

John Frusciante's departure is water 'Under the Bridge'

WILL DODDS
the duquesne duke

The rock industry, and its college student contingent in particular, were hit hard last month with the news of John Frusciante's second departure from the Red Hot Chili Peppers. According to his Web site, Frusciante writes that he quit the Chili Peppers while the band was on a hiatus more than a year ago and that "[his] musical interests have led [him] in a different direction."

Although his first departure from the band in 1992 was, in the end, only a six-year, one-album absence, do not expect John Frusciante to someday return to the Red Hot Chili Peppers. His first withdrawal was rash and drug-induced; this time it's assertive and purely emotional.

Frusciante leaves behind a band, who, through their revolutionary fusion of funk and rock, is perhaps the most influential group in the modern rock era. He also leaves behind Flea, with whom he shared one of rock's most distinctive bass-guitar partnerships. That quirky, funky Red Hot Chili Peppers sound, so perfectly complimented by the smoothness and melody of Frusciante's guitar, is now gone.

Yes, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, a band all-too-familiar with guitarist changes, will go on as they always have, but the Frusciante-era of the Chili Peppers will ultimately go down as one of the most prominent groups in rock history.

Chili Peppers listeners everywhere are hurt by this news, but college students like us should be even more hurt — we have a special connection to the John Frusciante-brand of the band. Those who saw Anthony Kiedis and Flea play in 1980's West Coast clubs with Hillel Slovak and Jack

Irons have grown apart from the Chili Peppers, dismissing their more modern material, fixated on the less commercialized, purer funk of Uplift Mofo Party Plan and Freaky Styley. Although Mother's Milk and BloodSugarSexMagik may be before our time, it was the post-heroin Frusciante whose work with the Chili Peppers dominated FM radio as we grew up.

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In 1999, as a recently recovered drug addict, a rusty Frusciante compiled his most brilliant guitar work on *Californication*. Three years later, on *By the Way*, he took a firmer grasp on his band's music. And in 2006, on *Stadium Arcadium*, Frusciante exploded. From the subtle "Charlie" to the two-minute solo in "Turn it Again," Frusciante had taken his work with the Red Hot Chili Peppers to a ridiculous, even more diverse level.

Unfortunately, for Frusciante and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, their music together wasn't meant to develop any further. And so, 17 years, nine albums and four guitarists after their debut as a band, the Chili Peppers are once again back to searching for a replacement.

According to stadium-arcadium.com, a Red

Hot Chili Peppers fan site, Josh Klinghoffer is due to replace Frusciante. Klinghoffer has worked with the band in the past, most notably during the *Stadium Arcadium* world tour. He has also collaborated with Frusciante on his latest solo release, *The Empyrean*.

Having worked officially with nine different guitarists through their years, change has become something the Chili Peppers have dealt with pretty well. But despite their abilities to adapt, with the Klinghoffer-Frusciante swap, the Red Hot Chili Peppers as a band will inevitably undergo a significant identity crisis.

With Flea as the band's engine — a bassist who isn't tied to rhythmic responsibilities — he has the freedom to create, and thus has a unique opportunity to put his personal stamp on the band's music: Slovak, amid 80s punk, kept them raw and funky; Dave Navarro geared them toward a heavier, grungier, more Jane's Addiction-like sound; and Frusciante shaped them into the band we know today.

So where will Klinghoffer take the Red Hot Chili Peppers? Judging by history, he is going to have a drastic impact on his new band. He will ultimately usher in a new era of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, but in which direction the band will go is yet to be seen. They may continue to mellow out, as Kiedis, Flea and Chad Smith all near age 50. Or the 30-year old Klinghoffer may lead them to reminisce in their younger days.

Despite the curiosity, though, for our generation of Red Hot Chili Peppers listeners, it's difficult to be optimistic. Now, with no John Frusciante, the most prominent era of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the era we knew so well, has come to an end.

My Dinosaur Life takes big stomps



KURT RETENAUER
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Despite being on the verge of a mainstream breakthrough, Motion City Soundtrack never achieved the rock-star status of other musicians in their league. Despite many setbacks because of addictions, Justin Pierre (singer/songwriter) gives his most honest effort to date, and the band's hard work and determination shines on *My Dinosaur Life*. With Columbia Records signing MCS for the album and Blink 182's Mark Hoppus on the production, *My Dinosaur Life* had many expectations to meet and, luckily, all were met.

Opener "Worker Bee" starts as a soft confessional. Although it seems like Pierre is trying to get over his past mishaps, he shows fans that, even though he is a different person, he has not lost sight of how to make incredible tunes, and the melodramatic song soon

enough turns into a ruckus of furious guitars.

Taking a turn from its predecessor, "A Lifeless Ordinary (Need A Little Help)" is, on the verses and bridges, an eclectic blend of soft melodies, yet has a heavy chorus that forces one's head to begin bopping. MCS has always been known for their punk rock roots, yet "A Lifeless Ordinary" comes off a bit more alternative than past songs.

Since Pierre and his girlfriend broke up before the recording of this album, the break-up anthem was inevitable. "Her Words Destroyed My Planet" shows Pierre's mixed emotions. In this song, he moves on to an extent, declaring that he "sold my X-Box to Jimmy down the street/I'm learning to speak Japanese." But he also desires her back: "If we'd only stayed together, I might not have fallen apart."

While tracks like "Delirium" and "History Lesson" run very much in line

with MCS's back catalog, featuring the swift drumming, thunderous guitars and sang/shouted lyrics, "Stand Too Close" takes a different route, traveling down the road of shakers, hand claps and acoustic guitars. Yet, something is missing, and that something is the sound of Jesse Johnson's signature Moog synthesizer.

Luckily, the Johnson's signature is not lost past that song. Although the synthesizer often overrides the rest of the instruments, Johnson's capabilities are exquisite on "Pulp Fiction," as the dizzying synthesizers blend beautifully with the booming guitars and drums, and come off as an ode to MCS's earlier work.

Hilarious, yet satisfying "@!#?@!" allows the listener to insert his/her own expletive and is the perfect song to turn up loudly when you're beyond spent. And, continuing on the overemotional feelings is "Hysteria," which comes off as a diary entry from Pierre, as he talks about "falling apart" and going "back to where [he] was again."



Tony Thaxton's spastic drumming and Justin Cain's layered melodies drive "Skin and Bones," making for one of the most powerful tracks on the album. The lyrics are brutally honest, and can almost show the passion from each member of the band. On the contrary, album closer "The Weekends" starts with a slow drumbeat and a distant piano, only to go into a bursting, fantastic closing song.

If there is any good that came out of such a dark point in Pierre's life, *My Dinosaur Life* is it. Having been a band for more than 13 years, MCS is far from new. However, being coupled with Columbia Records and Hoppus' production, *My Dinosaur Life* is a new beginning for MCS.

Musique on the Bluff: The French Seasons 3 p.m. Jan. 24

The Mary Pappert School of Music presents the second and final season of *Musique on the Bluff: The French Seasons*. The concert is performed by David Allen Wehr, the holder of the Jack W. Gertz Distinguished Piano Chair and artistic director for the series, along with other faculty colleagues and world renowned guest artists. A \$10 donation is suggested. For more information, call x6083.

Salsa Friday 10 p.m. Jan. 22

Some of the city's best Salsa disc jockeys heat up the Cabaret at Theater Square's dance floor. A popular Latin America dance, Salsa features various styles and variations to keep you dipping and spinning through the night. This 21 and over event is \$5 and includes a free dance lesson. For more information, call 412-456-6666.

Gallery Crawl 5:30 p.m. Jan. 22

The Pittsburgh Cultural District hosts its free quarterly showcase of art and entertainment. A variety of galleries and spaces are open to the public for display and also feature interaction with the artists. Admission is free. For more information, call 412-471-6082.

Gumby Dharma 9 p.m. Jan. 23

Enjoy a screening of this Emmy-winning 2008 TV documentary about Gumby creator Art Clokey at the ToonSeum. The creator of the green clay figure who starred in a stop-motion animated television series from the 1950s to the 1980s died this month. The documentary focuses on Art's vast animation work throughout his life and also includes short interviews with some contemporary leaders in the animation world who have been touched and influenced by Art's contribution. For more information, call 412-232-0674.

It's Murder, Charlie Brown 10 p.m. Jan. 23

The classic "Peanuts" comic strip gang makes a visit at the Cabaret At Theater Square for a fun, interactive show. Charlie, Lucy, Linus, Marcie and Patty are reuniting for one last holiday together, but when Lucy decides to dig deeper into Charlie's psyche, she puts a lot of risk on the line, including Charlie's life. Presented by Mystery's Most Wanted, a professional mystery dinner theatre company, the event's admission is \$5. For more information, call 412-325-6769.

A Midsummer Night's Dream Times vary, Through Feb. 21

An energetic fairy kingdom, a quartet of mismatched lovers, the bewitched Bottom and a band of bumbling rustics come together at the O'Reilly Theater to perform what is arguably the world's most magical play. Ted Pappas, the director of *Metamorphoses*, *Amadeus* and *Cabaret*, and his team of designers will transform the stage into an exciting new production of Shakespeare's masterpiece. Tickets start at \$15.50 and can be purchased online. For more information, call 412-316-1600.