

A glimpse of a return to form was given with a storming version of Bob Dylan's 'It's Alright Ma, I'm Only Bleeding', on the 1991 British Electric Foundation compilation *Music Of Quality And Distinction Vol. 2*. It was rammed home with the 1993 release *Terence Trent D'Arby's Symphony Or Damn: Exploring the Tension Inside the Sweetness*. Despite the continuation of hideously pretentious titles, his third album featured a handful of warm sounding soul tracks — 'She Kissed Me', 'I Still Love You', 'Do You Love Me Like You Say You Do?' — as well as being the first album recorded at D'Arby's newly built home studio, Monasteryo, in Los Angeles.

Two years on he unleashes *Vibrator*, 13 new tracks that can be summed up, says D'Arby, as being about "the world of spirituality", but as is his nature, the record covers a range of topics such as love, sex, fear, immortality, humour, and insecurity, all bound together by that main theme. Like *The Hardline*, *Vibrator* sees TTD ruling on everything from screaming funky rockers, to serene ballads, to deep up beat dance tunes, all sung in a voice that epitomises the word 'soulful'. In a world where lame MOR groups like Boyz II Men and All-4-One have the cheek to describe themselves as soul, TTD reveals himself to be a true master of the form.

"I think true soul music comes down to a certain thing that comes from the soul. When someone sings from some level within them and you believe it, or it moves you, that's what soul is. It doesn't matter what it is, it matters how it moves you; some things may move you emotionally, and some things may move you instinctively."

It's this degree of passion that many observers considered the missing link on *Neither Fish Nor Flesh*. In countless reviews D'Arby was informed he was a one-album wonder, and advised to return to his previous career as an amateur boxer. The backlash was such that while "in the throes of a personal metamorphosis", he almost threw in the towel.

"At the time I had to be very careful not to take those things in too deeply. I know the nature of the beast that I dwell in, and it's not good for it to take in too much of what people say. Ultimately, if I'm supposed to have a talent that's genuine, it stands to reason that it will grow for a certain period of time, there will come a time when it peaks, then there'll come a time when maybe it starts to decline. I think I should probably have another two or three albums where I can say: 'This is my best album yet.' After that you might reach a point where you've peaked out, and start to make shit records. But I'm not in that time now, so I shouldn't worry about that."

Agreed, no sleep should be lost over *Vibrator*. D'Arby has dropped heavily into the right groove once more, and as a lyric writer, he's never read better. Whether he's pleading to be the third party in the fun fest of 'Supermodel Sandwich', or confessing true love on 'It's Been Said' and 'Holding On To You' (a stunning Rod Stewart-style ballad, circa *Atlantic Crossing*), D'Arby has found his way with words.

"With this album, I did pay great attention to detail in my writing, but sometimes shit just came out. Not everything is personal, so I can't take full credit. You might write a song, one or two lines of which might be autobiographical, but the rest of it is just filling in blanks. Most writers have a cer-

tain amount of imagination that they can create things that are not necessarily of their own experience. For someone who's as vain as I am, I actually don't like talking or writing about myself that much."

Anyone who saw or read D'Arby interviews in those earlier days will find that difficult to believe. The arrival of this major vocal talent out of nowhere drew comparisons with legendary soul singers Sam Cooke and Bobby Womack, and in

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no time at all his head swelled. He became the king of unabashed self praise and promotion. Saying he prefers not to talk about himself is a quote choked with irony.

"Well, life is full of ironies. In fact, I believe life is the ultimate irony. I have this suspicion that until you learn to see it on some level as a cosmic joke, the laugh will always be on you. I have this deep suspicion I've had for years, that this isn't really real. I believe Shakespeare knew exactly what he was saying when he said: 'All the world's a stage, men and women are merely players.' I started to realise at one point that I wasn't

Terence Trent D'Arby as much as I was this soul in this body called Terence, watching this performance which had been written for Terence, and how this person was somehow going to act out this role."

I say nothing and D'Arby must suspect I think he's looney tunes.

"When you write about me, feel free to say: 'I think this guy's a fucking nutcase,' 'cause you could be right. I can't say for certain that I'm not.

At the same time, I can't say for certain that I'm even here. Sometimes I wonder if I'm just a thought in someone else's imagination."

Someone call the men in white coats. This is getting weird. Whether or not D'Arby is under the influence of hallucinogenics is unconfirmable, but he answers some questions with considerable deliberation, revealing an alert mind, and other responses are the irrelevant ravings of a madman. Earlier, I asked him if he felt happy and content.

"I personally think we tend to narrowly define a lot of things, but if we opened up a little more,

we'd see what we're looking for is there. Like, if my last girlfriend was a blonde with big tits, if I'm gonna have another person I'm gonna fall in love with, she has to be a blonde with big tits. But it may be that the woman who's gonna move you more the next time may be a short little girl with a big ass and dark hair. At the end of the day you'll realise she's been there all the time, but you've been so busy looking for a blonde with big tits, you almost missed her."

Quite.

The Terence Trent D'Arby experience hits the road worldwide from now until at least Christmas, and is due in the Pacific region sometime in August. The New Zealand leg of the trip is unconfirmed, but TTD claims he will pay for the touring costs himself if dates aren't booked, "and I'm not just bullshitting you on that, I really mean it".

Finally, before hanging up, TTD reveals the various complexities behind his new hairstyle.

"When you get older, sometimes it's important to just move on, to let go. I just felt it was time to move on. It wasn't an intellectual decision that I made. One morning I woke up and I just thought: 'Fuck this hair.' I decided that if I was going to chop it I should do something really different, like go blonde. And like Rod said, blondes have more fun."

JOHN RUSSELL

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New Dalacin T antibiotic Gel is for those women who use make-up.

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The New Dalacin T Gel dries clear and leaves skin hydrated.



like after they've had a shave.

The Dalacin T range of antibiotics, has been specifically developed for a range of skin types and conditions.

1. New Dalacin T Gel is for women who use make-up.

2. Dalacin T Solution is for normal to oily skin. It comes in a unique and handy self-sterilising dab-o-matic applicator.

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Because Dalacin T is topical, it's non-systemic. This means there aren't any disadvantages and side effects that you may get if you use oral antibiotics.

3. Dalacin T Lotion is for dry, sensitive skin (it does not contain alcohol).

The Lotion contains a moisturising formula and comes in a roller-ball applicator that is small, convenient and effortless to apply.

4. Prewash for users of Dalacin T. Prewash contains a gentle cleansing formulation designed to fight the bacteria that causes acne by effectively removing excess oil and dirt from skin pores.

It is recommended that both Prewash and a suitable Dalacin T antibiotic treatment be used together, twice daily.

There is no question that some acne treatments do cost less, and so they should — they don't contain an antibiotic to kill the bacteria that cause acne.

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