

= Niandra Lades and Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt =

Niandra LaDes and Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt is the debut solo album by John Frusciante , released on November 22 , 1994 , on American Recordings . Frusciante released the album after encouragement from several friends , who told him that there was " no good music around anymore . "

Niandra LaDes and Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt combines avant @-@ garde and stream @-@ of @-@ consciousness styles , with guitar , piano and various effects on a four @-@ track recorder . The album 's first half , Niandra Lades , was recorded before Frusciante left the Red Hot Chili Peppers in 1992 ; during the recording of Blood Sugar Sex Magik . The second half , Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt , was recorded while the band was on tour in the months leading up to Frusciante 's departure . Niandra Lades and Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt sold poorly upon its release in 1994 , and was taken off the market , only to be re @-@ released in 1999 .

= = Background = =

Frusciante joined the Red Hot Chili Peppers in 1988 , at the age of 18 , and released his first album with the group , Mother 's Milk the following year . The follow @-@ up album , Blood Sugar Sex Magik , was recorded in an empty mansion that the band decided to live in for the duration of recording . Frusciante adapted well to the environment , and often spent his time alone painting , listening to music , and recording songs that would eventually make up the first half of the album , Niandra Lades . Blood Sugar Sex Magik was released on September 24 , 1991 and was an instant success . The album peaked at number three in the U.S. and went on to sell over 12 million copies worldwide . Soon after the album 's release , Frusciante developed a dislike of the band 's newfound popularity . He felt that the band was too famous , and wished they were still playing small nightclubs like they were before he joined the group . By his own admission , the band 's rise to popularity took Frusciante by surprise , and he could not cope with it . During Blood Sugar Sex Magik 's promotional tour , Frusciante began using heroin and cocaine heavily . He and vocalist Anthony Kiedis often argued before and after performances . According to Kiedis , Frusciante began purposely sabotaging shows by playing the wrong intro for a song , or playing out of key . His relationship with the band had become progressively more strained , and he abruptly quit during the Japanese leg of their world tour in 1992 .

= = Writing and recording = =

After leaving the Red Hot Chili Peppers , Frusciante continued to write and record solo material . He had been doing so since the age of nine , but had never considered releasing his material to the public . That was until several of his friends ? including Johnny Depp , Perry Farrell , Gibby Haynes and former Red Hot Chili Peppers band mate Flea ? encouraged him to release the material he wrote in his spare time during the Blood Sugar Sex Magik sessions . Frusciante began working on final cuts of the songs he had been writing , and producing them at his home in mid @-@ 1992 . The production process , however , became hampered by his increasingly severe addiction to heroin . Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt was recorded in the order it appears , with the final tracks being recorded shortly prior to Frusciante 's departure from the Chili Peppers . Frusciante 's use of heroin and cocaine became more extreme during the final stages of recording in late 1993 ; he began viewing drugs as the only way to " make sure you stay in touch with beauty instead of letting the ugliness of the world corrupt your soul . "

During a 1994 interview , a visibly intoxicated Frusciante noted that he wrote the album in order to create " interesting music " , which he felt no longer existed . He felt contemporary artists were not writing material he deemed worth listening to and the mainstream population were settling for mediocrity . Drugs were another significant topic Frusciante based Niandra Lades and Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt on . According to Frusciante , he " was stoned for every single note [he] played on the album . " He increased his drug use to cope with worsening depression that was caused by

leaving the Red Hot Chili Peppers , and his subsequent isolation . Several songs on the album deal with his dislike for the Chili Peppers ' success , such as the album 's eleventh track , " Blood on My Neck From Success " .

All of the music on the record was written by Frusciante , save for the cover of hardcore punk band Bad Brains ' song " Big Takeover " . The track was intentionally slowed down and recorded melodically because of a pastime in which Frusciante sang punk songs in different time signatures : " It was just something I had been walking around thinking of in my head . Sometimes I 'll walk around singing punk rock songs to myself , but as if they were regular songs instead of punk rock songs , you know , slow it down and make a melody instead of just yelling them out . And then the idea occurred me to record it like a Led Zeppelin ballad with mandolins and stuff . " River Phoenix , a friend of Frusciante 's , had contributed guitar and backing vocals to two songs that were intended be included on the record , but they were ultimately left off due to protests from his family . These were later included under different names on the album Smile from the Streets You Hold in 1997 .

Niandra LaDes and Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt incorporated Frusciante 's avant @-@ garde style of song composition , with his stream @-@ of @-@ consciousness methodology . He recorded , mixed , produced and mastered the entire record by himself , and released it on Rick Rubin 's label , American Recordings . Warner Bros. , the Chili Peppers ' label , originally held the rights to the album because of the leaving @-@ artist clause in Frusciante 's Chili Peppers contract . Because he was living as a recluse , however , the label gladly handed the rights over to Rubin , who released the album under his label .

= = Release , reception , and aftermath = =

Niandra LaDes and Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt was initially previewed by Billboard magazine , who said that " Chili Peppers fans might be daunted by the album 's elusive experimentalism . " A representative of American Recordings did not foresee the album as being viable in any mainstream music stores , and some retailers went as far as to ban it from being sold . After the album was released , Frusciante played three small performances , and participated in a few magazine interviews to promote the album , explaining in one interview that people would only be able to understand his work if " their heads are capable of tripping out . " At one point shortly after release , Frusciante began searching for a string quartet to play the album with him on tour . The idea was eventually discarded when he could not find a band that " understands why Ringo Starr is such a great drummer , can play Stravinsky , and also smokes pot . " The concept of a tour was ultimately abandoned as well , due to Frusciante 's diminishing health .

Niandra LaDes and Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt was not widely reviewed , but yielded a generally positive response from critics . Steve Huey of AllMusic , who rated the album four out of five stars , said that " [the album was] an intriguing and unexpected departure from Frusciante 's work with the Chili Peppers " , and that " the sparse arrangements of the first half help set the stage for the gossamer guitar work later on . " He went on to say that Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt ? the latter half of the album ? contained " pleasant psychedelic instrumentals with plenty of backward @-@ guitar effects . " Ned Raggett , also of Allmusic , noted that " there 's nothing quite so stunning as [Frusciante 's] magnificent remake of Bad Brains ' ' The Big Takeover ' . " Adam Williams of PopMatters said the album " fall [s] somewhere between madness and brilliance " . He went on to compare Frusciante to Syd Barrett , and felt it was a " hint at a deeply cerebral artist looking within for inspiration and creativity . " High Times ' Tim Kenneally saw the record as " a revelation , both disturbingly intimate and cryptically veiled . Labeled straight out of the guitarist 's stream of consciousness , it 's worlds away from the up @-@ front , balls @-@ out funk assault of his former band , " with " an ethereal , otherworldly quality . " The album received its share of negative criticism as well . Rolling Stone 's Christian Hoard felt " Frusciante 's eccentricities run seriously amok " , and that " [the album] sounds like a string of four @-@ track demos . The first part of the album is slightly more tuneful than the more ambient , experimental second section [...] Mostly what you get are Frusciante 's acoustic @-@ guitar scratchings and stream @-@ of @-@ conscious ramblings . " The first Rolling Stone review of the record , however , was positive : " All in all , [the album is] a

mess - but definitely a fascinating , often lovely mess . As one might expect of an album titled Niandra Lades and Usually Just a T @-@ shirt this is twisted , cool stuff . " The Boston Herald said that while the album was " a stark display of Frusciante 's acoustic guitar virtuosity " and " eerily beautiful " , the singing was " terrible ; his high notes will drive the neighborhood dogs into a frenzy . "

Frusciante 's drug addiction worsened as the years progressed . An article published by the New Times LA described him as " a skeleton covered in thin skin " . He participated in an interview with Dutch public broadcast station VPRO ? the first media appearance he made since leaving the Chili Peppers . In the interview Frusciante speaks of the positive effects drugs have had on his mind and proudly admits to being a " junkie " . He went on to confess addictions to heroin and crack cocaine , but ultimately described himself as being in the best health of his life . In 1997 , Frusciante released his second solo album Smile From the Streets You Hold , primarily for drug money . Niandra Lades and Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt was estimated to have sold only 45 @,@ 000 copies when Frusciante ordered it out of print in 1998 ? when Frusciante rehabilitated and rejoined the Chili Peppers . Smile From the Streets You Hold was withdrawn from the market a year later . In 1999 Niandra Lades and Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt was re @-@ released on American Recordings . In the early 2000s , Frusciante said he planned to re @-@ release Smile From the Streets You Hold sometime in the future , but did not give any indication as to when . It was eventually re @-@ released on American Records in Europe of 2006 .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written by John Frusciante , except where noted .

Niandra LaDes

" As Can Be " ? 2 : 57

" My Smile Is a Rifle " ? 3 : 48

" Head (Beach Arab) " ? 2 : 05

" Big Takeover " (cover of Bad Brains) ? 3 : 18

" Curtains " ? 2 : 30

" Running Away into You " ? 2 : 12

" Ants (Cassette only bonus track) " ? 2 : 23

" Mascara " ? 3 : 40

" Been Insane " ? 1 : 41

" Skin Blues " ? 1 : 46

" Your Pussy 's Glued to a Building on Fire " ? 3 : 17

" Blood on My Neck From Success " ? 3 : 09

" Ten to Butter Blood Voodoo " ? 1 : 59

Usually Just a T @-@ Shirt [commonly referred to as ' Untitled # 1 @-@ 13 ']

Untitled # 0 (Cassette only bonus track) ? 3 : 41

Untitled # 1 ? 0 : 34

Untitled # 2 ? 4 : 21

Untitled # 3 ? 1 : 50

Untitled # 4 ? 1 : 38

Untitled # 5 ? 1 : 30

Untitled # 6 ? 1 : 29

Untitled # 7 ? 1 : 42

Untitled # 8 ? 7 : 55

Untitled # 9 ? 7 : 04

Untitled # 10 ? 0 : 25

Untitled # 11 ? 1 : 51

Untitled # 12 ? 5 : 27

Untitled # 13 ? 1 : 52

= = Personnel = =

John Frusciante - vocals , guitar , bass , piano , mandolin , banjo , clarinet , producer

Toni Oswald - vocals (Untitled # 9) (Uncredited)

Martyn Atkins - art direction and design

Dirk Walter - design