



## LOU DONALDSON

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"My first impulse is always to describe Lou Donaldson  
as the greatest alto saxophonist in the world."

-- Will Friedwald, New York Sun

Jazz critics agree that "Sweet Poppa Lou" Donaldson is one of the greatest alto saxophonists of all time. He began his career as a bandleader with Blue Note Records in 1952 and, already at age 25, he had found his sound, though it would continue to sweeten over the years -- earning him his famed nickname -- "Sweet Poppa Lou." He made a series of classic records for Blue Note in the 50's, and takes pride in having showcased many musicians who made their first records as sidemen for him: Horace Silver, Clifford Brown, Grant Green, Blue Mitchell, Donald Byrd, Horace Parlan, and others. After also making some excellent recordings for Cadet and Argo Records in the early 60s, Lou's return to Blue Note in 1967 was marked by one of his most famous recordings, *Alligator Bogaloo*. Lou was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Letters by North Carolina A & T University and a scholarship was established in his name that is awarded to the most gifted jazz musician at North Carolina A & T University each year. He was inducted into the International Jazz Hall of Fame, is an NEA Jazz Master – our nation's highest award bestowed upon jazz artists, and is the recipient of countless other honors and awards for his outstanding contributions to jazz, America's "classical music."

Lou was born in Badin, North Carolina on November 1, 1926 -- the second of 4 children born to father Andrew, a minister and graduate of Livingstone College, and mother, Lucy, graduate of Cheney University who was a teacher, music director and concert pianist who recognized Lou's expert ear for music and introduced him to the clarinet. He matriculated to North Carolina A& T College at age 15 where he received a Bachelor of Science degree and joined the marching band playing clarinet. After being drafted into the US Navy in 1945, Lou played in the Great Lakes Navy Band where, when playing for dances, he would also play the alto saxophone. After going into Chicago several times, he heard of Charlie Parker and, after checking him out, decided that this was the style of playing he would make his own. Lou moved to New York in late 1949 where he attended the Darrow Institute of Music and lived at 127<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue with his new wife, Maker, his longtime sweetheart from Albemarle, North Carolina who remained his wife and business partner for 56 years until her death in 2006. Together they raised two daughters, Lydia and Carol, and called the Bronx their home where Lou still resides, and where he penned his signature tunes like *Blues Walk* that are still acclaimed classics today.

Today, at age 88, Lou continues to play at his very best, entertaining audiences worldwide with spirited performances that are always soulful, thoroughly swinging, and steeped in the blues. Just returning from an extensive European tour, Lou is pleased now to go on delighting fans in the States. Lou's hits on Blue Note Records are still high demand favorites and, today, he is the label's oldest musician from that notable era of jazz.

**LOU DONALDSON**

♪ JAZZ & BLUES ♪

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