



# Sananda Maitreya, Formerly Known as Terence Trent D'Arby: 'If There's Anything I Regret, It's That I Didn't Raise Even More Hell'



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Sananda Maitreya has always gone against the grain. When he made his debut under the name Terence Trent D'Arby in 1987 with the Grammy-winning *Introducing the Hardline According to Terence Trent D'Arby*, his brazen confidence alienated the press and many of his contemporaries. But he didn't care.

Two years later, when his record label refused to support his psychedelic sophomore effort, *Neither Fish Nor Flesh (A Soundtrack of Love, Faith, Hope & Destruction)*, he released it anyway.

And then, when he'd enough of major-label politics interfering with his creative process, he pushed back, moved to Europe, and adopted a new moniker.

After years of keeping a lower profile, Maitreya/D'Arby, now 53, has returned with a new album, [The Rise of the Zugebrian Time Lords](#), and a sound that he dubs "Post Millennium Rock." While it's not as brash as his earlier work, his voice still resonates amid the music, as his passion is just as evident.

In an exclusive email interview with Yahoo Music, Maitreya explains his current musical state, describes why he loves his current home city of Milan, says he has no regrets for taking a stand for his music, and even empathizes with Kanye West – who, like D'Arby, has been labeled egotistical.



*Sananda Maitreya, formerly Terence Trent D'Arby*





**YAHOO MUSIC: Over the last year, you gradually released music from *The Rise of the Zugebrian Time Lords* kind of under the radar. Was this approach a part of your plan, and how does it feel to finally have it released?**

SANANDA MAITREYA: A part of the template of Post Millennium Rock has been to release the music in chapters as part of an ongoing process. And yet it always feels like a great relief to finally finish a project. I put everything that I am into it, so it takes a lot.

**What was most liberating about changing your name and moving to Europe?**

What was most liberating is that the change of name and the move to Milano – Italy helped me stay one step ahead of the old lawyers.

Italy is a great culture for the arts; artists are respected here as professionals and given great affection. What was most enlightening about changing my name was that you can change your name to anything you want BUT you cannot change your Social Security number! Which goes to show what matter most to the system.

**Why do you believe European audiences are different than American audiences?**

Because they are older. They come from much older cultures. Their artistic judgment is based more on quality than profiles.

**What was it about the music business that made you go independent?**

The greater question is whether there was anything about the music business that made me consider suicide. I was caught in a very unfortunate political situation, which made it necessary for me to be mummified. It was politically convenient for me to be entombed. I had lost complete control of that life and too many people had become involved in what it was. It was no longer about me and my vision but about what was best for other bitches. I simply could not have this, so since a cat has nine lives and I was born in the year of the tiger, I sacrificed one and moved on.

**On the [Arsenio Hall Show](#) you talked about being driven to follow your heart when you make music, even if it means risking more**

**substantial commercial success. Have you ever regretted that?**

If there is anything that I regret, it is that I didn't raise even more hell.

**Early in your career, some dubbed you egotistical because you referred to yourself as a "genius." How do you see it now? Today, Kanye West gets similar flak for his comments. What could he learn from your experiences?**

Every man must bear the cross that he recognizes as his own. I was feeling the excitement of my youth as he is feeling the burden of confidence and power. The only way out is through. At the end of the day, the same people throwing stones at him now will agree with him later. He just has to put is time in, like all of us bitches.

PS: SIAMO QUI in Italian means "we are here."

Tell me about your love for Robert Johnson, who you reference a few times on the album, in "[We Can All Go Home](#)" and "[They Went Back in Time and Killed Robert Johnson](#)."

Robert Johnson went down to the crossroads. The Zugebrian Time Lords, who have complete control of time, past, present, and future, understood that Robert Johnson was also the crossroads of Western civilization. They recognized that if they took him out of our timeline, they would own complete control of our sense of time by giving us a false memory. This is why I sing about Robert Johnson, he is the nexus of our Western civilization. They knew that if they took him out, Shakespeare and Dante would disappear and you and I would not be having this conversation.

**"Paradise Postponed Prelude" is beautiful. What was it that struck you about this song?**

Mainly because as you said it is a beautiful piece of music and it made sense for the overall texture of the project for me to do a separate piece for solo piano. Plus, it allowed me to get more of my money's worth from my new piano!

**Why don't you appear in your "[Siamo Qui](#)" video, except for the photographs at the end?**

The great thing about being independent is that I do not



necessarily feel obliged to do everything the same way. This video allowed for more social media participation instead. And the point of Zugebrian philosophy is simple: We are only here when we are not there, because if I am there than I am not here! ■

