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# Monty Alexander melds jazz, reggae

By Rick Nowlin  
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When pianist Monty Alexander came to the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild's Jazz Hall in 2000, he brought along a rhythm section from his native Jamaica, with the resulting show turning into something of a reggae fest.

This weekend he returns to the Guild with the "Harlem-Kingston Express," bringing two different rhythm sections — one jazz, the other reggae. He plans to have them trade off.

"In a way, it's another edition of that journey," Mr. Alexander says. "I have been enjoying offering music that's both worlds but one world."

After all his years in music, the 66-year-old says he's "still trying to find the right notes."

Mr. Alexander listened to and played all kinds of music in Kingston and came to the United States in the early 1960s as a jazz pianist. He performed at the Crawford Grill in the late 1960s, and with, among others, Ray Brown and Milt Jackson.

Even with those impressive credits, he has never wanted to pigeonhole himself as a jazz player.

When it comes to music, "I'm the same guy loving all of it," Mr. Alexander says. "I want to hear country-western at times. I'm here to put a sledgehammer through" the idea of commit-

## MUSIC PREVIEW

### Monty Alexander: Harlem-Kingston Express

**Where:** Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, North Side.

**When:** 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 2:30 p.m. Sunday.

**Tickets:** \$42.50-\$45.50. 412-322-0800.

ting just to one style — which explains the two different rhythm sections for this weekend's shows.

The jazz group comprises guitarist Yotam Silberstein, who has appeared several times at Pitt's Jazz Seminar; bassist Lorin Cohen; drummer Obed Calvaire; and former Weather Report percussionist Robert Thomas Jr., who was part of that "Yard Movement" ensemble 10 years ago. Joshua Thomas on bass and Santa Davis on drums make up the reggae rhythm section.

Mr. Alexander promises a variety of music for this weekend's shows, including some of his own compositions as well as covers of songs by his late countryman Bob Marley. And he wants the audience to join the party.

"Come help us celebrate 'one love,'" Mr. Alexander says.

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