

Red Hot Chili Peppers

"Artist Direct" (1995)

Featuring 13 new Red Hot Chili Peppers originals, including the single "Warped," *One Hot Minute* is the long-awaited follow-up to the group's 1993 multi-platinum smash, *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*. In the interim, the Peppers recruited a new guitarist (former Jane's Addiction and Porno For Pyros mainstay Dave Navarro), stopped the show at Woodstock '94, appeared and performed in a number of films and wrote some of the most original and exciting music of their career. In a recent interview, the Red Hot Chili Peppers (Anthony Kiedis, Flea, Dave Navarro and Chad Smith) discussed the making of *One Hot Minute* and related subjects.

Q: How would you categorize the music on *One Hot Minute*?

Dave: I don't think there is a categorization that fits. I think if we categorize our music, it leaves us in a closed position where we're trying to open doors.

Flea: The Red Hot Chili Peppers have never been a part of any movement or any collective thing or any existing category. We just try to create our own categories.

Q: Recently, there have been remarks about you getting away from your early funk influences. Any comments?

Anthony: The funk is so subtle that obviously it eludes any shallow interpretation of what funk is. There's funk all over this record, but we don't necessarily sound black or white. We sound like people connected to a universal energy, inspired to play music that knows no color.

Q: Any favorite songs on the new album?

Anthony: My favorite track is different every day. It depends on the mood that I'm in because all of these tracks are very meaningful to me. They were born and grew out of honest experiences, sad experiences, happy experiences. And because those experiences are expressed in these songs, today my favorite track might be "Deep Kick," but tomorrow my it might be "Blender."

Chad: My favorite track is one called "*Deep Kick*," because I think that it blends a lot of different styles together and shows a real influence of what Dave's brought to the band. I think it's some new territory that we're exploring and it's really exciting to me that that track is one of my favorites right now.

Flea: Actually, the album has many different sounds and emotions and feelings going on in it. You really couldn't limit it to just one song. It would be unfair to single out any particular track.

Q: Who produced *One Hot Minute*?

Anthony: Rick Rubin, who also did our last album, *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*. He was with us the whole time and his influence was greatly appreciated. He's our friend as well as our producer, so we have a great rapport and it was a rewarding experience as always to work with him.

Q: It's been well over a year since your last album. Why did it take so long?

Anthony: Because we don't subject ourselves to time. We have no deadlines or due dates or expectations of when something should be finished. When we found Dave Navarro we started getting to know each other and hanging out together and working on music. No one told us when it was finished because we knew when it was finished. If it takes ten years to make a record, then that's how long it takes. This record took us a year to make and it's a good thing that it took that long, because if it would have taken less time, it wouldn't be what it is now. There's a natural flow of creative unity and that doesn't happen according to a schedule or a deadline.

Q: Dave, what do you feel you've brought to the Red Hot Chili Peppers?

Dave: I think that everything that encompasses who I am and who I've been in my life has been brought to this band in an amicable way. I think that I come from a slightly different place, musically speaking. These guys are percussive and sharp edged, to use an expression that Flea has come up with, and I'm into melodic and ethereal sounds. And I think that the combination has really worked and given birth to something really new.

Q: The Red Hot Chili Peppers have been together for over a decade. What's the secret to your longevity?

Anthony: Well, obviously it takes a whole lot of love and a lot of friendship and a lot of learning for a band to stay together for that amount of time and to constantly do something different with every record. And I think without a genuine love for each other, we would have dried up a long time ago as a band. There have been tragedies and incredibly inspirational experiences along the way, but the one thread that has been consistent has been the desire to create something honest, soulful and powerful. When we were making music 12 years ago, we were making it because it felt good and we wanted to do it and we're still making music because it feels good and we want to do it.

Flea: And the difference between our band and other bands is very obvious. We're not really concerned with what other people think about us. Our only concerns are just progressing artistically.

Chad: This band is not based on strangers coming together to make music. It's based on friends sharing their lives. That's who we are and without that friendship I don't think we would exist at all.

Q: Have you had trouble adjusting to your success?

Anthony: Well, what is success? Success is different to a lot of different people. You know, I think that we were successful from the very first day we became a band because we were doing something that we believed in. Playing music for people, whether it's two people or two million people, is being successful.

Q: What's your feeling about the commercial potential of One Hot Minute?

Flea: The commercial success of a record is really not our concern. Our concern is trying to make the most honest music that we can. We're really proud of this record. We think we've grown a lot and made an album that sounds different than anything we've ever done. And whatever the world wants to do with it is fine. We hope that we can communicate to as many people as possible because we have love to give the world.

Chad: We really feel that we've grown and changed by learning about ourselves and learning about our lives and trying to become more kind, sensitive people and that's all reflected on our new record.

Q: Was it difficult integrating a new member into the group?

Dave: Well, it's been different for me because for the past 13 years I've worked by myself and now I have the input of these guys. But it works to the fullest potential and we've come up with something really exciting and new and we hope everyone loves it.

Anthony: Dave had something that nobody else had and that was Dave. Dave had Dave and Dave brought Dave to the band.

Q: What was it like playing at Woodstock?

Flea: For us, playing Woodstock was a very exciting experience. I think we went there really questioning the whole thing, questioning the fact that they were advertising peace and love and at the same time it seemed to be about corporate structures and merchandising. But when we got to play, the energy of the whole thing really took over. There were zillions of people having a great time and it was our first show with Dave and we were really excited and we had a fun time.

Q: Can you describe some of the themes of the music on One Hot Minute?

Anthony: No. I hate talking about songs. I really hate analyzing our music. It takes all the fun out of it, it takes the mystery and the beauty out of it. We work on songs and we record them for people to hear and it isn't our place to sit there and try to give detailed explanations of how a song came to be or what it's about.

Q: Do you think your explanations will be misunderstood?

Flea: Being misunderstood is sort of par for the course, at least for us. I think probably because of certain things we've done in our career, there have been a lot of misconceptions about this band. There have been misconceptions that we're just a party band from California that surfs and skates all the time and that all of our songs are about that. I think that's a very common misconception. I think the Red Hot Chili Peppers have always run a pretty wide spectrum throughout our careers and obviously through the years we have become more capable to express that range. But, you know, people can think what they will. We don't regret anything; we're proud of everything that we do.

Q: How do your songs come about?

Anthony: Songwriting is a state of mind, it's a state of spirit. It happens every way imaginable. There's no formula. No song is ever written the same way twice. It happens with a bass line. It happens with a guitar part. It happens with a drum part. It happens with a vocal part. It happens when we get together and work and there is no secret to it. It's just an intangible factor of illogic behavior. And then some.

Q: Did you approach this album in the same way as the last one?

Anthony: For the last record, Blood Sugar Sex Magik, we all moved into a house and lived together while we recorded. But I think it would be pretty stupid to try to recreate something we did a long time ago, so we tried to do something new this time. We went to Hawaii for three months and lived and wrote songs and played around together.

Q: How do your parents feel about your career choice?

Dave: They really wanted me to be whatever I wanted to be. I was fortunate enough to come from a very supportive family that encouraged me to undertake whatever interests I had.

Anthony: I think all of our parents love what we do and completely support us. They come to our shows and we've even had the privilege of Flea's grandmother sitting on stage while we play.

Flea: They were proud of us before we were in a band and before we had the commercial success that society places so much emphasis on. They just wanted us to be happy whatever we did, as long as we didn't hurt ourselves or anybody else.

Q: There's been a lot of film work, both in acting and music, among the group. Will we be seeing more of that?

Anthony: Right now the most important thing in our artistic careers is being the Red Hot Chili Peppers. We all have other interests and sometimes we experiment with doing movies or producing other records or fiddling around on a Sunday afternoon at the park with our children. But as far as being creative people, this is the most important thing in the world to us right now. We have a lot on our plate as the Red Hot Chili Peppers and it's all we can do to maintain focus and accomplish what we're trying to do, which is play music.

Q: Flea, could you talk about the song you wrote for River Phoenix?

Flea: It's called "*Transcending*" and it's about one of the kindest people I ever met in my life. When I think about River I don't think about his death. I don't get sad about it. I think about how incredibly fortunate I was to be friends with a person who looked inside me and saw things that no one else ever saw before. And that song is a respectfully loving song for him.

Q: This group seems to put a premium on emotional honesty. How has that affected your music?

Anthony: We've always been emotionally diverse and I think that the longer that we're alive, the more aware of ourselves we become and that gives us the ability to express ourselves more clearly. It's always been there and it's just what people are able to connect with from the outside in.

Dave: I think we all relate to each other in our personal experiences whether they be joyous and happy or traumatic and sad and that's what this album is. It's a combination of all our personal experiences thrown into the mix to create a beautiful and wonderful combination.

Flea: All there is in life is honesty and love. There's nothing else, really, and without those, we simply couldn't exist. It just would be ridiculous.

Dave: And if we weren't honest, do you really think we'd tell you about it?