

PHAROAH SANDERS
YOSHIS
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Pharoah Sanders was born in Little Rock, Ark, in 1940, which would put him about 68 years of age today.

Sanders moved to New York City in 1961 after playing with rhythm and blues bands. He received his nickname "Pharoah" from Sun Ra, with whom Sanders performed. He came to prominence playing with John Coltrane's band starting in 1965, as Coltrane began adopting the avant-garde jazz of Albert Ayler,

Ra and Cecil Taylor. Sanders first performed on Coltrane's *Ascension* (recorded in June 1965), then famously on their dual-tenor recording *Meditations* (recorded in November 1965). After this Sanders joined Coltrane's final quintet, usually performing very lengthy, dissonant solos. Coltrane's later style was strongly influenced by Sanders.

Various critics have hailed him as the "Greatest tenor saxophone player alive" and a few have even gone so far as to state he is the greatest ever to have lived.

We had the pleasure of catching Sanders at Yoshi's East recently and we found the Master still at the top of form. He has moved from pure dissonant walls of sound to a form of jazz that is edgily melodic, and as we would expect a musical artist to evolve with time, this progression is not unexpected.

He also has the disconcerting tendency to wander away from the stage in mid performance, leaving the band, consisting of Nat Green on standup bass, John Farnsworth on drums, and Bill Henderson on piano comping for minutes until he wanders back to closed the song. Farnsworth really earned his laurels that evening with a couple of inspired percussion solos that did a lot more than just fill in the breaks as he playfully ran through a gamut of drumming techniques. Bill Henderson held the entire performance together with great virtuosity as he cued the various musicians through their paces while laying down some pretty impressive lines at the keyboards while Sanders remained off stage.

Nevertheless, it was clear from the crowd reaction that they adored Sanders and found he could do no wrong as they clapped syncopation to the last piece.