

# A Zen master who could let his garters down

The artist formerly known as Terence Trent D'Arby remembers the artist for ever known as Prince

By Sananda Maitreya

**H**is death was mind-blowing. Then again, he was always mind-blowing and he always had a grand sense of drama.

He left us too soon. Though he was always too soon, as masters of great timing are.

As a young blade aeons ago, I once had the stoned hubris to ask the esteemed journalist Steve Sutherland – who had, in a review, proclaimed Prince God: “What does that leave for me?” It was a sin for which he never quite forgave me. I was still rather young, dumb and full of Cumberland.

The first time I met Prince I planted a nice wet kiss right on his forehead. There was no mouth kissing! I am a conventional, boring heterosexual. What else was I to do? I was a star, and protocol required that I did not gush or drool. But he was a great master and a mentor who I always made a point of deferring to – until maturity bid me to go my own way. His job was to awaken the troops, those of us knighted by destiny to serve in the culture wars that forever engage us.

And everywhere he went, he turned it into a piece of his world. A space worthy enough to contain him, as befits a grand strategist. He demanded a lot but gave more.

It is inconceivable to imagine President Obama in a world that Prince – along with Michael Jackson, also born in the magical year of 1958 – did not help create the possibility for.

He was using emojis and text lingo years before it even became an official lingua franca. This dude got away with being just a symbol for almost a decade, during which

time the irony dripped like candle wax. We were played like a fiddle!

He was, when he wanted to be, insanely funny in the way that Zen masters can be when they let their garters down. He could both read minds and place thoughts, like the ancient eastern yogis. And if you were full of shit, you would be very uncomfortable around him. In fact, he once berated me for not responding to a telepathic message he sent: I did receive it but I told him that I was busy sending a message to Michael Jackson.

He had little tolerance for posers, though nobody threw as hard a shape as he. He was a true diva, one who had earned the right.

**I planted a nice, wet kiss right on his forehead. What else was I to do?**

He was a Buddha of culture and a font of wisdom, though he endured at times harsher judgements than was healthy for his soul to bear. His great weakness was in not accepting his weakness, and he would punish himself for this.

We did a record together in the early Nineties but fell out because of a dispute over my use of an eleventh chord. The last time he reached out to me, well after I had relocated to Milano, I brushed him off. I was annoyed about some lame shit at the time and didn't want him getting into my head with any of his hypnotic logic.

After the birth of my second son, I had transformed enough to want to introduce

him to his young “nephews”, knowing that, in spirit, he would see my sons as also his own. I also knew that he would have been proud of me for having gotten my family act together, as much as for anything musically that I might have done to warrant his attention.

And I knew that he and my missus, Francesca, would get along like a house on fire.

Do I feel guilty for having missed out on our last communication? No.

Steve Sutherland was right. Prince is God. Or at least he is the man sitting next to him.

And whether he is living or dead, or hovering in the various states in between, I am always in communication with him. He did not go anywhere: he just wised up finally, sensibly, and left us trifling bitches behind.

His body belongs to the earth, but his mind belongs to us all. The awesome force of his will created new worlds. It feels very much as if one of my own lifetimes has moved on and it is profoundly and unexpectedly moving.

A mirror to my soul is gone. I loved him. All of his bitches loved him! May he rest in the peace he has earned.

Over 25 years ago, he complained to me that as far as the industry was concerned, we only existed as models to milk the young white kids, and that was pretty much the extent of our worth. I agree – but I also feel that was our duty and the reason we are chosen for service.

As soon as he died, the very next article I read about him asked if now Justin Bieber was the world's greatest performer. With no disrespect at all to young Master Justin, it was an irony I found too rich for my blood. ●



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“A Buddha of culture and a font of wisdom”: Prince, as remembered by Sananda Maitreya