

Lou Donaldson – Mr. Shing-A-Ling (1967)

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1. *Ode to Billie Joe* (6:33) 2. *Humpback* (5:28) 3. *Shadow of Your Smile* (6:25) 4. *Peepin'* (8:21) 5. *Kid* (10:59) Lou Donaldson - alto saxophone Blue Mitchell - trumpet Jimmy Ponder - guitar Lonnie Smith - organ Idris Muhammad (listed as Leo Morris) – drums

This October 27, 1967, recording was always the best of Lou Donaldson's funky albums. It's just amazing — given the material and the awful cover art — that Blue Note put this back into circulation at all. If for nothing else, Mr. Shing-A-Ling is worth the investment for the ultra-funking "Peepin'" alone (featured for the first time on CD in last year's terrific *The Best of Lou Donaldson Vol. 2*). Composer and organist Lonnie Smith lays down a basic fatback groove and manages to glean a funk anthem that set the foundation for a whole decade worth of Lou Donaldson LPs ("Midnight Creeper" is a mere rewrite of this classic). Among Donaldson's big funk classics — "Midnight Creeper," "Brother Soul" and "The Caterpillar" — "Peepin'" reigns supreme.

The groove sets the tone for its talented principals to really strut their stuff: Blue Mitchell on trumpet, Jimmy Ponder on guitar and Idris Muhammed on drums. The credit goes to Donaldson, a talented original who learned from Bird how to structure clever solos and taught by example how to get his group to deliver one infectious line after another. This group even invests corny, overplayed tunes like "Ode to Billie Joe" and "The Shadow of Your Smile" with foot-tapping good groove. Mr. Shing-A-Ling is a hearty brew of some steaming funk. ---Douglas Payne, allaboutjazz.com

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