

# Arvel Bird (Southern Paiute-Me'tis/Scottish)

## World Music Violinist/Flutist

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**Arvel Bird**, a classically trained violinist, performs and records in a number of diverse genres, including Native American, Celtic, classical, world fusion, blues, jazz, bluegrass, New Age, folk, Cajun, Western swing, Appalachian, and American roots. In addition to the violin, he is also an accomplished mandolin, guitar, Native flute player. He is an experienced musician who toured the world with Glen Campbell, Loretta Lynn, Ray Price and other country greats for several years before turning his musical focus to his mixed-blood heritage in 2001. He now focuses most of his time on touring, while writing and recording music that reflects that background. Bird is signed to Singing Wolf Records, his own label, in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Recordings:** Bird has released fifteen CDs, and two DVDs:

- 1) *Red River Jig* (2009) is a lively Me'tis Fiddle CD featuring many of Arvel's favorite Me'tis fiddle tunes along with several of his own composition.
- 2) *Tribal Music Suite, Journey of a Paiute* (2008) is Arvel's Soul Song, and his most important work to date. This release is a concerto for violin, Native American flute and symphony orchestras.
  - 2009 Nomination at Indian Summer Music Awards for Best Contemporary Instrumental
  - 2009 Nomination at Native American Music Award for Artist of the Year
  - 2009 Nomination at Native American Music Award for Best World Recording
- 3) *One Nation* (2008) is the second and last outing for this world fusion band.
- 4) *Music for Wellness and Bliss* (2008) is a massage CD that combines selected songs from *Animal Totems* and *Animal Totems 2*.
- 5) *Arvel Bird and One Nation* (2006) is Bird's debut CD with One Nation, featuring Chris James, John LoneEagle and Vlasia, is a world beat album with flavors of Celtic, Native, Latin, reggae, and other cultural mixtures.
- 6) *Ananeah* (2006) is an improvisational New Age CD featuring the talents of Grammy nominees William Eaton, Will Clipman, and Mary Redhouse.
  - 2008 winner of the New Age Reporter's award for Best Native American Album.
- 7) *Animal Totems 2* (2005). This sequel to *Animal Totems* contains blues shuffle and Latin jazz with striking cinematic arrangements.
  - 2007 winner of the Native American Music Award for Artist of the Year.
  - 2006 winner of the Indian Summer Music Award for Best Contemporary Instrumental CD.
- 8) *Arvel Bird LIVE!* (2004), a mixture of songs from *Animal Totems* and *Big Chief Quetoos* featuring the popular stories he tells before playing the songs when he's performing live.
  - 2006 winner of the Native American Music Award for Best Instrumental CD.
- 9) *Animal Totems* (2002). Bird's signature CD is a collection of original works which each reflect the essential elements of the powerful spirit that resides within each animal. It blends New Age, Celtic, classical, and improvisational music styles to create a "Native Jazz Fusion" sound. Was remixed, remastered, and rereleased in 2007.
  - 2007 winner of the Canadian Aboriginal Music Award for Best Instrumental Album.
- 10) *Big Chief Quetoos, Paiute Country Fiddle* (2003), a collection of Bird's original tunes, as well as old cowboy songs and traditional fiddle jigs with Indian names.
- 11) *Christmas with Arvel and Fred* (2003) features Bird on fiddle with vocals by Fred Rothert and is a collection of some of their favorite carols.

- 12) *Rakish Paddy* (2002), a collection of Celtic tunes from the 16th through the 19th centuries played on traditional instruments.
- 13) *My Cabin Don't Leak* (2002), with Bird on fiddle, vocals by Fred Rothert, and Billy Ray Lilly on banjo, this CD features fiddle music that brings to mind a front-porch jam session in the Appalachian Mountains.
- 14) *Birdstock: Fiddle Tunes for the Birds* (2001), an eclectic mix of Texas fiddle, bluegrass, Celtic, and jazz tunes all named for birds.
- 15) *Draggin' the Bow* (1981), Bird's first recording features his original composition entitled "The Breakfast Suite" - a piece that was premiered at a concert by the Fort Wayne Philharmonic.

#### **DVDs:**

*Arvel Bird at Roots & Rhythm DVD* (2009) is a live video recording of a solo concert in Ft. Wayne, IN featuring many new songs and stories.

*Arvel Bird Live at Schemitzun* (2006). Schemitzun is the Green Corn Festival in Stonington, CT, celebrated by the Mashantucket/Pequot Tribe.

Also: *Winds of the East* (2006). Bird collaborated with mega-talented, multi-Grammy nominated pianist Peter Kater and flutist extraordinaire Joseph Firecrow to create this incredible New Age CD, released on Red Feather Records.

Next in line: Bird is currently working on *Ride Indian Ride*, due to be released in late 2009.

**Scores:** Bird has written music for the following documentaries and short films:

- 1) **Documentaries:** Native American Sacred Places, Sacred Journey, Mighty Mac, Icebreaker Mackinaw.
- 2) **Short films:** Spirit Mountain, Animal Totems (music video), Patrick, Pirate Fantasy, Field Trip, A Secret World, Lost Souls: Lighthouses & Shipwrecks.
- 3) **Feature Films:** THE BOYHOOD OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN: The Making of the Man, THE SPIRIT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

**Endorsements:** Barcus-Berry Violins, L.R. Baggs violin bridges and pickups, Pat Haran Flutes, Badger Family Drums, Desert Son Moccasins

**Early life and education:** From the age of nine, Bird knew what he wanted to do with his life - he wanted to play the trumpet. However, with no funds for one available, he was instead presented with a violin - an instrument given to his mother by a violinmaker named Joseph Smithbauer. Bird and the violin were soon inseparable, although the instrument's size challenged the young player. His family recognized his special gift, and was eventually able to provide him with private lessons. Bird continued to study classically on a music scholarship to Arizona State University. Though his desire was to develop his performance skills, each and every professor he encountered told him he wasn't "good enough" to perform and that he should concentrate on teaching instead. His response was to leave Arizona and move to the mid-west to study with Paul Roland, a renowned Hungarian violin instructor at the University of Illinois-Champaign/Urbana. Under Roland's tutelage, Bird gained the technical proficiency and confidence that has served him so well over the years.

**The foundations of Bird's musical style:** It was after leaving university that Bird found his true musical calling. During this period he devoted hours of each day to improvisational playing, developing the unique style for which he is known today. As this style developed, Bird was invited to play with many folk, bluegrass, and Celtic musicians. According to Bird: "I was attracted to the wild abandon of fiddle music. Eventually, as I continued performing, a tribal feeling and Celtic style began running through most of my own compositions resonating from deep inside of me." Ironically, at this time, Bird was unaware of his Scottish heritage, and had not yet explored his Native roots.

**Bird's exploration of his American Indian roots:** Born to a Mormon inter-racial family in Idaho, and raised in Utah and Arizona, Bird was aware of his Indian heritage from an early age, but, like many families in that time and place, it was not mentioned, let alone celebrated. He grew up as part of a hard working, middle-class family, and out of respect for his mother's feelings he never asked her about her Native origins. As an adult, however, he became more and more interested in his background, eventually donating time and resources to a project aimed at protecting ancient Native burial sites in Tennessee. By the year 2000, Bird had recorded his first Native American album for a Nashville singer/songwriter - and simultaneously launched Singing Wolf Records.

This sparked the beginning of his personal journey to uncover the truth about his Paiute heritage. In the summer of 2001, he received documentation from his mother, previously unknown to him, supporting his bloodline to the Shivwit band of Utah's Southern Paiute tribe. The effect this discovery made on Bird has been profound.

He made trips to St. George, UT, and the Shivwit Paiute reservation where he met half sisters (cousins), searched and studied his genealogy, attended pow wows, and talked to elders, all the while finding a stronger affinity and connection to the underlying core beliefs of Native America, and a deepening sense of who he was. Since then all of his performances have reflected and honored his Native American heritage through his music and stories.

**The Celtic Connection:** In early 2008, Bird visited Scotland for the first time when he was invited to perform at Celtic Connections in Glasgow - a series of concerts featuring artists from around the globe alongside the very best of Scottish talent. Shortly before leaving for the event he found out from his aunt that she had traced the Scottish side of Bird's family back to 1744 to a member of the Kennedy clan called James. His birthplace was Kilmarnock, just south of Glasgow. His voyage across the ocean had now become the trip of a lifetime for Bird as he was finally able to put the final piece in the puzzle to his unique heritage.

**Further Information:** For more information on Bird, the public may visit [www.arvelbird.com](http://www.arvelbird.com) and [www.myspace.com/arvelbird](http://www.myspace.com/arvelbird). Bird's CDs are available at [www.arvelbird.com](http://www.arvelbird.com), [www.singingwolfrecords.com](http://www.singingwolfrecords.com), [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com), and select Borders, Barnes and Noble, Native American and New Age stores worldwide. Downloadable individual tracks are also available at [www.myspace.com/arvelbird](http://www.myspace.com/arvelbird), [itunes.com](http://itunes.com), [emusic.com](http://emusic.com), [rhapsody.com](http://rhapsody.com) and many others.