch: My Tribute (arr. Dino Kartsonakis); Richard Alston, piano

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5G0ix7JtPg>

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## Richard Alston – Video Links

<http://bit.ly/148i> (PBS radio WHYY interview/documentary)

Prof. Richard Alston is the host and producer of "Performing Arts Showcase At Essex County College". This new cable TV show features singers, instrumentalists and actors from the New Jersey/New York metropolitan area. It is broadcasted over the Cablevision Network. You can view the show also on Prof. Alston's Youtube channel at [www.youtube.com/user/rcapno](http://www.youtube.com/user/rcapno)

Richard Alston YouTube channel

<http://www.youtube.com/RCAPNO>

[www.linkedin.com/in/richardcalston](http://www.linkedin.com/in/richardcalston)

<https://www.facebook.com/RichardAlstonConcertPianist?ref=ts&fref=ts>

<http://www.fandalism.com/rcapno#!tab=Interview>

<http://bit.ly/ZjNY29> (radio interview of Alston)

<http://www.richardcalston.com> (website --work in progress)

MATTERS monthly magazine, Maplewood, NJ, article/interview with Richard Alston

(article begins on p. 16)

<http://digital.turn-page.com/i/217446/0>

Matters Magazine

[\*\*Matters Magazine Interview/AFRICLASSICAL POST\*\*](#)

AFRICLASSICAL POST Richard Alston, pianist, featured as 'The Maestro' in

"Matters Magazine" Holiday 2013 issue (December 2013), which can be read

online <http://lnkd.in/dbEvbSE> The article begins on page 16. Copy and paste this

link to read the article. <http://lnkd.in/dbEvbSE>

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