

Dr Drew.com (01/2000)

When we caught up with Anthony Kiedis at his Los Angeles home, he was making last minute preparations for the Red Hot Chili Peppers' final tour of the past millennium, which climaxed with a rowdy New Year's Eve concert at the Great Western Forum in the band's own celebrated hometown. The indestructible but often troubled quartet just capped off another eventful year: guitarist and estranged former junkie John Frusciante rejoined the fold, the critically-acclaimed *Californication* was released, and the band was onstage playing a cover of Jimi Hendrix's "Fire" as Woodstock '99 unraveled into a delirious mess. According to Kiedis, it was all business as usual.

You are all spiritual, right ? So do you feel sensitive about the new millennium ?

AK: In terms of having high hopes that the level of consciousness will get higher and higher, yeah.

Um, what ?

AK: It seems like the chaos of this world is accelerating, but so is the beauty in the consciousness of more and more people. It's kind of like this mad race to see which evolves faster quicker.

Do you remember how in your early videos you used to wear neon paint on your hogshooter ?

AK: Hell, yeah. I've changed so much, but I kind of miss the blustery naiveté of young Anthony. I love that guy. Sometimes life's so much cooler when you just don't know any better and all the painful lessons have not hammered your head open yet. He's definitely still there. Those early videos crack me up.

They weren't all wussy like Duran Duran videos.

AK: We were definitely on the contrarian tip. The funny thing is, at the time, I was so sworn to the punk rock, I couldn't even hear Duran

Duran. It was something that my ears refused to hear. Now, I listen back to their songs, and I go, "God, those are pretty good."

Some people think *Californication* is your best record. Do you think they're probably nuts ?

AK: Sometimes the fickle nature of the public decides, "Oh, they're good. Oh, they're bad," irregardless of what you're up to. In this particular place, the fact that people are so down with this record is not a result of us being flavor-of-the-moment or youth culture trend of the early '90s. It's strictly based on the fact that they like these songs and the colors that we're perpetrating on this record.

How is John Frusciante working out for you ?

AK: I would consider him definitely one of my very best friends and I know he feels the same about me. We have a lot of love and respect. We're able to breathe in each other's space at this point, and it was never really like that before, even when we were hyper best friends.

Um, what ?

AK: There really was a magical vibe happening between everybody when John came back. It was so easy for us to write and record it, just because we were all so happy to have John back and it was flowing. He's the cosmic wizard of the band.

Do you ever feel superstitious about your success ?

AK: I don't really feel superstitious. That's just the nature of life, the whole "battles lost and won" concept. I think we're very lucky because we love music so much and we love each other so much. We found our perfect chemistry in this universe. As long as we're alive and together, good things are going to happen.

par Aidin Vaziri