



Sananda Maitreya: His Former Name, Introducing The Hardline, Boxing, Milan, New Music and More...



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Exclusive Interview by Karen Beishuizen

Photos by Manuel Scrima for TreeHouse Publishing

(Publisher Note: We wish Sananda a Happy 60th birthday today.)

The name Sananda Maitreya might not ring a bell but when I say Terence Trent D'Arby, most of you will know who I'm talking about. His 1987 debut album "Introducing the Hardline" released 4 hits: Wishing Well, If You Let Me Stay, Sign Your Name and Dance Little Sister. So, what happened to him? Sananda lives in Milan now and still makes great music.

KB: In July 1987 your debut album Introducing The Hardline was released which spend 9 weeks on number 1 in the UK Charts: Did you ever expect your first album to be such a global success?

Yes, I did! Of course, I never knew what form it would take exactly but trusted that my lifelong dream to be a 'Rockstar' would come true. I had a great teacher who went by the name of 'Light' who always emphasized that 'If you cannot see it, you cannot have it'. And dreams that are Visualized & Seen are those dreams that we shall live & watch come true. I always knew that I was born to this life & never doubted it.

KB: The album produced 4 Smash Hit Singles: How challenging is it to top a debut album that was such a hit?

The truth is, it was much less of a challenge for me than it was for the record company. In fact, they wanted to release a 5th single but my common sense wouldn't allow it. I only ever feel the pressure that my own artistic ambition places upon me. Other people's ambition is not a viable part of my imagination. I am not a greedy man. 4 worldwide hits were more than enough.

KB: You have been a successful boxer in your youth, what did Boxing teach you and what do you cherish

of these moments?

Boxing, like the military, proved to me the truth of my fighting, warrior spirit. And it reinforced the idea that Discipline & Vision are necessary to any ambition. Boxing gave me a new sense of who I was beyond the programming & fear of my youth & reminded me that one of the greatest strengths we humans have, is the ability to stand up for ourselves. I am by nature a fighter & it has helped me tremendously throughout my life fighting against dogma & other people's idea of who they feel most comfortable that I should be to please them.

KB: In 2001 you changed your name legally into Sananda Maitreya declaring your former name dead. What happened that made you take such a drastic step?

What happened was waking up to realize that I had been a product & a slave & the name I was born with had become the property of corporations. And once that name became spiritually dead to me, I was given dream instruction by the angels to move on, & that if I trusted these instructions, I would experience a new life as well as a new spirit. Which all came true. I am now & have been for decades now in full and complete control of my life as every soul should have the great blessing to be. I am now only a slave to my muse, which is as it should be for an artist.

KB: I looked it up: Sananda means possessed of Happiness and Maitreya means Kind and Loving: That is a wonderful name to choose!

Thank You Karen but to me, 'Sananda' means: Fuck That & 'Maitreya' means: Get out of my way or I will run your ass over!

KB: You live in Milan now. Beautiful city! Why Italy?

Italy is renowned for its love of Beauty, Art, Music, Great Food & Living in the moment. It has traditionally been a great haven for artists & has a very high regard for them, whether they are



making a corporation money or not. They respect & regard the life & commitment of a true artist & they have great style & an appreciation for the art of charm. I feel at home here & Milan is historically supportive of sponsoring art & style. It's one of the 'Perfume Bottle' towns of the western civilization & my wife Francesca is a Milanese, as are our 2 sons. Plus, Italians have great passion, so they understand me.

KB: You released 12 studio albums and 4 Live albums so far: Did you write, compose, and produce all of them? How does an album come together, what is your creative process?

I count mainly what projects I have personally released & my next project will be Project number 13, which I am quite excited to begin later this year. Except for the maiden project, 'Hardline', which was brilliantly produced by the great Martyn Ware. After which I took possession of every subsequent release. Some of which have been feted for their production. I am always in the process of creating & learned everything I could from having worked with Martyn Ware. I have also mainly been the only musician on most of them, especially all my 'Post Millennium Rock' catalog.

KB: In 2007, 3 of your songs featured in Judd Apatow's movie "Knocked up": How did this happen? Did Judd ask you?

Working with master Apatow was also a wonderful opportunity for me, not to mention I am generally a fan of his films & productions. As the publisher & writer of my work, yes, he did have to get my approval, which I was more than happy to acquiesce to. I am a major fan of films! And one can never have enough comedy in one's life.

KB: In March 2021 your album Pandora's PlayHouse was released with 3 collaborations and I noticed that there is 1 instrumental song called Prince: A tribute to your friendship with him?

'Pandora's PlayHouse' has by the grace of spirit been very successful for my 'TreeHouse' Publishing company, one of my most successful to date & I'm very grateful for the worldwide response. I know how lucky I am to have had such an international presence & fan base for over 35 years & never take it for granted. Yes, that song was a tribute to an artist for whom I retain Immense Love, Regard & Respect & in fact as I write this on February 24, 2022, I had a dream of speaking to him on the phone just last night! We were very close & he was like both a mentor AND a big brother for me. He was 4 years older than I but much more experienced in the ways of life.

KB: This year Calvin Harris used one of your songs for his love Regenerator track "Lonely": How did this

happen?

Maestro Calvin reached out to me & asked for the collaboration, which I was more than pleased to consider. It was an honor to have been asked by him. It is awesome to be my age (60 on March 15, 2022) & be asked to work with these young superstars. Along of course with Riva Starr. To remain open is a great creative instinct to have.

KB: You worked together with Director Manuel Scrima on the video of your song "Pie". Congratulations as you got several awards for this video (New York Movie Awards, Sound and Vision International Film & Technology Festival, Hollywood Gold award): What is the song about and what do you mean by "I want my pie in the sky"?

Yes, working with Manuel Scrima was a good stroke of fortune for me & he deserves as much of the credit as he has rightfully received. I usually come up with the initial idea for all my videos, then pass it on for the director to take where they are inspired to go with it. When I was a boy, the phrase 'Pie in the sky' was something that implied that religion & politics inspired us to look beyond our earthly needs & instead wait until we got to Heaven for our 'Great Reward'. This encouraged a passive acceptance of a life that was shit & excused our societies of their obligation to their less fortunate. So, the sentiment expressed in the song is "I want my dessert now!" And not when I fucking die. For why should I simply assume that death is any less stingy than life can be?

KB: What are you up to currently? You have something new lined up?

Madame Karen, I always have something new lined up! Sometimes my issue is which project idea to surrender my attentions to, because as the late Great philosopher 'J. Krishnamurti' suggests, 'Where attention goes, energy flows'. My next official Sananda Maitreya project will be my lucky 13th & will be called: 'Project 13- Songs from the Middle Finger'. And I aim to make it my best so far. In honor of the number 13 (my favorite 2-digit number), it will have only 13 songs. Precisely because we're taught to fear & avoid the number 13 is exactly why I adore it as an old reliable & faithful friend.

KB: You are a multi-instrumentalist: Any instrument you have not played yet but you would like to learn to play?

Yes, the violin. Generally, I am one of those types of people that if you give me enough time, I can get a little something useful out of almost any instrument. But if I have to blow into it, I'm not too interested. I'd much rather blow air into a woman, than an instrument.

***KB: What kind of music genre have you always liked but never really sung or played?***

Any 'genre' that I've loved, I've approached at some point in time. I'm very much like my great hero Duke Ellington, in that there's only 2 types of music for me, 'Good & Bad'. I judge music Exclusively on whether I like it or not, I don't put much stock or faith in genres. In any event, one of my old mentors once said to me something that I tend to agree with: "90% of Everything is shit", Whatever it is called. Although I'm rhythmically sufficient enough to Rap, I've never had any interest in actually Rapping myself, though there have been many great rap records that I've admired & enjoyed. I love music & great ideas, wherever I find them.

KB: Any artists at the moment you like and who you would like to work with?

At this point in my very long & fortunate journey as an artist, I am willing to consider working with any artist with a cool piece of work or inspiration. After having endured years of record company politics (& restrictions), these past decades have been a most liberating experience & have allowed me to simply follow my muse & the opportunities that have arisen because of my freedom. The freedom to say yes, is the greatest freedom to have!

KB: The whole world has been in several lock downs due to the raging pandemic: what have you been doing during these lock downs? Any hobbies you enjoy you?

I, like the Chinese advise, never like to waste the opportunities that crisis brings. I take advantage of whatever conditions time brings. My mind is both blessed and cursed with being an Active Mind, sometimes unfortunately even overactive. As for hobbies, most of my hobbies are work related, even my enjoyment of entertainment still pertains to myself as an entertainer. Before I found my family, collecting the love of women was my favorite, most passionately regarded way to pass through time as it passed through me. But now, with a nurturing family life I find spending time in & with nature to be a most fulfilling way to commune with the great eternal spirit that reminds us of all of who we are & from whence we come. Nature is our great mother & I take advantage of listening to her voice anytime I am fortunate enough to hear her speak to my heart, as she speaks to all who are willing to take the time & hear her beautiful spirit call! ■