

= Blood Sugar Sex Magik =

Blood Sugar Sex Magik is the fifth studio album by American rock band Red Hot Chili Peppers , released on September 24 , 1991 . Produced by Rick Rubin , it was the band 's first record released on Warner Bros. Records . The musical styles of Blood Sugar Sex Magik differed notably from the techniques employed on the Chili Peppers ' preceding album , Mother 's Milk , and featured little use of heavy metal guitar riffs . The album 's subject matter incorporated sexual innuendos and references to drugs and death as well as themes of lust and exuberance .

Peaking at number one in Australia , Canada , and New Zealand , and at three on the United States ' Billboard 200 , the album has sold over 13 million copies worldwide and was the Red Hot Chili Peppers ' introduction into worldwide popularity and critical acclaim . Blood Sugar Sex Magik produced an array of hit singles including the hugely successful " Under the Bridge " and one of their most popular songs , " Give It Away " . The other three singles released were " Suck My Kiss " , " Breaking the Girl " , and " If You Have to Ask " . Guitarist John Frusciante quit the band mid @-@ tour in 1992 (not returning until 1998) due to his inability to cope with the album 's popularity . Blood Sugar Sex Magik is recognized as an influential and seminal component of the alternative rock explosion in the early 1990s . Steve Huey of AllMusic stated that Blood Sugar Sex Magik is " ... probably the best album the Chili Peppers will ever make . "

= = Background = =

The band 's previous album , 1989 's Mother 's Milk would become the band 's second album to enter in the Billboard 200 , peaking at number 52 and at the time the biggest of their career . Although the record was mildly successful , production was weighed down by producer Michael Beinhorn . He convinced Frusciante to play with an overall heavier tone , and instructed Kiedis to write lyrics that would be more radio viable , thus causing the band to feel restricted creatively .

As the Chili Peppers ' contract with EMI came to an end , they began looking for a new record company to release their next album . The group reached a consensus to go with Sony BMG / Epic , with the proviso that they buy out their last album from EMI . Even though the label promised it would take only a few days , the process stretched out into several months . Although a deal had been made with Sony / Epic , Mo Ostin of Warner Bros. Records called Kiedis to congratulate him on the successful deal , and complimented the rival record label . Kiedis recalled of the situation : " The coolest , most real person we had met during all these negotiations had just personally called to encourage me to make a great record for a rival company . That was the kind of guy I 'd want to be working for . " The group pursued the idea , and eventually dropped the contract with Sony in favor of a deal with Warner Bros. Ostin called an old friend at EMI , who immediately allowed for the label transfer .

= = Recording and production = =

Now settled into Warner Bros. Records , the Chili Peppers began looking for a suitable producer . One person in particular , Rick Rubin , stood out , as he was more broadminded in contrast to individuals they had worked with in the past even though Rubin previously turned down the band 's offer to produce their 1987 album The Uplift Mofo Party Plan due to the drug problems of Kiedis and guitarist Hillel Slovak who would die of a heroin overdose a year later . Eventually , the band decided Rubin would be the best choice as a producer , and therefore hired him to produce what would become Blood Sugar Sex Magik . Unlike the Peppers ' previous producers , Rubin was someone that they felt confident to ask for guidance and input during times of difficulty . He would often help arrange drum beats , guitar melodies and lyrics .

The band sought to record the album in an unconventional setting , believing it would enhance their creative output . Rubin suggested the mansion magician Harry Houdini once lived in , to which they agreed . A crew was hired to set up a recording studio and other equipment required for production in the house . The band decided that they would remain inside the mansion for the duration of

recording , though Smith , convinced the location was haunted , refused to stay . He would , instead , come each day by motorcycle . Frusciante agreed with Smith , and said " There are definitely ghosts in the house , " but unlike Smith , Frusciante felt they were " very friendly . We [the band] have nothing but warm vibes and happiness everywhere we go in this house . "

Frusciante , Kiedis , and Flea each had their own separate rooms at each end of the house . When not recording with the band , Frusciante would spend his time painting , listening to music , reading and recording songs he 'd written . Due to the seclusion , Kiedis ended up recording all his vocals in his room , as it was large enough to accommodate the recording equipment . For over thirty days , the Chili Peppers worked inside the house ; Kiedis felt it was an accommodating and resourceful environment which allowed him to complete the rest of the lyrics . During production , the band agreed to let Flea 's brother @-@ in @-@ law document the creative process on film . When the album 's recording was complete , the Chili Peppers released the film , titled Funky Monks .

= = Music = =

Blood Sugar Sex Magik was written at a more rapid pace than the band 's previous album . Prior to the Chili Peppers relocation into the mansion , Frusciante and Kiedis collaborated at each other 's homes , in order to arrange song structures and guitar riffs . They would then present ideas to Flea and Smith , and the band would , as a whole , decide what they would use for the bass , guitar , vocal and percussion ensembles .

Kiedis focused lyrically on sexual references and innuendos as they were frequently on his mind . Songs such as " Suck My Kiss , " " If You Have to Ask , " " Sir Psycho Sexy , " " Give It Away " and " Blood Sugar Sex Magik " all contained various sexual links , with lyrics like " A state of sexual light / Kissing her virginity / My affinity " and " Glorious euphoria / Is my must / Erotic shock / Is a function of lust . " The concept behind " The Greeting Song " was a request by Rubin , who asked Kiedis to write a song solely about girls and cars . Although Kiedis disliked the concept , he wrote the song as Rubin requested and ended up hating nearly every aspect of the lyrics . Kiedis also began to write about anguish , and the self mutilating thoughts he would experience as a result of his heroin and cocaine addiction ; he believed his life had come to its lowest point under a bridge in downtown Los Angeles . Over a month later , Rubin stumbled upon a poem that would become the lyrics to " Under the Bridge " , and suggested Kiedis show it to the rest of the band . Kiedis was , however , apprehensive because he believed the lyrics to be " too soft " and unlike the band 's style . After singing the verse to Frusciante , they began structuring the song the next day . The two worked for several hours arranging chords and melodies until they both agreed it was complete . Frusciante ultimately chose the chords he played in the intro to balance out the depressing atmosphere of the song : " my brain interpreted it as being a really sad song so I thought if the lyrics are really sad like that I should write some chords that are happier . " " Naked in the Rain " was one of the first songs written for the album and even played once at the end of the Mother 's Milk Tour in 1990 while the intros for " The Greeting Song " and " Sir Psycho Sexy " were also teased during the end of that tour but neither song was completed or had lyrics .

Blood Sugar Sex Magik integrated the band 's typical punk and funk style , but moved away from this with more melodically driven songs . Tracks like " The Righteous and the Wicked , " " Suck My Kiss , " " Blood Sugar Sex Magik , " " Give it Away " and " Funky Monks " still incorporated use of heavy metal guitar riffs , but differed from Mother 's Milk in that they contained less distortion . Flea , who had centered his bass playing around the slapping technique , downplayed on this in favor of more traditional and melodic bass lines . He also adopted a minimalist , " less is more " philosophy : " I was trying to play simply on Blood Sugar Sex Magik because I had been playing too much prior to that , so I thought , ' I 've really got to chill out and play half as many notes ' . When you play less , it 's more exciting ? there 's more room for everything . If I do play something busy , it stands out , instead of the bass being a constant onslaught of notes . Space is good . " Kiedis felt that the album would expand the Chili Peppers ' musical horizons , and that it was a departure from their previous material . One of Blood Sugar Sex Magik 's more melodic tracks , " Breaking the Girl , " was written about Kiedis ' constantly shifting relationships . He feared that he was following in his father 's

footsteps and simply becoming a womanizer , rather than establishing stable and long @-@ term relationships : " ... As exciting and temporarily fulfilling as this constant influx of interesting and beautiful girls can be , at the end of the day , that shit is lonely and you 're left with nothing . " The track also featured a bridge in the middle , consisting of percussion instruments salvaged from a garbage dump .

Although jams had always been an integral aspect of song creation for the Chili Peppers , Blood Sugar Sex Magik saw songs being created with more structure . One specific jam would lead to the breakout song on the album : Frusciante , Flea and Smith were all playing together ? with Kiedis at another part of the room watching ? when " ... Flea started playing this insane bass line , and Chad cracked up and played along ... I always had fragments of song ideas or even specific isolated phrases in my mind . I (Kiedis) took the mic and belted out ' Give it away , give it away , give it away , give it away now . " The philosophy behind the lyrics originated from a conversation Kiedis had with Nina Hagen , regarding selflessness and how insignificant material possessions were in his life . It , thus , gave birth to the song " Give It Away . " He 'd also been reminiscing about late Chili Peppers guitarist Hillel Slovak , composing " My Lovely Man " in his tribute . Kiedis wrote " Sir Psycho Sexy " to be an over @-@ zealous and overly exaggerated version of himself ; a figure that could get any woman , and do anything he pleased to them . " The Power of Equality " confronted topics concerning racial equality , prejudice and sexism . Kiedis wrote " I Could Have Lied " to document the brief relationship he had with Irish singer Sinéad O 'Connor .

= = Artwork = =

All photography , paintings and art direction for Blood Sugar Sex Magik were credited to filmmaker Gus Van Sant , with the exception of the " tongue illustration " , which , according to the album booklet , is credited to Henky Penky (Henk Schiffmacher) . The cover of the album features the four band members ' faces positioned around a rose . The lyrics are printed in white lettering across a black background , hand written by Kiedis . The booklet also contains a collage of photos assembled to showcase the band members ' various tattoos , which feature faces of Native American tribal leaders , animals and sea creatures , as well as various symbols and phrases . Photographs of each band member alone , and two photographs of the band as a whole are also included .

Singles released to coincide with the album share little with Blood Sugar 's artwork . The cover of " Give It Away " was a painting of a Chinese infant , surrounded by fish , vegetables , fruits and sushi ; " Under the Bridge " is a photograph of a bridge in the city of Los Angeles ; " Suck My Kiss " had a black and white photograph of the band , with Kiedis and Flea holding a large fish ; " If You Have to Ask " is an illustration of an avocado next to a girl 's large buttocks in a yellow bikini ; and " Breaking the Girl " featured a painting of a human being covered in magma .

= = Promotion and release = =

Blood Sugar Sex Magik was released on September 24 , 1991 , the same day as Nirvana 's breakthrough album Nevermind . It was certified gold just over two months later on November 26 , 1991 , and certified platinum on April 1 , 1992 ; since then it has gone seven times platinum in the United States . The album peaked at number 3 on the Billboard 200 . Originally , " Give it Away " did not fare well in the mainstream ; several of Warner Bros. ' target radio stations refused to air it , telling the band to " come back to us when you have a melody in your song . " KROQ (of Los Angeles) , however , began to play the single several times daily , and that , according to Kiedis , " was the beginning of the infusion of ' Give It Away ' into mass consciousness . " The single ultimately peaked at number 9 on the UK Top 40 and number 73 on the Billboard Hot 100 . Blood Sugar Sex Magik has sold over 13 million copies worldwide .

Due to the success of " Give it Away , " the band did not foresee " Under the Bridge " as being equally viable . Warner Bros. sent representatives to a Chili Peppers ' concert in order to figure out what would ultimately be the next single . When Frusciante began playing " Under the Bridge " ,

Kiedis missed his cue ; the entire audience began singing the song , instead . Kiedis was initially " mortified that I had fucked up in front of Warner 's people ... I apologized for fucking up but they said ' Fucking up ? Are you kidding me ? When every single kid at the show sings a song , that 's our next single . ' " " Under the Bridge " was , therefore , selected as Blood Sugar Sex Magik 's second single . By January 1992 , " Under the Bridge " had exploded , peaking at number 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 .

To promote the album in Europe , Kiedis and Frusciante both agreed they would make the trip . However , it proved difficult for Frusciante to adapt to life outside of the mansion , after being in near @-@ seclusion for almost 30 days . Kiedis recalled of the situation : " He had such an outpouring of creativity while we were making that album that I think he really didn 't know how to live life in tandem with that creativity . " It was also during this period when Frusciante began to experiment with heroin , which further compromised his mental stability . The European promotional trek took its toll on Frusciante , and he decided to return home when he and Kiedis reached London .

= = Critical reception and legacy = =

Blood Sugar Sex Magik was well received by critics , who praised the Chili Peppers for not overpowering the listener with heavy metal guitar riffs as their previous album had . Rolling Stone 's Tom Moon credited Rick Rubin for the change in style ; Rubin " [gave] the Chilis ' dynamic . " He went on to praise the overall sound , which " displayed a growing curiosity about studio texture and nuance . " Steve Huey of AllMusic said the album was " The Red Hot Chili Peppers ' best album ... John Frusciante 's guitar is less overpoweringly noisy , leaving room for differing textures and clearer lines , while the band overall is more focused and less indulgent . " He considered Blood Sugar to be " varying ... it expands the group 's musical and emotional range . " Guitar Player magazine credited Frusciante with the Chili Peppers ' drastic change in style : " by blending acid @-@ rock , soul @-@ funk , early art @-@ rock , and blues style with a raw , unprocessed Strat @-@ and @-@ Marshall tone , [Frusciante] hit on an explosive formula that has yet to be duplicated . " Devon Powters of PopMatters said that " in one funky @-@ out , fucked up , diabolical swoop , Blood Sugar Sex Magik reconfigured my relationship to music , to myself , to my culture and identity , to my race and class . " In an article published in The Tampa Tribune , editor Philip Booth praised the record as " an ambitious effort that amounts to a culmination and blossoming of the musical forces that have been brewing in the band 's sound since Kiedis and Flea birthed the band in 1983 . " Music critic Robert Christgau gave the album a two star honorable mention . Blood Sugar Sex Magik is considered to be an influential album , throughout the nineties , by establishing itself as a fundamental foundation for alternative rock . It has also been referred to as " the cornerstone album of funk rock " by FasterLouder .

" Under the Bridge , " which became a breakout song for the band , was considered to be a highlight of the album by several critics . Allmusic reviewed the song individually and called it a " ... poignant sentiment ... it is self evident among the simple guitar which cradles the introductory verse , and the sense of fragility that is only doubled by the still down @-@ tempo choral crescendo " , and ultimately " has become an integral part of the 1990s alterna @-@ landscape , and remains one of the purest diamonds that sparkle amongst the rough @-@ hewn and rich funk chasms that dominate the Peppers ' own oeuvre . " However , Entertainment Weekly criticized the seriousness that the Red Hot Chili Peppers explored as being " disapproving of the band 's usual Red Hot antics " , and " Under the Bridge " had " fancy @-@ shmancy touches " . The song ended up peaking at number 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 in April 1992 . " Give It Away " was also praised , though as " ... a free @-@ associative mixture of positive vibes , tributes to musical heroes , and free love " , with Frusciante " ... adding the song 's two most unpredictable change @-@ ups : a sudden contrast to Kiedis ' hyperactivity in the form of a languid solo pre @-@ recorded and dubbed backwards over the rhythm track , and a hard @-@ rocking riff which is not introduced until the song 's outro ... " Tracks such as " Sir Psycho Sexy " , however , were criticized for being overly explicit . Devon Powters of Pop Matters said that " Eight minutes of ' Sir Psycho Sexy ' will turn RHCP 's young listeners into quivering masses of hormonal jello . Oversexed lines sneak their way into ' Apache

Rose Peacock ' ; ' Blood Sugar Sex Magik ' , simply , sounds like fucking . Even the purest virgin comes away from Blood Sugar Sex Magik with a degree of sexual maturity ; even the slickest playa can learn a couple of new moves . " In contrast , " Suck My Kiss " , according to Amy Hanson of Allmusic , " completely flew in the face of the established pecking order of alternative rock . " With the song , the Chili Peppers " fully allied themselves with the very few genre @-@ bending bands that were able to make a radical impact on the sonic landscape that was dominated , it seemed , from every minute angle by grunge . "

Years later , Blood Sugar was placed atop many " Best Of " lists , especially those pertaining to the ' 90s . Spin magazine charted the album at number 58 on their " Top 90 Albums of the 90s " , and number 11 on a similar list compiled by Pause & Play . The record was placed in slapnpop Magazine " 101 Essential Guitar Albums " ; and included in the book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die . Blood Sugar Sex Magik also ranked number 310 on Rolling Stone 's the " 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " and number 14 on the " 100 Best Albums of the Nineties " .

= = Blood Sugar Sex Magik Tour and John Frusciante 's departure = =

Before the Blood Sugar Sex Magik Tour began , Kiedis saw the music video for The Smashing Pumpkins ' " Rhinoceros " on MTV . He then called the band 's manager and asked him to accommodate The Smashing Pumpkins for the tour . Several days after the Pumpkins confirmed they would accompany the Chili Peppers , former Chili Peppers drummer Jack Irons called and asked the band to allow his friend 's new group , Pearl Jam , to open for them on the forthcoming tour . The first show following the release of Blood Sugar Sex Magik was at the Oscar Mayer Theater in Madison , Wisconsin , which was met with positive reactions from the Milwaukee Journal : " the audience was a swirling mass of airborne cups , ice cubes , shoes , shirts , pogo dancers , body @-@ passers and stage divers . And it wasn 't purely a boy 's club in the moshpit ? many females bought into the mayhem , stripping down to their bras and flinging themselves about madly as the band tore through ' Higher Ground ' , ' Suck My Kiss ' , and ' Give it Away ' , which was Goth @-@ ed up by Frusciante when he added a riff from Black Sabbath 's ' Sweet Leaf ' . "

Blood Sugar Sex Magik began receiving heavy radio play and massive sales in the middle of their U.S. tour . Frusciante , who preferred the Chili Peppers to remain in the underground music scene , entered a state of denial and depression because of this . According to Kiedis , " He began to lose all of the manic , happy @-@ go @-@ lucky , fun aspects of his personality . Even onstage , there was a much more serious energy around him . " Frusciante was slowly slipping away from the band altogether , and began to form grudges against his band mates . He saw the band 's newfound popularity as shameful .

Onstage tension began to grow between Kiedis and Frusciante . Kiedis recalled an argument after a show in New Orleans : " We had a sold @-@ out house and John just stood in the corner , barely playing his guitar . We came offstage and John and I got into it . " With the Peppers now playing shows at arenas rather than theaters , the promoters of the tour decided that Pearl Jam should be replaced with a more successful act . Kiedis contacted Nirvana drummer Dave Grohl , and asked him if Nirvana would replace Pearl Jam on the tour ? an offer Grohl accepted . The Smashing Pumpkins ' Billy Corgan , however , refused to play with Nirvana as he once dated frontman Kurt Cobain 's wife Courtney Love . The Pumpkins were , therefore , taken off the concert bill and replaced with Pearl Jam . Their first show with Nirvana was at the L.A Sports Arena . Kiedis considered their act to be " raw energy ; their musicality , their song selection , they were like a chain saw cutting through the night . " When the Red Hot Chili Peppers finished touring with Nirvana , they traveled to Europe , where Frusciante , in need of someone to connect to , brought along his girlfriend Toni Oswald . Kiedis said that " John had broken our unwritten rule of no spouses or girlfriends on the road . " Briefly interrupting the European @-@ tour , the Chili Peppers flew to New York City and performed on an episode of Saturday Night Live . The band played " Under the Bridge " as the second number ; a performance that Kiedis felt was sabotaged by Frusciante :

[Frusciante] was experimenting the way he would have if we 'd been rehearsing the tune . Well we weren 't . We were on live TV in front of millions of people and it was torture . I started singing in

what I thought was the key he was playing in . I felt like I was getting stabbed in the back and hung out to dry in front of all of America while this guy was off in a corner in the shadow , playing some dissonant out @-@ of @-@ tune experiment .

The band took a two @-@ week hiatus between the European and Japanese legs of the tour , which began in May 1992 . Minutes before the Chili Peppers were scheduled to perform in Tokyo , Frusciante refused to go on stage , claiming he quit the band . After half an hour of coaxing , Frusciante agreed to play the show , though he asserted it would be his last . Kiedis recalled of the situation : " It was the most horrible show ever . Every single note , every single word , hurt , knowing that we were no longer a band . I kept looking over at John and seeing this dead statue of disdain ... And that night , John disappeared from the topsy @-@ turvy world of the Red Hot Chili Peppers . " The band hired guitarist Arik Marshall to complete the rest of the tour , which included Lollapalooza and several European festivals . Marshall , however , was fired at the end of the tour .

= = Accolades = =

= = Track listing = =

All songs written by Red Hot Chili Peppers , except where noted .

= = Album outtakes = =

Around 25 songs were written and recorded during the Blood Sugar Sex Magik sessions . Seventeen of those songs made the album 's final cut . The album 's singles contained four outtakes from the album sessions as b @-@ sides . Among those songs were the instrumental " Fela 's Cock " , a cover of the Stooges ' " Search and Destroy " , " Sikamikanico " (which would also appear on the Wayne 's World soundtrack " in 1992) , and " Soul to Squeeze " , a song that would eventually become a hit single in 1993 when it was released on the Coneheads soundtrack . The song was also included on the band 's 2003 Greatest Hits album . " Little Miss Lover " and " Castles Made of Sand " (a song the band had been performing live for a few years) , two Jimi Hendrix cover songs , would eventually be released in 2006 as iTunes bonus tracks . An unknown song appeared in the VH @-@ 1 Blood Sugar Sex Magik documentary , Ultimate Albums . A rough mix of the album surfaced on the Internet and contains some alternate versions of the songs recorded during the album 's sessions .

= = Personnel = =

Red Hot Chili Peppers

Flea ? bass , backing vocals , percussion on " Breaking the Girl " , trumpet on " Apache Rose Peacock " , piano on " Mellowship Slinky in B Major "

John Frusciante ? electric and acoustic guitars , backing vocals , percussion on " Breaking the Girl "

Anthony Kiedis ? lead vocals , percussion on " Breaking the Girl "

Chad Smith ? drums , percussion on " Breaking the Girl " and " Give It Away "

Additional musicians

Brendan O 'Brien ? mellotron on " Breaking the Girl " and " Sir Psycho Sexy " , B3 Organ on " Suck My Kiss " and " Give It Away " , toy celeste on " Apache Rose Peacock "

Gail Frusciante and her friends ? choir vocals on " Under the Bridge "

Pete Weiss ? Jew 's harp on " Give It Away "

Recording personnel

Brendan O 'Brien ? engineering , mixing (with Rick Rubin)

Rick Rubin ? production

Howie Weinberg ? mastering engineering

Additional personnel
Gus Van Sant ? art direction

= = Chart positions and sales certifications = =

= = = Album = = =

= = = Singles = = =