



## What's In A Name? From TTD To Sananda Maitreya



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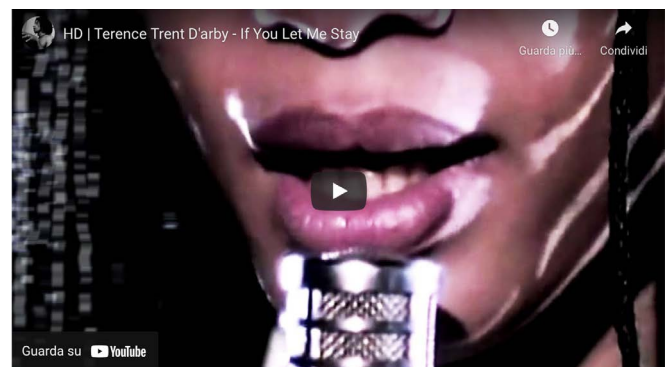
recovered the commercial momentum he had established with his debut.

In 2001, he announced he had had a spiritual awakening, and he legally changed his name to Sananda Maitreya. He has since released several records under this name, operating as an independent artist who caters to a small but devoted audience.

The man currently known as Sananda Francesco Maitreya has gone by several different names in his lifetime. Born March 15, 1962 with the name Terence Trent Howard, he is best known as the brash but sensitive neo-soul man of the late '80s and early '90s, Terence Trent D'Arby. His debut album, 1987's [Introducing the Hardline According to Terence Trent D'Arby](#), was a global sensation, widely praised by critics, and wildly praised by D'Arby himself (famously, he claimed it was the most important record since [The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band](#), an album that at the time was considered the best pop record ever made).

Hardline was pretty great, with four outstanding singles and a number of terrific album cuts. Its followup, [Neither Fish Nor Flesh](#) (1989) was a thorny though ambitious sophomore statement not as easily embraced by radio, and was consequently ignored by most record buyers. Two more albums appeared over the next six years, each with plenty to recommend them, but D'Arby never

If pressed to explain D'Arby/Maitreya's art in just five songs, these are the ones we'd pick:



**"If You Let Me Stay":** The very first thing most listeners heard from D'Arby is this sweeping mid-tempo soul tune full of longing and pleading - an exquisite debut single and a harbinger of a great talent and solid first album.



**“Wishing Well”**: A skittering funk tune, heavy on the drums and low-end keyboards in the verses and chorus, light and melodic after the chorus, as if to set up the listener to get whalloped again when the whole thing comes back around. D’Arby even chuckles mid-way through the second verse, like he knows he’s got you and you’re not letting go - you can’t do it. You’ve got to hear how the thing ends. Probably the coolest song to hit No. 1 in 1988; there was definitely nothing else that sounded like it.



**“Attracted to You”**: Stuck in the middle of the tablas and water harps and orchestrated psychedelic mishmash of *Neither Fish Nor Flesh* is this total jam - James Brown by way of Prince, filtered through the speakers of a bombed-out boombox in the corner of the coolest party you’d ever been invited to. It might be D’Arby’s last great pure funk tune, and it’s a killer.



**“Holding On to You”**: “Sign Your Name” got everyone’s attention when released as a single in ‘88, because it was a great pop-soul ballad. Better still is this towering thing, released by D’Arby on his 1995 [Vibrator](#) album. There’s little pop to it – it’s all soul, all testifying, all heart and sweat and feel. “They say that all poets must have an unrequited love,” he sings, knowing that unrequited love is like gravity; it keeps you grounded when you’d expected to soar. Every once in a while, though, someone soars anyway. This is one of those moments.



**“In America”**: This single dropped in February 2021, and on it, Maitreya laments the many ways American society disappoints, if not outright betrays, people of color. “Where’s the land I used to understand?” he asks, against a blippy bed of synthesizers. The song’s presence is unexpected and entirely welcome; may it mark an extended return for a voice listeners love and might well need. ■