

Eddie Mendenhall is an exceptional pianist and composer who has led his own group and has performed alongside with “Senator” Eugene Wright, Ray Drummond, Pete Christlieb, Gary Meek, Manhattan Jazz Quintet, Ali Jackson Jr., Tommy Campbell, Calvin Keys, George Young, Peter Erskine, Enrique Iglesias, Peter Yellin, Virginia Mayhew, Paul Contos, Vince Lateano, Scott Steed, Steve Houghton, Mark Sherman, Akira Tana, John Shifflett, Dottie Dodgion, Mike Lent and many more.

Eddie began studying piano when he was four years old, and by the time he was eight he was good enough to play works of Schumann and Beethoven in front of his school. He became hooked on jazz at the age of 13, when he attended the Monterey Jazz Festival. While still in high school, he earned a place in the Monterey Jazz Festival High School All Star Band in 1989 and 1990, under direction of Bill Berry and had the opportunity to accompany Dizzy Gillespie at the main stage of the festival. Soon after, Eddie earned scholarships to the Berklee College of Music in Boston and went on to graduate with a Bachelors degree in Jazz Composition.

For the next 7 years the Tokyo jazz scene kept Eddie busy along with several trips back to the states. He rapidly became one of the busiest pianists in Tokyo. Performances ranged from jazz clubs, major hotels, touring around Japan and embassy parties. Through this extensive time spent as a soloist, he developed his own style, but says that his main influences are Art Tatum, Teddy Wilson, Hank Jones, Hampton Hawes and Bill Evans.

Eddie actively performs on the west coast and resides in the San Francisco Bay Area. Recent projects include a trio with bassist Dan Robbins and drummer Steve Robertson. The trio backed the steel drum jazz legend Othello Molineaux during a California tour. Eddie has performed and recorded with Ray Brown’s “Great Big Band” for the last 9 years, and is featured on the fall 2010 release of Ray’s CD Kayak.

Eddie’s compositions also include works ranging from solo piano to large ensemble. His exceptional writing is featured on Cosine Meets Tangent, Eddie’s debut recording as a leader. The CD was released on February 15, 2011 and features vibraphonist Mark Sherman, drummer Akira Tana, and bassist John Shifflett.

Eddie is active in jazz education - piano clinician with the Monterey Jazz Festival and an instructor for their summer jazz camp, director of Kuumbwa Jazz Center's Honor Band (a select group of talented high schoolers from the central coast), and instructor at the California Jazz Conservatory in Berkeley, CA.