

really. We've got Dave now, and we're very pleased because he's such a wonderful musician. Actually, we tried to get him when John quit. He was the first guy we thought of because we were such fans of Jane's Addiction and big fans of his guitar playing. So, we called him, and he said: 'You know what? I'm probably the only guy who could do it, I'm the best guy to do it, but I'm not going to do it.' He teased us like that, the whore, but he just wouldn't take off the chastity belt. At this time he was busy on a project with Eric from Jane's, which was Deconstruction. So, we got Arik Marshall, who was a wonderful guitar player, and we played with him at *Lollapalooza* and in Australia and New Zealand. But when we started to write music, the chemistry wasn't right with Arik, so we went on to audition about a zillion guitar players."

KG: That would be the infamous *LA Weekly* ad, right? (Historical Note: In 1994, the Chili Peppers ran a full page ad for an open audition in an LA paper. This resulted in thousands of hopefuls showing up for three days worth of very short auditions. Eventually, a young LA hopeful by the name of Jesse Tobias was chosen. He quit his newly signed band — an awful rocker mess called Mother Tongue — but within a month, he was out of the Peppers. Some you win, some you don't.)

CS: Well, we'd exhausted our friend of a friend thing, it just wasn't panning out, so we thought: 'Fuck it, there's got to be a guy out there.' So, we did what we had to do and we knew it was going to be a circus, but out of the thousands there had to be 10 or so who might work. We found some good musicians, but no one who had what is needed to fit in the Chili Peppers, which is a multi-faceted musical prowess and a pretty crazy personality. Chemistry is really important to this band because of the way we write together; it's a very important part of our music, so you have to feel some kind of love and respect and admiration for the person you're playing with. So, I was like: 'Can I hang out with this guy?', and it wasn't there. Luckily, Dave was cut loose, and Flea called him and said: 'Do you want to jam?', and he came down. We played for about five minutes and we said: 'Do you want to join the band?' He said: 'OK,' and that was that."

KG: It would seem to me that with the Chili Peppers being such a rhythmically driven band, the guitarist is almost following the leads of Flea and yourself, so that sense of connection would be really important.

CS: "I don't know. The Red Hot Chili Peppers are a very rhythm oriented band, and have been more so in the past. Like, before *BloodSugarSexMagic*, the bass was very up front, very percussive. But you can change and grow as musicians, and with *BloodSugar* we were writing songs, rather than funk jams with lyrics over the top. That's not to take anything away from those early records. I love that stuff, and *Uplift Mofo Party Plan* is probably my favourite record, and I didn't even play on it. You just grow and try to better yourself as a musician, and I think we've done that."

"Dave contributes more through reaction, and a lot of these songs came from bass ideas, but Flea has been playing some guitar, which means this record seems more stripped down. Everybody just does what's right for the song, no one pulls that 'well, my part is going to stick out because I need to impress whoever'. That's not what it's about. I think everyone in this band has big ears, especially Dave. He really uses the studio as a tool. His sound is bigger sonically and has all these textures and little parts that stick out all over. It's very much a headphones thing, so all you stoners can do bong hits and listen with your headphones on."

KG: Navarro is pretty lucky. He has such a strong reputation that he doesn't have to live up to being 'the new guy' in the Chili Peppers.

CS: "Well, Dave is pretty much his own guy. His personality comes out in his playing. You hear it and it sounds like Dave, which is what everybody wants. He doesn't conform to what he thinks a Chili Peppers guitarist should sound like, and we don't try to play like Jane's Addiction. We just found the common ground in what we do."

KG: Once again, Rick Rubin is on board as producer.

CS: "Oh yeah, we just had such a pleasurable and rewarding experience with him on *BloodSugar*, he became our friend and we trust him. We never discussed whether we'd use him again, he just assumed he'd be doing this. I remember when Dave joined, Rick said: 'It's great you're playing with the Chili Peppers as we'll be able to work together again.' It's comfortable for us. I mean, he's smart, we have a lot of mutual musical respect, and he's just the right guy for us. He doesn't put any Rick Rubin sound or stamp on the music. He loves the

band being the band while he holds up the mirror and bounces around ideas. He just lets the band work and then has this great skill when it comes to the mixing process, so we really trust him."

"I'll do my impersonation of Rick when we're cutting tracks. He even moved a couch into the control room. [At this point, Mr Chad puts on his sunglasses and lies flat on his back like a guy in a coffin.] We're rocking out as hard as we can, and he's like [doesn't move an inch]: 'Aaah, guys, let's do it again with a little more energy.' If it's a good take, you'll see his head bobbing around and that's it. But he does know when to be in there and when to let the band do its thing."

KG: You guys really spent some time on this album, didn't you? I remember hearing you'd gone to Hawaii to record about a year or so ago.

CS: "We went to Hawaii to write. We wanted to get away from LA and the distractions and stuff. We also wanted to hang out and get to know each other, we wanted to get a personal bond going with Dave. We wrote a lot of the basis of this album in Hawaii and it was a good experience. We did take some time off. We recorded the basic tracks, then we had to rehearse to play at *Woodstock*, then did a European tour, and then another break. It was a gradual thing, but you can't really expect a band to punch a clock. It's certainly not how we work. You really have to be inspired and you need to do things in your life to get inspired, so it took as long as it needed to take. We didn't really want to put out anything that was less than great. So yeah, in answer to the 'it took a long time didn't it?' question, it did take a while, but we toured for a couple of years in there, and went through this guitar player thing, and a year of basic recording. We were busy!"

KG: It must be hell having to sit here all day and deal with a stream of press all asking stuff like: 'How come so long?', and: 'What happened with the guitarists?', and: 'Will this album be as big as *BloodSugar*?'"

CS: "Yeah, but it's part of the whole gig. Anyway, you have to do that 'album listening' thing, which is pretty bad. It's weird to sit around and listen to an album once, especially with an album that's like 70 minutes. I know with albums I've grown to love, the first time around, I hated them. I wasn't sold. They've got to grow on you. If they have any depth, you're not going to get hit by the emotional impact immediately. This whole talking about the album, it's something I have to do, but I'd much rather just have people hear it and get what they want out of it. Hopefully someone will hear it and love it, and be uplifted or affected. If that does happen, then it's very rewarding to us, we've done what we want."

"You have to be honest about music, and any good artist is going to be that. We really don't feel any kinship with any particular musical community or scene, and I think one of the cool things about the Chili Peppers is, no matter what song it is, you can always tell it's us. We're very unique in that sense, and we always strive to do that and not be influenced by any sort of trends. We don't feel any pressures of commercial success. I think if you start doing that, you dig yourself a grave"

KG: At around this point, we are politely interrupted by a record label person and given the 'one last question' smile. Not easy, as I had all manner of stuff to ask, like how John Lurie of the Lounge Lizards ended up playing harmonica on the album, or how Chad's golf game is progressing. (I've seen him at the same cheap public course I frequent, and although I've never seen him play, he's a big guy and I imagine he's got a pretty reasonable drive on him.) Our respected editor, however, has drummed into me the fact that people don't want to read about golf or obscure jazzbos in a rock mag, so I went with the nice 'are you really the sane one in the band?' angle.

CS: "Yeah, but sane compared to what? No, I think an important part of being in the band is that everyone has to be their own person and have their own personality, and you inject that into the band equation, although there is something to be said for balance. There's a perception that we're nuts because we're entertainers when we play live, and people don't get beyond that. Everyone in this band really is pretty rational and smart and caring, there's that side to everyone, definitely. I think maybe the one thing I bring to the mix is some stability. It helps being the drummer and being the stable one. Everyone has their own little quirks, but everyone has the same goal, which is to make honest, beautiful music, and that's an OK thing, because when we're rocking together, it's a great feeling."

KIRK GEE



Australia's young export Silverchair have repeated their massive Australian success in the USA. Their album *Frogstomp* has been certified "Gold", which means they have official industry recognised sales of over 500,000 copies in the USA.

This has been achieved before the release of a single. The album is selling at about 100,000 per week. Their record label Sony says sales are already over 700,000 units. Silverchair will soon be the first Australian act since INXS to top the "Platinum" million sales mark in the United States.

After a USA A&R man David Massey saw the band at Australia's Big Day Out earlier this year, an elaborate marketing plan was put in place for the American release of *Frogstomp* on the Epic label, but the whole process was jumpstarted early, when in April, key USA modern rock radio stations started playing import copies of 'Tomorrow'.

In Australia the band had been managed by their mothers but with success snowballing, Silverchair started looking for a manager. By mid-year with the USA success, the need for a full-time manager became paramount and John Watson from Sony Australia took the job.

Watson had been Sony's Director of International Marketing and had watched his plans go out the window. He told *Billboard*, "We had a great strategy mapped out. Now that's been shot to pieces but in a most pleasant way."

As *RipItUp* goes to press *Frogstomp* is No.17 on the *Billboard* magazine Top 200 Albums Chart. The previous week the song 'Tomorrow' was No.32 on the Top 100 Airplay Chart.

John Watson is confident that the success of Silverchair is not linked to their "teen" appeal or the novelty of their being

so young.

"[USA] radio and public have responded purely to the song and the performance on the record. They did not know what the band looked like or their history."

Only in Australia have quips like "Nirvana in pajamas" or "kinder(Sound)garden" been attached to Silverchair.

In Australia there have also been chauvinist jokes aimed at the band's mothers' roles as managers.

One Australian record executive claims a mother was asked, 'what was London like?'

'The shopping was great', was the alleged reply.

In the USA the band's record label are aiming for a young alternative audience in the USA and hope to have Silverchair on 1996's *Lollapalooza* tour. The label also sent 10,000 music samplers and 25,000 Silverchair hang tags to surf shops around the USA.

Silverchair have a busy August school holidays, starting in Cologne Germany, August 19, at the Popkomm music industry convention, followed by several summer festival appearances including Lowlands in Holland, Pukkelpop in Belgium and the legendary Reading Festival in England.

From there it's off to North America for gigs in Montreal, Toronto, Chicago, Boston, Washington, New York, Atlanta, San Francisco, Los Angeles and finally, the home of grunge, Seattle on September 15.

Around the world, music press find it quite difficult talking to three guys who have very little to say. When *NME* asked Daniel Johns if he had a final message for English fans, he replied.

"Yeah. Listen to more Helmet."

MURRAY CAMMICK