

"Under the Bridge" Red Hot Chili Peppers



By Lorne Behrman

In 1989, the Red Hot Chili Peppers were a spastic bunch of groove mutants, and they charmed the budding alternative scene with endearingly obnoxious humor and exuberant kitchen-sink funk. Two years later, the band charmed the rest of the world with the more digestible *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*

Magik—a bluntly produced distillation of what had lain beneath the band's spinning-room, party-music exterior. When the Peppers slowed down and dug in, they proved themselves as songwriters. The ballad "Under the Bridge" became RHCP's first Top 10 single and marked the beginning of the group's platinum-pop run.

THE INTRO/VERSE RIFF

The intro to "Under the Bridge"—an ornate D-F# guitar figure—is instantly recognizable. To learn the intro, first get comfortable with guitarist John Frusciante's closed D voicing [Fig. 1]—basically your open D "cowboy" chord with the root and 3rd relocated to the 5th and 4th strings, respectively. As shown, fret the low D with your 4th finger, the 4th-string F# with your 3rd finger, the 3rd-string A with your 1st finger, and the 2nd-string D with your 2nd finger. Ease into this stretchy shape by playing it higher on the neck—somewhere, say, between 7th and 10th position—and working your way down to intro's 2nd-position chord. The F# chord [Fig. 2], meanwhile, is your standard barre shape.

Frusciante plays the intro fingerstyle, picking with relaxed precision. To do the same, delegate your pick hand's thumb to strings 6-4 and your index and middle fingers to strings 3 and 2, respectively. Use your thumb and middle finger to squeeze the dyads that occur on the first beat of nearly every bar. Start slowly, finger-picking with economy of movement as you increase the tempo.

HENDRIX-STYLE ACCOMPANIMENT

Frusciante has gone through various artistic phases where he's studied other musicians with such disciplined passion that their music has become part of his own. "Under the Bridge" marks the high point of Frusciante's fascination with Jimi Hendrix—this

is most apparent in the "Little Wing"-style accompaniment in verses 2 and 3. Before attempting these celestial chord licks, get the basic changes in your ear by using stock voicings to run through the



ALBUM
Blood Sugar
Sex Magik
(Warner Bros.)

E-B-C#m-G#m-A-E-B-C#m-A progression. Frusciante chips harmonic essentials from this sequence and ornaments them with hammer-ons and pull-offs. These Hendrix-style moves—the lone exception here is the E chord, which is played unembellished and with a regular grip—are based entirely on

6th string-rooted barre chords fingered without the low root notes [Fig. 3]. To cop Frusciante's treatment of the B chord, use your 4th finger to hammer on to the 9th-fret E, and to pull off to the pre-fretted D#. Start slowly and work on building the muscle control needed to consistently nail this maneuver. For the C#m move, simply slide into the chord from a whole step (two frets) below, and then pick the 4ths-based dyads as indicated. Finally, as with the B chord's embellishment, execute the A chord's slurred triplet with your 4th finger.

THE OUTRO

The outro is a clever variation on the chorus. Here, Frusciante uses the same ringing chords, and adds decorative pull-offs and picked motifs to change things up. There isn't much repetition in the outro; Frusciante's ideas develop from bar to bar. Start by mastering each measure on its own, perfecting each variation before you start slowly tying them all together. **B**

TONE ZONE

GUITARS 1 & 2: Solidbody
PICKUP/POSITION: Single-coil/Neck
GAIN: 4
EQ: Bass/Mid/Treble:
7/6/5

Fig. 1 D

4 3 1 2

Fig. 2 F#

1 3 4 2 1

Fig. 3 B

3 4 2 1

C#m

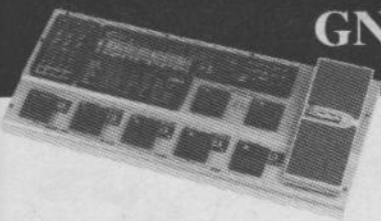
3 4 1 1

G#m

3 4 1 1

A

3 4 2 1



UNDER THE BRIDGE

As Recorded by Red Hot Chili Peppers

(From the Warner Bros. Recording BLOOD SUGAR SEX MAGIK)

Words and Music by Anthony Kiedis, Flea,
John Frusciante and Chad Smith

Lyrics

Verse 1

Sometimes I feel
Like I don't have a partner.
Sometimes I feel
Like my only friend
Is the city I live in,
The City of Angels.
Lonely as I am,
Together we cry.

Verse 2

I drive on her streets
'Cause she's my companion.
I walk through her hills
'Cause she knows who I am.
She sees my good deeds,
And she kisses me windy.
I never worry,
Now that is a lie.

Pre-Chorus

I don't ever wanna feel
Like I did that day.
Take me to the place I love,
Take me all the way.

Verse 3

It's hard to believe
That there's nobody out there.
It's hard to believe
That I'm all alone.
At least I have her love,
The city, she loves me.
Lonely as I am,
Together we cry.

Chorus

Under the bridge downtown
Is where I drew some blood.
Under the bridge downtown,
I could not get enough.
Under the bridge downtown
Forgot about my love.
Under the bridge downtown
I gave my life away.

Intro

Moderately Slow ♩ = 68

Gtr. 1
(clean)

Chord progression: D F#

mf
w/ fingers
let ring throughout

TAB

3 4 2 4 3 2 4 2 0 4 2 4 4 4 3 4 4 2 0 2

Chord progression: D F# F#

1. F# 2. F#

3 4 2 3 5 3 2 4 6 6 2 4 4 4 4 2 0 2 2 4 4 3 4 4 3 4 4

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Under the Bridge

0:28

Verse 1

Faster ♩ = 82

E B C#m G#m A E B C#m A

w/pick

1. Some-times I feel like I don't have a part - ner. Some-times I feel like my on-ly friend is the

9 7 9 4 5 9 7 9 5
9 8 9 4 6 9 8 9 6
7 9 7 6 7 7 11 7

E B C#m G#m A E B C#m A Emaj7

cit-y I live in, the Cit-y of An - gels. Lone-ly as I am, to- geth-er we cry. 2. I

9 7 9 4 5 9 7 9 5 9
9 8 9 4 6 9 8 9 6 9
7 9 7 6 7 7 11 7 7 7

0:58

Verses 2 & 3

E B C#m G#m A

Rhy. Fig. 1

drive on her streets 'cause she's my com - pan - ion. I

9 9 7 7 7 9 9 4 5 5 7 5 5
9 8 9 8 9 8 9 9 4 4 6 7 5
9 9 9 9 9 9 11 11 6 7 7

E B C#m A Emaj7

End Rhy. Fig. 1

walk through her hills 'cause she knows who I am. She...

9 9 7 7 7 9 9 5 5 5 6 9
9 8 9 8 9 8 9 9 4 4 6 7 5
9 9 9 9 9 9 11 11 7 7 7

1:27

Pre-Chorus

F#m E B F#m

I don't ev-er wan - na feel like I did that day...

X X 10 9 9 9 16 16 16 16 10 10 10 X X
X X 11 9 9 9 16 16 16 16 11 11 11 X X
X X 11 9 9 9 16 16 16 16 11 11 11 X X
X X 9 7 7 7 14 14 14 14 9 9 9 X X

*omit note on repeat

To Coda

1:50 Interlude
play 4 times
Gtr. 1: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1

D.S. al Coda
(take repeats)

