



## New name, same smoky soul singer



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By Dan DeLuca  
*Inquirer Music Critic*

Terence Trent D'Arby may not know who he is, but he sure knows what he's doing.

On Wednesday the long-missing soul singer, now based in Florence, Italy, was at the Trocadero to roll out not only a new CD, but a new name. At some point during his time in record-label purgatory, which began after the 1995 release TTD's *Vibrator*, D'Arby says he had a dream in which an angel addressed him as Sananda Maitreya.

Thus, his album, Terence Trent D'Arby's *Wild Card!*, which makes its U.S. debut on Sananda Records on Tuesday, lists not D'Arby but Maitreya as producer, arranger and songwriter. (Maitreya is also credited with playing guitar, banjo, sitar, accordion and lots of other things.) And at the Troc, he led his Euro band - Sicilian rhythm section, Portuguese back-up singers - in front of a banner that advertised [www.sanandamaitreya.com](http://www.sanandamaitreya.com) as the online home of Terence Trent D'Arby.

But never mind the identity crisis. It's been a long time since D'Arby - whose multi-million-selling *Introducing the Hard Line* According to Terence Trent D'Arby came out in 1987 - was a big deal. The still lithe, dreadlocked and pretty multi-instrumentalist, now 41, acknowledged as much to a small crowd of rabid fans when he introduced his biggest hit, "Sign Your Name," as "a song from your childhood."

Like D'Arby's three sprawling opuses since *Hardline*, *Wildcard!* isn't likely to reach a mass audience. And that's too bad, because it just may be his best album.

At the Troc, he showed off the set's dazzling range, from the sweeping old-school soul of "O Divina" and gorgeous balladry of "What Shall I Do?" to the trippy self-help of "The Inner Scream" and futuristic funk of "Designated Fool" and "SRR-636."

His voice remains a remarkable instrument. D'Arby/Maitreya possesses an elastic Al Green falsetto ideal for the gentle wooing of "Delicate" (in which he moved in super-tight jeans like a bellydancing ballerina), but he can instantly switch to an Otis Redding rasp suitable for psychedelic rock screamers such as "She Kissed Me" and "Supermodel Sandwich."

Like that other astonishingly talented name-changing artist, Prince, D'Arby/Maitreya seems to exist in his own universe. But at the Troc, he worked hard to connect and made it clear to his audience that, no matter what they choose to call him, he's still deserving of their devotion.

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Contact music critic Dan DeLuca at 215-854-5628 or [ddeluca@phillynews.com](mailto:ddeluca@phillynews.com).