

Dana Cunningham

May the simple light move in and through us, and may music help open the door.

Since the release of her debut album in 2002, solo pianist, Dana Cunningham has used her musical prowess as a personal dais for peace, illustrating her music is not only inspired, but deeply insightful. Music columnist, Steve Ryals said of Dana's first recording, "Dancing at the Gate is one of the finest debuts of this or any year." That her music is fresh and engaging opens the door to Dana being noticed as one of the leading female piano soloists of the 21st century.

Her latest and third release, *The Color of Light*, drew high praise from legendary producer, Will Ackerman, who oversaw the project. He writes, "The Color of Light is simply the most impressive work of composition and performance I've heard from a pianist in twenty years. Dana is a brilliant player. Whatever she plays is invested with emotion...hers is music that communicates."

Currently living and composing in New Hampshire, Dana loves nature and is deeply inspired by her surroundings – the woods, lakes, rivers and breathtaking views of the White Mountains. There, in a place of natural beauty, listening to nature's intricate harmonies and stillness, Dana is able to compose with the intent of capturing the essence of the light, of darkness, of water, and stone. As music is an evolving arrangement of sound and silence, fans often remark on the meaningful space between the notes Dana writes creating music which is evocative and grounding, allowing the imagination to linger a while.

Growing up in rural Texas, Dana began playing piano at age seven, continuing classical study for many years thereafter. While earning a degree in communications from Vanderbilt University she also dedicated herself to studying piano at Blair School of Music. Playing the classics, particularly Chopin, Debussy, and Bach's preludes and fugues stimulated the creative voice for composing she'd discovered years earlier. Her passion for improvisation grew dramatically. Contemporary influences include among others, Joni Mitchell, Arvo Part, Ennio Morricone and Pat Metheny.

The difference between playing notes and making them come alive was an awakening that continues to grow in Dana personally and professionally. "I experienced music as a way of opening the heart. Playing became an act of communion that can have an influence." As her curiosity and insights have grown deeper, she has sought answers to how personal gifts, visions, and passions are discovered and developed in different people. Her quest has taken her on a spiritual journey of traditional and alternative practices. From studies of the healing arts, to seminaries then monasteries, Dana continues to look deeply into this life allowing the music to reflect what she finds.