

Entertainment

Terence Trent D'Arby Returns with Vigor

Years ago, Terence Trent D'Arby jotted down the titles on a piece of paper for his first three albums: *Introducing the Hardline According to Terence Trent D'Arby*, *Neither Fish Nor Flesh* and *Symphony or Damn*. At the time, he had only just signed to Columbia Records.

"I can't explain that," the songwriter, vocalist and multi-instrumentalist confesses. "All I know is that I had these three LP titles before the first album even came out. It wasn't four titles or two titles but three, so maybe, in some sense, this LP finishes off something which I will understand more as time goes by." Even at that early age in his startling career, Terence was convinced of his ability to cross, with skill and panache, pop's most difficult barrier, that of serious musical depth and popular acceptance.

His third album, *Symphony or Damn (Exploring the Tension Inside the Sweetness)*, which includes the double-A sided single release, "Do You Love Me Like You Say?" b/w "She Kissed Me," triumphantly continues to take Terence's vision even further. The new album combines the widest range of music with his own individual talent, emerging with a sound and style that is unmistakably Terence's.

Some two years in the making, *Symphony or Damn* is Terence's most focused work and the answer to all those who felt that he had somehow slipped from his mission. The genesis of this album began at the start of the decade which found Terence, the wanderer, leaving London and relocating to Los Angeles. "I had to get out of London," he explains. "I really needed an atmosphere to work out what I wanted to do next. London is many things, but one thing it does not provide for me is a nurturing environment, which is what I needed."

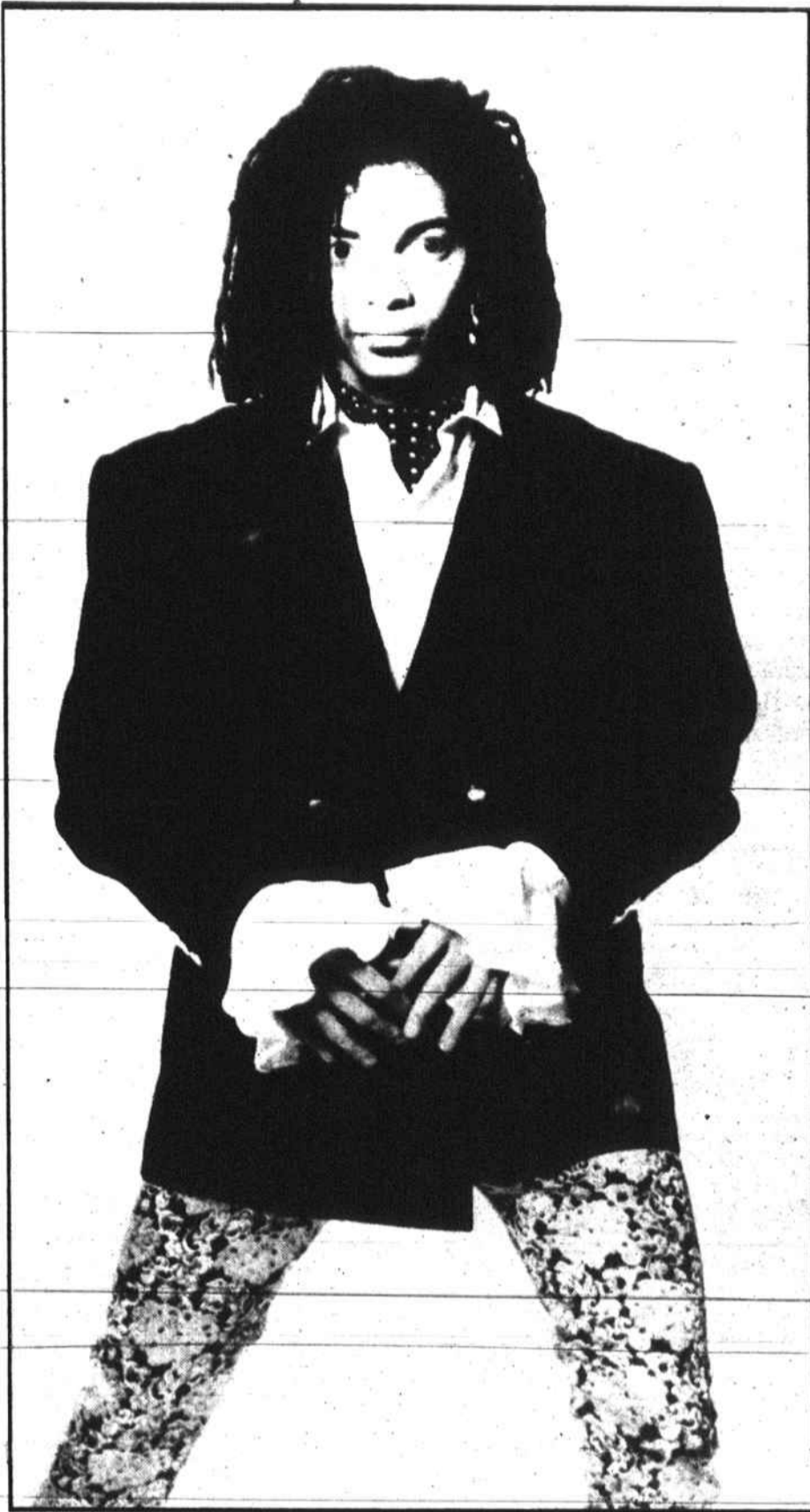
After moving into his Los Angeles home, Terence spent six months overseeing the building and installation of his own studio, the Hummingbird Monastery. Once it was in place, Terence began work on his *Symphony or Damn*, writing nearly 50 songs between the summers of 1991 and '92. The only interruption of this hugely productive period was the offer to record and produce the title song for the hit film "Frankie and Johnny," starring Al Pacino and Michelle Pfeiffer. (That song is also featured on the new album.)

Symphony or Damn features the contributions of many respected musicians, including Epic recording artist Des'ree on the stunning ballad, "Delicate" (a worth successor to Terence's 1988 hit "Sign Your Name"). The Tower of Power Horn section contributes to "Neon Messiah"; and drummer Harvey Mason and keyboardist Greg Phillinganes can be heard on the cryptically titled "T.I.T.S."/"F&J."

But what distinguishes *Symphony or Damn* is Terence's unique approach as writer, producer, arranger and vocalist. Sounding fresher than ever before, Terence's love for music in whatever form it takes is widely evident as he effortlessly adopts various styles and then adds his own unique ingredients. His refusal to be constrained by musical labels and genres has resulted in an album which critics have hailed as "Sgt. Pepper as sung by Sam Cooke," while describing Terence as "an extravagant talent."

Starting with the raw rock "She Kissed Me" and the R&B hook of "Do You Love Me Like You Say?" *Symphony or Damn* is an exhilarating musical journey that displays preternatural diversity and depth of talent. There's the erotic seduction of "Wet Your Lips" (which brilliantly combines a heavy guitar lick with a gospel-style backing); the surreal passion of "Succumb to Me"; the infectious pop of "Penelope Please"; the soulful "Are You Happy"; the adrenalin rush of "Turn the Page"; and the sensitive elegance of "Let Her Down Easy."

Terence is positioning himself to be a visual vanguard as well, by releasing two electrifying new



Terence Trent D'Arby

music videos. The video for "She Kissed Me," directed by Frenchman Michel Gondry, features breakthrough special effects that are nothing short of mindboggling. The "Do You Love Me Like You Say?" video, directed by Big TV!, showcases Terence's riveting abilities as a dancer and includes filming techniques used by Francis Ford Coppola in "Bram Stoker's Dracula."

"I want to be able to give something back to this art form that has given me so much. Each song is a nutrient," says Terence with his penchant for an arresting metaphor, "but put together it all adds up to the big multi-vitamin." It also adds up to an album that refuses to be categorized — except to call it Terence Trent D'Arby's music: fresh, vital and unique.

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