



**HUFFPOST**

## Sananda Maitreya Talks Music, Life, and Spirituality

[Luka Neskovic](#)

10/06/2013 12:35 EDT | Updated 01/23/2014 06:58 EST

Sananda Maitreya, an internationally renowned artist, AKA Terence Trent D'Arby first hit it big with hit singles like "Wishing Well" and "Sign Your Name". His debut album *Introducing the Hardline According To Terence Trent D'Arby* (1987) sold over a million copies in its first three days of release and over 12 million copies worldwide, and won him a Grammy Award in 1988, for Best R&B Vocal Performance, Male. Those and many other achievements during his longtime career made him a legend, and one of the most recognizable music performers of the 80s. He changed his name to Sananda Maitreya in 1995, at the age of 33, after a series of dreams.

We spoke recently about his latest project, music in general, life, spirituality, family life and some of his famous colleagues. His latest album, *Return to Zooathalon* was released last March.

**LN: Where is Zooathalon located?**

SM: Geographically, Zooathalon inhabits the space in your mind between the triangular configuration of Archetypes/Imagination, Doubt, and eye floaters, those skinny fractal shaped things that float across your eye like ghosts and can never be stilled by the eye. They also act as military bases for the ZUGEBRIAN TIME LORDS ©, but that's another story, for a later time.

**LN: What do you consider under a "Post Millennium Rock"?**

SM: Post Millennium Rock is an excuse to take all of my influences and experiences, merged with passion and imagination, and turn it into its own permission to exist as it is and is inspired to be, and not as might be required

otherwise for political or corporate expedience. It means that I get to be a composer without prejudice, nor portfolio. And I am not obliged to consider ANY outcome but the mood and direction that the muses and the moment wish to take the music in. I am greatly indebted to music, not to any particular genre or categories which can serve to inhibit the sensibility of the music and lessen the potential magic. Post Millenium Rock is my opportunity to attempt to give back to the music, even a fraction of the life and spirit that she has given to me. and it helps me pay my bills! Post Millenium Rock is not a profile based music. And, as with any living thing, it is still very much in the process of ongoing definition and discovery. And since we live in the age of branding, better to beat the bastards back and brand yourself first! Create your own brand, and then, back it up with the work.

**LN: Is there any new act on a music scene that you see as inspiring?**

SM: In truth, I tend to remain quite isolated, by design, from most of what goes on anywhere. I am always excited by anything aiming or reaching for its own expression and right to proclaim itself. And I am most often moved, not necessarily by a new artist's talent, but by my knowledge of how much shit and reprogramming they are going to have to survive, if even any of their intent is original and not to be another clone. What excites me most is the opportunity artists now have to continually challenge and reinvent themselves, each, naturally, in their own unique way, though the greater challenge is the suffocating quicksand of conformity. And if life and the business has taught me anything it is this; You are an 'artist' when you are paying for it, when others are paying, you are just an 'act'.

**LN: I love your performance of "Who's Loving You" that Smokey Robinson wrote, but became popular because of Michael Jackson. Did you ever meet Michael? How do you see him as artist, and his place in music history?**

SM: As much as any other cause or excuse, Master Michael used his tremendous influence and control of the Beatles' catalog to ensure that my way was compromised. I can honestly stand before God at Judgment and testify that the great Master Jackson was a bona fide, life changing 'pain in my ass', the 800 pound Gorilla in the room never mentioned but always felt, if not seen. I have always found the grand irony in the fact that the Beatles, whose songs opened and changed my



life, would be the same group used in the hands of my great nemesis, to, in effect, kill the same life that those songs had first given life to. Isn't Irony a rather witty and cold hearted bitch?

He hated me. And yet, circumstances being as we find them, none of that made him any less a Hero to me for all that he had already done to inspire my youth, and coming together as a servant of the music. In many respects, it can be said that he helped to steal my life. And yet, because he did, he may have also helped to prolong it, preserve it and place me onto another plane of perspective wherein I might dwell and succeed, in this wonderful new life, that he may well be a viable part of having to help establish. I always felt, and still, that had he not used his power to crush my scene and its influence, and had other powerful forces not concurred, my competition might have made him, at that stage of his life, an even greater artist than the genius that he already was.

I would have challenged him, kept my foot in his ass, and dared and invited him to challenge me, all in the interest of the best that we could have been and the benefit it might have been to the industry and its fans and employees. History will show that despite his spectacular status well earned and deserved, avoiding and helping to nullify the fact of my existence did neither of us any great favors. Bear in mind that Sony was scared shitless of myself and Master Jackson being close. Then again, so was the F.B.I. & the C.I.A. Particularly African American talent is watched and scrutinized carefully that they not put their minds together towards anything not on the system's agenda, lest they inspire greater discussion and participation in the body politic among those regarded as their "People".

Being a fatal nemesis aside, his place in the music Pantheon is unquestioned. He was truly, though a part of a tradition, one of a kind, and never to be seen again. And neither do we deserve to see his kind again. We are by and large a bunch of bastards, and use our geniuses as forms of pagan sacrifice. Especially once they become worth more dead than alive. In the final analysis, who was I to have expected better treatment from him? Heroes at war is the history of heaven.

***LN: You changed your name after a series of dreams. I will not ask you for the contest because you described that many times, but do you see that as a major life change for yourself?***

SM: Not only was it a major life change, but a very

necessary one. that life had grinded to a complete halt and none of its balloons would fly for me anymore, so I took the hint, and got the hell out! The room was on fire and I wasn't going to stick around and count the silverware, I only had just enough time to grab the cat, kick Grandma awake, and get the hell out. I no longer felt any sense of ownership nor connection to the life, that the series of dreams I had, suggested that I find the faith to leave. By the time of the dreams, which were themselves the answer to prayers and meditations, I was relieved to have been given confirmation that someone, somewhere, felt and understood my pain. Though worse than the pain, the confusion and the loss of identity, as though my initial programming had hit a wall, and couldn't get over it. I kept hearing a name that eventually I accepted as my new life and it has been an amazing ride ever since! And yes, there is a difference between the two psyches, since it was only a matter of one damaged psyche being replaced. Much as you would keep the bed, but change the sheets. There is something in God's grace that is real, even if I will never understand it! Bear in mind that the name Sananda Maitreya was actually my second choice. My first choice, Donny Osmond, was already registered.

***LN: What makes Sananda different from your past identity?***

SM: His balls and chin hang a little lower. The answer is time & circumstance. In severe crisis, I asked for a new spirit and in time, received one. And it is naïve for ANY of us to believe that we do not die quite a few times in this life before we die. There are many deaths on the way to life! I am inhabiting the building, residence of a former tenant and helping to finish the work left to be done. And time is proving to many of us, that identity is specious and negotiable. We are mainly numbers after all.

***LN: When you look at those days (before your "transformation") what do you see?***

SM: I do not look into those days. I am not, nor have I ever been, the type to look behind, UNLESS of course, it involves p\*\*\*y. If I were to look back and see anything, it would be gratitude that he got wise, and got the hell out of dodge! And created for himself, the space he wished to make his contribution from. That scene wasn't right for him. And looking back too much is how we crystallize into old age and bitterness. And to judge anything that you were confronted with in your youth, is a losers game, one you will never win.



**LN: Do you believe that all your ideas and music you made came from a higher source?**

SM: In essence I believe that all good things that are, come from a higher source.

**LN: Would you characterize yourself as a spiritual or a religious person?**

SM: Spiritual yes, inasmuch as I can see the interconnectedness with spirit with all other aspects of our identity. But am I more spiritual than emotional, instinctive, intellectual, and physical? Don't know, the jury is still out and I still have a life ahead of me to help me figure it out. As far as my religion, music is my religion. Maintaining my consciousness towards its own levels, aspirations and understanding is my religion. Loving my wife and family is a religion, as is honoring my commitment to communicating at my highest, purest, most honest level, as it may encourage others in finding the courage to be who they are and to cut the bull\*hit that we are given swords to fight. My relationship with my understanding of God, is not a religion, but a personal experience beyond category.

**LN: What do you consider as your biggest success?**

SM: I would honestly consider my biggest success to have been smart enough to have chosen a life with my wife, Francesca Francone Maitreya. She is not only a great supporter of my work and ideas, but a wonderful mother and a very smart person to be engaged by. I KNEW that I could accomplish all the rest. But I could only dream to have met a woman as vital to my heart and interests as my wife, now of over ten years! We have two sons, Francesco Mingus and Federico Elvis, who prove that life's successes, come in many wonderful and enduring forms. The rest is just metal with your name on it, rusting on a shelf, sat next to books, long ago discarded to cobwebs and allergens. At the end of the day, what is not family, or paying for family is bullshit. I also consider having survived the grave tragedy that was my previous life assignment to have been nothing short of miraculous. I am more than certain that I were not meant to have survived to this fair point. What it taught me, was to avoid games whose rules you can't create. If you cannot bend it to your will, then stab it in the back and walk away while you watch it bleed!

**LN: How do you see your future?**

SM: Right now honey, I see my future through Roberto Cavalli lenses. I have a pair for when I want to gaze boldly into my future like a hawk, and another pair when I just want to quietly see if I am wearing the right socks. And I am trying to get him to make me a pair to see if the Miami Dolphins will cover the spread. The great gift of being a father to young sons is that you know what your future is, and how it will begin each day. Usually with a boy, eager to face the new morning, jumping on your balls with his elbows or feet, and sending your jewels into your throat. Other than that, the future is as speculative as the past. And there is less need for me to know my future, when I am clear about what it is that I need to do NOW. All I know is, if I keep going, the work will get done. And the good news is that; there is always work to do!

Visit Sananda's official website at [www.Sananda.org](http://www.Sananda.org)