

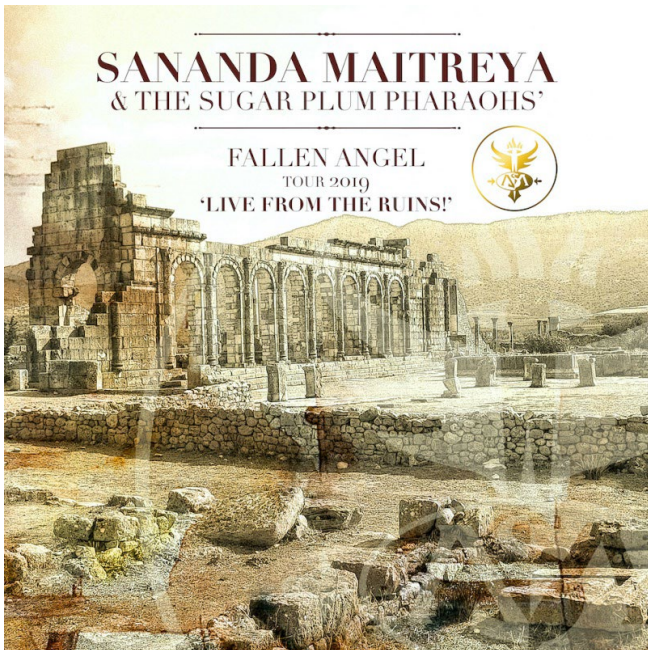


# ALBUMISM™

## Sananda Maitreya’s Heart & Soul in Fine, Flourishing Form on ‘Fallen Angel Tour 2019 – Live From The Ruins!’ Album Review



December 15, 2019



I’ve been a fan of his soulful voice, funk leanings, and mastery of composition and exploration of sound and style ever since his debut album [Introducing The Hardline According To Terence Trent D’Arby](#) arrived in 1987. With a mid-career name change and rebirth as Sananda Maitreya in 2001, album after album continued to fuel my passion to see him live. Alas, he’s still on my wish list.

So as I wait for that opportunity to arise, I was delighted to discover that he has released a live album containing nearly two dozen songs winding their way through both of his musical incarnations. Recorded during his recent Spring and Summer tour with special performances throughout Italy, *Fallen Angel Tour 2019 – Live From The Ruins!* is a refreshing take on the live album process.

By [Andy Healy](#)

### Sananda Maitreya & The Sugar Plum Pharaohs *Fallen Angel Tour 2019 – Live From The Ruins!*

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Who do *you* most want to see live?

This is a question I often ask my friends when talk invariably gets round to music. Having seen over 300 live shows, I’ve been fortunate enough to see the majority of my faves, several times over in some cases. I’ve seen Jackson, Prince, Bowie, McCartney, Radiohead, the Chili Peppers, Arcade Fire, Clinton, Monáe, U2, Coldplay, and on and on the list goes, including some I will reluctantly confess to. But there’s always a handful on my yet-to-see list—CHVRCHES, Of Monsters & Men, Anderson .Paak, Vampire Weekend, Jill Scott. But consistently topping that list (as well as my most underrated artist list) is [Sananda Maitreya](#).



As many Albumism readers know, our list of the 50 Greatest Live Albums of All Time contains a few albums that are “mostly” live, as is the more than common norm for most in-concert releases. From fixing a bum note here or there, to splicing two nights’ performances into one track, it seems to be the norm to create an aural experience that lives up to (and makes up for) the full sensory immersion of a live show. They’re forgivable manipulations, particularly when accompanied by dazzling performances.



And whilst *Live From The Ruins* is curated from several nights' performances, it keeps those moments intact. The rawness still present, visceral to experience, the sweat still dripping onto the mic. And it's this rawness, this refusing to dash back into the studio to overly polish, that gives the album a sense of authenticity and urgency. The occasional strain in a vocal here or there doesn't showcase imperfection, but rather reveals the soul of the artist.

With a setlist drawing from many of the twelve albums in his catalogue, the performances are pure and unfiltered. Backed by The Sugar Plum Pharaohs, his rock band composed of Luca Pedroni on guitar, Luca Fraula on keyboards, Francesca Morandi on bass, Marco Mengoni on drums and backing vocals, and Beatrice Baldaccini on backing vocals, Maitreya treats us to his musical virtuosity.



Opening with the rocking "Mid Life Crisis Blues" from his most recent studio recording [PROMETHEUS & PANDORA](#) (2017), he takes us through the multicolored hues of his musical palette. He weaves through the trippy funk of "Supermodel Sandwich" and "Superstar" to the grooving rock of "It Ain't Been Easy" to the soft soul of "Delicate" and on to the jaunty soul of "The Ballad of Lonesome Rhodes" and "It's Been A Long Time."

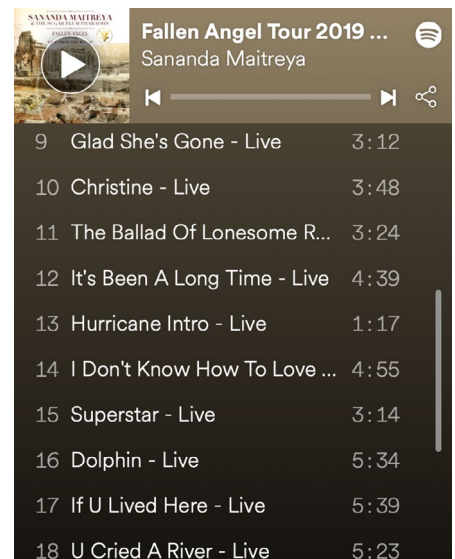
In addition to the tight backing of The Sugar Plum Pharaohs, several songs are augmented by the Orchestra Ritmico Sinfonica which stretches the sonics to a blissful blend of pop rock symphonics. This is best displayed on the sweeping bombast of "O Divina."

For all the rock swagger and funk fervor, the moments on the album that really cut through find Maitreya alone with a simple piano and vocal recalling of "Let Her Down Easy" and the soothing balladry of "Holding Onto You."



Although there's no easy hit recall of "Wishing Well" or "If You Let Me Stay" or "To Know Someone Deeply Is To Know Someone Softly," Maitreya does tip his hat on "She Kissed Me" and the sweet set closer "Sign Your Name" that still evokes chills.

Is it my dream setlist that spans his career? No, for that you should check out the [Portrait of An Artist](#) playlist that I previously curated. But *Live From The Ruins* does show an artist still delivering his all every time he steps behind the mic. And whilst I still wish to one day see a two-part show—the first set being TTD tracks and the second his evolution into Maitreya material—*Live From The Ruins* does the next best thing with a selection of tracks obviously close to the artist's heart and delivered with a whole lot of soul.



**Notable Tracks:** "Let Her down Easy" | "O Davina" | "Superstar" | "Sign Your Name" ■