



Pharoah Sanders is a noted jazz saxophonist who is recognized as a pioneer of the “free jazz” movement. Collaborations with artists such as Sun Ra and John Coltrane remain his most noted work, but his solo efforts stretch over five decades from 1964 to the present.

Pharoah Sanders was born Ferrell Sanders on October 13, 1940, in Little Rock (Pulaski County). His mother worked as a cook in a school cafeteria, and his father worked for the City of Little Rock. An only child, Sanders began his musical career accompanying church hymns on clarinet. His initial artistic accomplishments were in art, and it was not until he was at Scipio Jones High School in North Little Rock (Pulaski County) that Sanders discovered the tenor saxophone. The band director, Jimmy Cannon, was also a saxophone player and introduced Sanders to jazz. When Cannon left Scipio Jones High School, Sanders, still a student, took over as the band director until a permanent director could be found.

Sanders’s major-label debut would finally come in 1995 when Verve Records released *Message from Home*, followed by *Save Our Children* (1998). But again, Sanders’s disgust with the recording business prompted him to leave the label. In 2000, Sanders released *Spirits* and, in 2003, a live album titled *The Creator Has a Master Plan*.

Sanders lives in the Bay Area and continues to compose music, including ballets, and tours in Europe and the United States. In October 2015, he was named one of the recipients of a 2016 Jazz Masters Award from the National Endowment for the Arts. In March 2021, he released a new album, *Promises*, that was a collaboration with the London Symphony Orchestra.