

nights ago, on the other hand — or should that be leg? — is another story all together.

"I was spinning around with my eyes closed, and I fell straight forward off the front of the stage, eight feet, into a cold concrete floor," explains Anthony. "On the way down I crushed my other leg's calf. So, I'm now in a temporary calf cast on my left leg, and I had to perform last night, in Kansas City, with such a cast. But it actually improved my performance, funnily enough. It forced me to redirect my whole energy flow, and it was kind of new and stimulating for me."

Anthony's not worried Madam Misfortune may be on his tail.

"It's all a very wonderful experience really, having the chance to play music with your friends, and write songs, and kind of exorcise your demons and ghosts and experiences in the form of songs, and have people get into it, and be able to play them live. I'm feeling pretty lucky."

A lot of people are saying *One Hot Minute* is the best album y'all have made yet, and I've read you saying you thought it might be as well. Has there been a major contributing factor that's driven it to the higher level of intensity people are perceiving?

"I think perhaps we just become more and more neurotic and maniacal as time goes by. Therefore our art reflects that sort of maniacal intensity of emotional disparity. I actually think every record we've ever made was a pretty perfect representation of that period of time, so they're all kind of like the perfect musical journal of a lifetime. But this one is the one that's happening now, so I'm partial to it at the moment."

I've always thought the relationship between you and Flea would make a great film. Now you seem to have written the perfect script for it in 'Deep Kick'.

"Flea actually got the ball rolling on that song. Over the years I've definitely written songs about our experiences, but not in such an autobiographical way. Flea wrote the first lyrical verse for that song. He gave it to me, and said: 'What do you think about this?' I said: 'It's cool, but let me hold onto it and I'll write some more verses.' Since we shared these experiences, it was pretty easy to share the lyrical experience on that song. The groove just kind of dictated everything that happened with the vocal, and that's the song I probably most enjoy playing live."

How long have you and Flea been friends for now?

"I'm 33 years old, and I met Flea on the cusp

of my fifteenth and sixteenth birthday."

Can you tell me how the terms of your relationship have changed through the years?

"The terms of our relationship kind of change on a daily basis really. I mean, there are some things that remain consistent, just like our unspoken true love for each other, but in terms of how we actually relate to each other, that can change from minute to minute, because we know each other so well that we are probably a little too in tune with each other's foibles. You know how best friends can sort of concentrate on each other's shortcomings rather than their beautiful and magnetic qualities. So, sometimes we have our struggles together. At the end of every day I think we both go to sleep knowing we have immeasurable love for each other, and that that will last forever no matter what."

"I think perhaps we just become more and more neurotic and maniacal as time goes by."

"Because we spend so much time on the road together, and recording together now, we probably spend less time than we used to as just chumming around buddies. But there are *some* things we still must do together, like go to the Los Angeles Laker basketball games, and things like this."

If a movie ever got made of this relationship, who should play you and Flea?

"I reckon Dom Deluise could probably play Flea, and I think, aah, Natalie, what's her last name, the little girl..."

Portman?

"Yes, Natalie Portman could play me."

What is she, 14?

"I think she's 15."

On the small screen, your most recent videos have gotten amazing. Who's behind the last three: 'My Friends', 'Warped' and 'Aeroplane'?

"Flea's brother-in-law, Gavin Bowden, made both 'Warped' and 'Aeroplane', and he also made our *Funky Monks* home video. He's in the process of making yet another sort of home video/short film of us."

"For the 'My Friends' video we worked with

Anton Corbijn, just based on a particular photo session experience we had with him, and just really liked him as a person, and as a photographer, and thought it would be cool to make a video with him. But Gavin is kind of our mainstay these days."

Speaking of *Funky Monks*, I remember a piece in it where Flea is talking about the things essential to make a Red Hot Chili Pepper, and one ingredient is a love of funk music. I understand the newest Chili Pepper [former Jane's Addiction guitarist Dave Navarro] doesn't score very well on that point.

"It's the kind of thing where because he did not grow up embracing the primally potent vibrations of funk music, he consciously doesn't know how much he relates to the funk. Just last night after we played our show," Anthony tattles, "I heard

"I don't know what goes on in the mind of Chad Smith. He's a pretty mysterious and ghost-like character. To me the priorities are the same as they've always been, which is to make the best possible music we can, without taking any shortcuts or selling out to ourselves at all, just being honest and hardworking, and doing it. That's the priority, to make music we love and believe in and that sounds good."

"If you lose that and you become inspired or affected by all of the outside nonsense that comes along with a successful rock band, then everything gets watered down and tainted and destroyed. When your goals become something other than just making the best music you can find inside yourself, it's not gonna be real, it's not gonna be right."

So, tell me, at this stage, if the Chili Peppers are currently [to paraphrase the 'author's note' in *One Hot Minute's* artwork] 'roosting in the hen house or wallowing in the pig pen'?

"It's a little bit of each at all times. My existence is a huge and splendid contradiction at all times. It's never one or the other, it's always a combination platter."

'Pleasure spiked with pain', right?

"Yeah, funny as it sounds, it's the truth."

Anthony's looking forward to returning to New Zealand in a big way. He holidayed here in May last year, and plans to stay awhile after the rest of the Peppers leave this time around.

"I truly do love the country of New Zealand," he says. "Aesthetically, vibe-wise, historically, just everything. I'm very, very attracted to that country. I wouldn't necessarily announce that to the world, because I think one of the most precious things about New Zealand is its minimal population of humans, and I think it'd be a bummer if it just became another hotbed of human trash."

Although Anthony swears he has not bought "a single piece of dirt in old New Zealand", he says he would like to, "to have a house there and make babies, and show them what it is to live in clean air and clean water".

Still, he can't imagine ever severing ties with the place he has sung of sometimes being his only friend, in the band's cross-over hit, 'Under the Bridge', from *BloodSugarSexMagik* (1991).

"I do love Los Angeles, and as disgusting a place as it is, I'll never be able to say goodbye to it completely."

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

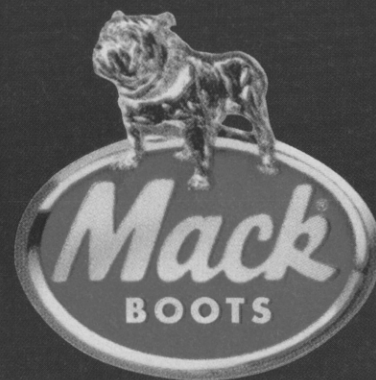
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