

Throwback: Terence Trent D'Arby-Wishing Well



Terence Trent D'Arby's "Wishing Well" is how most people remember seeing and hearing him for the first time in 1987. D'Arby had grit and pure soul in his voice that made him one of Otis Redding's and Sam Cooke's musical heirs. He still had much of his boxer physique from his days in Florida when he won the Golden Gloves lightweight championship. His stature was something he had in common with James Brown who boxed as a teenager. D'Arby danced like Brown and wore a suit like him in his video for "Wishing Well." But D'Arby's dreadlocks were a big departure from the straightened hair Brown wore and Prince who he was compared to a lot in the media. D'Arby and Tracy Chapman were the only mainstream Black singers to wear their hair in locks. Those things made him one of the most unique

artists of the '80s and early '90s. The combination of '60s soul, cool melody, and hair that was associated with reggae music carved out a path for the neo-soul style that would emerge in the '90s from people like Meshell Ndegeocello and Erykah Badu.

“Wishing Well” heated up the demand for D’Arby and when his debut album *Introducing The Hardline According To Terence Trent D’Arby* was released in July it sold one million copies within three days. The video for “Wishing Well” was played heavily on MTV and the song would eventually hit number one on the Billboard Hot 100. He kept the attention on himself by giving interviews and saying things like his album was the most important since The Beatles’ *Sargeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*. D’Arby was tremendously talented and played percussion, keyboards, and the saxophone on his album. Critics and fans agreed that his music was some of the best of the decade. The album’s success earned him the Grammy for Best R&B Vocal Performance Male, a nomination for Best New Artist, a Soul Train nomination for Best New Artist, and a BRIT Award for International Breakthrough Act.

In 2001, D’Arby changed his name to Sananda Maitreya after releasing five albums as Terence Trent D’Arby. He has released eight albums as Maitreya. In 2023, he released the documentary and live album *Welcome to the MadHouse: The Costa Rica Sessions*. New generations are being introduced to D’Arby and “Wishing Well” thanks to placements like the video game *Grand Theft Auto: Episodes from Liberty City*’s fictional radio station *Vice City FM*.

Throwback: Terence Trent D'Arby-Sign Your Name



[youtube id="3YmAGxc95QM"] When Terence Trent D'Arby's *Introducing The Hardline According To Terence Trent D'Arby* was released in 1987 it was surrounded with a cloud of intriguing hype. D'Arby said his album was the most important since The Beatles' Sargeant Pepper's record and critics compared him to Prince, Michael Jackson and Sam Cooke. A million copies of *The Hardline* sold internationally within three days and D'Arby's high-energy performances reminded critics of James Brown. "Sign Your Name" did well chart-wise in the UK but it took longer for *The Hardline* to gain full recognition in the United States. The song's video debuted in January of 1988 and "Sign Your Name" became the one sacred artifact that has carried his

old name to future generations. D'Arby's first album won the Grammy for Best Male R&B Performance and the BRIT Award for International Breakthrough Act. He received Grammy and Soul Train Award nominations for Best New Artist.

D'Arby released four albums before changing his name to [Sananda Maitreya](#) in 2001. He said he had a series of dreams in 1995 that convinced him of the death of D'Arby and the need for a new identity. The name change was followed by a move to Germany and the launching of his Treehouse Pub record label. As Maitreya, he has released eight albums and continues to tour outside of the United States.