

Red Hot Chili Peppers By The Way



WHO ARE THE RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS?

Red Hot Chili Peppers (RHCP) is an American rock band that formed in 1983 in California. They are known for combining funk, punk-rock and alternative rock and creating an original sound not heard often in the 80s'.

The band changed members a few times, but the 2 of the founding members stayed the whole time- singer and songwriter Anthony Kiedis, and bassist Michael Balzary, going by Flea. In the early years, Anthony's style consisted more of rapping, also because of the band's early funky sound, but with the evolution of their style, he showed a gentle, soulful and more



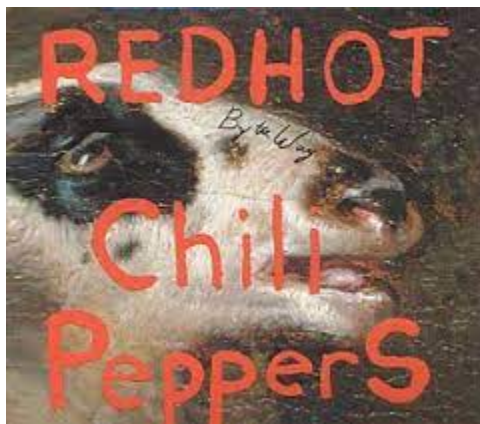
comprehensive voice. Flea is in large part responsible for the funky sound by using “slap” bass playing. He can also play the trumpet that is used in some songs. The drummer Chad Smith joined RHCP in 1988, as a replacement for D.H. Peligro who had been recently fired and has been with them since, and lastly guitarist John Frusciante whom I would call the most original and innovative, as he is the main force behind the *By The Way* album.

Frusciante, overwhelmed by the band’s recent increase in popularity, left in 1992 and fell into heroin addiction. He released his first solos, and rejoined the band in 1998 after he completed drug rehabilitation, taking them to major success with the breakthrough album *Californication*.



By The Way is the band’s eight album released in 2002.

Generally, the album was liked and acclaimed for the departure from their typical funky style. It is the creation of the creative tension Frusciante and Flea had. *By The Way* brought a new, melodic and soothing sound of the RHCP. Considering that it was released 3 years after *Californication*, which so far defined their style, it was a pleasant welcome change. From the first to the last song we can see the style diversity in this album: some little funk rock like *Can’t Stop*, but mostly a calmer alternative and even indie sound, with beautiful ballads like *Dosed*.



The album was titled by the first song, *By The Way*. It still has a hint of funk, but the background instruments say that RHCP really chose the melodic path. It was released as a single before the album, but Frusciante noted that it was not their decision: “Our managers thought it was an exciting song and their enthusiasm convinced us. I guess they thought that it combined the wild part of our sound with the melodic part of our sound.”

It stayed as #1 on Modern Rock Tracks chart for 14 weeks.

I heard this song so many times and I think I will never get bored of singing and listening to it. Some of Red Hot Chili Pepper songs will just stay with me forever, and I don't even have to think if I still like them, because they are embodied with me.

<https://youtu.be/JnfyjwChuNU>

Second track *Universally Speaking*, is either a drug or a love song. It's so beautifully written that I still can't figure it out.

"Bloodshot, your smile

Delicate and wild

Give me she-wolf style

Rip right through me"

This verse is about loving someone so hard, that just their look affects you. It becomes addictive.

"I saw your crime

Dying to get high

Two of a kind

Beats all hands tonight"

And I guess this refers to drugs, and the girl not having any will or effort to stop herself from

taking. The poker reference is saying that she already lost (maybe won?) with herself, by not even trying to resist the temptation, with the smallest cards.

RHCP have the ability to take a song about a common, or darker topic and make it sound lovely. Sometimes you have to figure out the meaning just by listening to it over again. I love the background melodies in this song.

<https://youtu.be/CoOibAstPJ4>



Fourth track is called *Dosed*. It is a beautifully composed song, with 4 layers of guitar composed by Frusciante. The very soft and sorrowful voice of Anthony fits perfectly with it.

It has such a big impact on me, every time I listen to it it shows me something different. I feel free but also very down. It reminds me that everything goes away at some point, but also drags me into it more. I still don't fully understand the lyrics, I try to interpret

them my own way. At its core, it's a very depressing and draining song but covered by the beautiful melodies, soft voice and a soothing guitar. I can only feel so dreadful and heavenly at once when I listen to it.

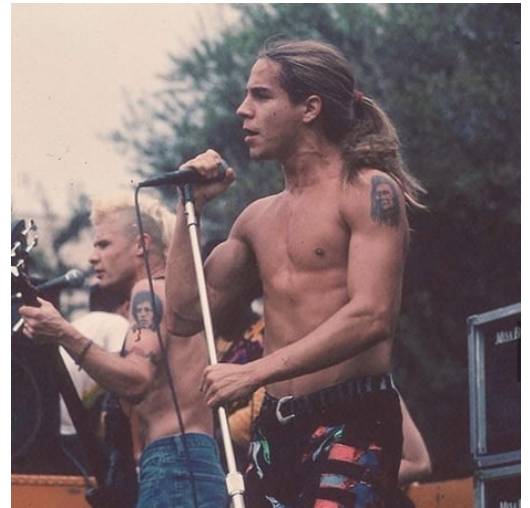
I think it's the most beautiful song on the album.

<https://youtu.be/bFCW32Tsw8>

Fifth track *Don't Forget Me* also speaks to me a lot. It has a simple, but very pretty structure and gives a beautiful vibration. It is about something that is always with us, whether we are good, bad, whether we deserve it or not. Some kind of mystical love that doesn't turn its back on us. It can find us in the hardest moments, sometimes we don't see it.

The inspiration behind this song was Anthony's hard drug addiction and the love that kept him alive through the darkest moments.

<https://youtu.be/SnQ0E-UVt1g>



The twelfth song is called *Tear*. It is about never knowing the outcome, but still learning from it and taking risks without being too tight. Go with the flow and love. What is supposed to come, will come, and what was supposed to happen, happened. There should not be that much space in you for doubting yourself. Throughout this life there is only so much we can do and everybody will eventually look and see everything that's behind them. Why not forgive yourself for all the things you were not expecting, and why not live in peace with yourself?

"All in all and I'm

Loving every rise and fall

The sun will make and I will take

Breath to be sure of this

In the end and then

All will be forgiven when

Surrender rises high and I

Gave what I came to give"

<https://youtu.be/9OzjUuB3WHo>

In the end, I think *By The Way* shaped the style of Red Hot Chili Peppers and showed that they can also touch into different sounds than what they are used to, and make something truly beautiful. I love how it brought a new sound of Red Hot Chili Peppers, and was a breakthrough in their own style and development.

I really appreciate the album, it's so calm and whole and the feeling it gives me is really satisfying and makes me think about myself and other people. I can listen to it whenever. I must say that the first half of the album is better, and there are some songs that I don't enjoy that much, but it compensates with the ones that I truly love. Just because of that, I am rating it 4/5.