



After reviewing *Native Heart - Urban Soul* by Big City Indians in the last issue of *Eternal Spirit* Paul Pirate was intrigued to find out more about them. BCI front man, Wolfsheart, answers the questions.

Sorry, but I'm afraid I can only think of Native North American Indians as living in North America. How is it that you come to be based in Vienna, Austria?

Since my childhood days I've felt a close relationship to nature and freedom. I grew up in surroundings (Vienna) that could accept my personality. For me it was a natural development towards the Indian way of life. I feel a strong respect for what the rhythm of nature is giving to us and I feel a strong respect for the dignity of every human being. As you can see, there's a strong link to the native philosophy. But some people may claim that I'm a part of western society. They're right: This is why Big City Indians is something like a melting pot of two worlds. I don't pretend to be a native, but I'm certainly a native in mind.

Are any members of your band Native Indians?

The other guys are all also from Austria, but we have natives in our band: the dancers Roy Pete from Arizona (Navajo), and White Buffalo

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from Canada (Blackfeet).

Who are the members of the band and what instruments do they play?

I play Native American drums and flutes, and lead vocals. We've got Chris Pogats on acoustic and electric guitars, Firefly plays bass guitar and percussion, Gigi Skokan plays keyboards and backing vocals, and Roli Reiter is on drums.

Do your lyrics reflect Indian culture?

There's a very conscious message, but to make it clear: I don't want to push my opinion, as I'm not a preacher. But despite that I'd be glad if the listeners would share some of our thoughts. Especially in these strange and chaotic times, we should remember some of the old values and rules of the old culture. Remember, this a high-tech civilization where machines and computers sometimes are more important than human beings. We live in a world where profit is the new God. So the philosophy of Big City Indians is to make people think about the real values of life. I speak of individuality,

nature, freedom and a conscious life. Don't get me wrong: I'm not against technical progression and the evolution of our society, but we have to keep a balance. This is what Big City Indians is all about. Come and join our mind family.

When I listen to your music it seems to me that you mix tribal music with Rock 'n' Roll and a touch of Blues. How would you describe your music?

We call our emotional energetic sound 'Native Indian Power Groove'. We've stuck with the Native intertribal basics, but added some more ethnic sounds, tribal beats, mystic ethereal keyboard sounds, funky bass lines, rocking riffs, Native American flute, meditative sounds and grooving guitar.

Who was responsible for the idea of mixing the musical styles?

I've been playing music for a very long time now. Even when I played with my previous band, which wasn't involved in this native thing, I always had the idea of bringing Native Indian music and contemporary western pop and rock music together. In 1997 the vision became reality: Along with two other guys from Vienna I founded Big City Indians. The band became very well accepted after quite a short time. We played a couple of gigs and released our debut album, *Uncle Peyote*. We

got very cool reactions from the audience, because people were very much fascinated by this unique sound. This gave me a lot of power to carry on. In 1999 there was a big change in the musical direction. At this time I wanted to give the band a whole new face, personally and musically. We incorporated more groove, more keyboards and more guitar power, because the music needed refreshing. For this reason, we had four new members join the band. After some changes we've now got a constant line-up.

What's the reaction of people when they first hear your music?

Some people are fascinated from the first tune on; some people are a bit confused.

How many albums have you made?

Two original studio albums: *Uncle Peyote* and *Native Heart - Urban Soul*. There are also unofficial Harmonized Chill-Out Tapes, two compilation CDs and the DVD: *Live Rising Spirit*.

Have you ever had the chance to perform in North America?

No, but some negotiations are happening for 2009.

I see on your website that you've got a page dedicated to 'kids'. What's this all about?

We're particularly concerned with letting children explore the world of rhythm in a playful manner. To achieve this, we use animation techniques designed for kids and use a variety of rhythm instruments, plus our own hands, feet and voices. In other words: through beating the drums, stamping feet, dancing and singing you can have a lot of fun and learn a lot about music and the American Native's culture at the same time.

Have you ever performed in the UK?

Not yet, but hopefully this year we shall.

Have you got any plans you'd like to tell us about?

BCI have started work on a new album - sessions are going fine. Expect the new CD and some surprises in summer 2008. Come and hear our new songs being performed this year in Europe.

