

Throwback: D'Influence-Simmer Down



[youtube]ZJETrC8zVVA[/youtube]

D'Influence was a funk/soul band from the UK comprised of Sarah Anne Webb, Kwame Kwaten, Ed Baden-Powell and Steve Marston. They released four albums between '92 and '02. The band was formed in '91 when keyboard player Kwame Kwaten used session saxophone player Steve Marston for a date with his band Rebekkah. They would soon recruit Webb, Ed Baden Powell and Ned Bigham to make D'Influence. When they had no luck securing a deal they recorded ["I'm The One"](#) independently. The record was sold out of their van and DJ Tim Westwood became the first person to play their music on Capitol Radio. A deal with Acid Jazz Records soon followed but when Sylvia Rhone heard "I'm The One" she quickly signed them to a contract with East West/Atlantic. *Good 4 We* came out in '92 and proved to be a carrier of hefty soul that got them immediately recognized by the British press and the judges of the Mercury Music Prize awards. ["Journey"](#) and ["No Illusions"](#) were two paramount songs from the completely captivating tracklist. Several American artists booked them as the opening act to their shows

including Michael Jackson, Prince, En Vogue, Naughty By Nature and James Brown. Their success as a live band garnered them production and remix work for Tom Jones, Seal, Mick Jagger, Beverley Knight and Jay-Z. *Prayer 4 Unity* was their second critically acclaimed album on East West and "Simmer Down" comes from that set. Maurice White of Earth, Wind & Fire and Linton Kwesi Johnson both worked on *Prayer*. During this time period Kwaten discovered teenage singer Shola Ama and D'Influence would produce her first album *Much Love* that sold a million copies and earned them mainstream recognition as producers. *London* was their third album and it was released in '97. "[Hypnotize](#)" and "[Rock With You](#)" gave them their biggest chart success and the album itself saw them expanding their sound with bits of salsa and gospel. Kwaten also founded the Urban Music Seminar in '97 making it the largest of its kind in Europe. *D'Influence Presents D-Vas* was their final output as band in '02. Webb left the group and her vocals are heard only on "Show Me Love." Marsha Ambrosius co-wrote two songs for the mostly covers project that includes a worthy remake of Gladys Knight & The Pips' "[Taste Of Bitter Love.](#)" In 2006 Kwaten started working as a manager for ATC Management in charge of the careers of British artists Rumer and Master Shortie. Steve Marston passed of cancer in December of 2010. D'Influence never achieved the fame of Soul II Soul, The Brand New Heavies or Jamiroquai but their work was integral to the development of British soul music and has left lasting impression on R&B fans around the world.