

# Micki Free In Concert

■ Cherokee/Comanche Singer, Songwriter Is Winner of NAMA's "Best Male Artist" award for 2002.

By Ron Karten

Micki Free is another Indian star loaded with talent in art and business at the same time.

"I gotta tell you, I'm really excited about playing for your guys," said Free in a recent telephone interview.

Discovered by Gene Simmons of the rock group *Kiss* in the 1980s, Free has worked with Diana Ross, Prince and Janet Jackson, and he wrote music for movies like "Beverly Hills Cop" (winning a Grammy for "Best Album of an Original Score Written for a Motion Picture") and "Footloose."

His albums have gone platinum (a Record Industry Association of America award for album sales exceed-

ing 1,000,000 units) and gold (exceeding 500,000 units).

Free's is not a standard Indian upbringing. As he hit his teens, his stepfather was transferred to Germany, where the family lived principally for 10 years.

"I knew I was a Native, but I wasn't aware of the racial barriers that people put on others. They keep it down in Europe."

As a result, it never occurred to him that he couldn't do anything he wanted. When he turned to rock & roll, he spent his time on the tour bus earning his Bachelor of Arts Degree in public relations by a correspondence

course from Germany.

Multi-talented, Free also is a prize winner in such shooting groups as "The California Desperados," "Single Action Shooting Society" and "Cowboy Mounted-Shooting Association." He performs around the world, both on his horse, Ty-ee, and with any number of instruments from guitar to Native American flute to piano.

Free also owns companies selling Native American jewelry and clothing. "Cherokee Free's Native American Jewelry" and "True Native" can be previewed at [www.cherokeefrees.com](http://www.cherokeefrees.com).

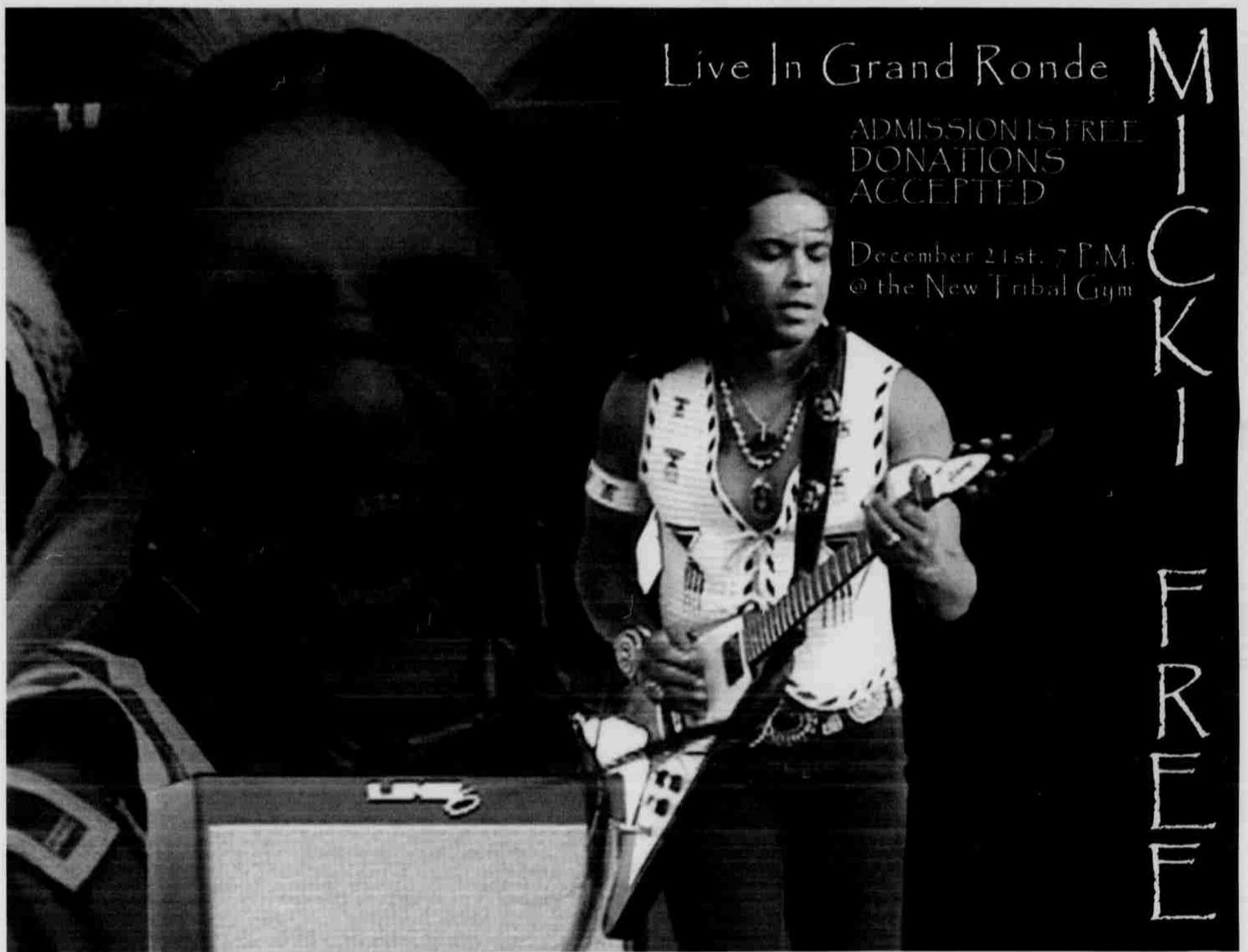
Free's music fans will have an exclusive chance to see him in (music)

action at the new Tribal gymnasium in Grand Ronde, where he will perform on Saturday, December 21, at 7:00 p.m. in the evening.

"We tear it up," said Free. "I'll put on a show for you guys like when I go on tour with *Kiss*. I'd be honored to do anything to help Native people. I'm a huge advocate for our youth. I'm down for it."

Free, who also loves fly-fishing, will take the opportunity while in Oregon to see if he can't find a river that runs through it.

Learn more about this remarkable individual at his website: [www.mickifree.com](http://www.mickifree.com). ■



Live In Grand Ronde

ADMISSION IS FREE  
DONATIONS  
ACCEPTED

December 21st, 7 P.M.  
@ the New Tribal Gym

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## INTERIM CASINO CEO BILL PIERCE KNOWS THE ROPES

Interim continued from front page

able since that time."

He left the Marines as a lance corporal and returned to Oregon where he joined the Oregon State Police (OSP).

For 28 years, he made a career in the police department as a detective, handling such high profile cases as the Michael Franke murder. Michael Franke was the Director of the Oregon department of Corrections when he was murdered in front of the DOC Headquarters in 1989.

For what Pierce described as a simple situation of "a guy (Franke) being in the wrong place at the wrong time," he said it was the longest running case of his career, taking up two-and-a-half years.

When Tribal gaming was established in 1995, he was assigned to the OSP Tribal Gaming Unit and was involved in auditing the activities of all eight Tribal casinos, including Spirit Mountain. He was still on this beat at his retirement in 1999.

For two months in early 2000, the Grand Ronde Gaming Commission coaxed him out of retirement for the first time to help with an annual compliance audit of the casino. With his years of experience auditing Indian casinos for state government, he was a natural for the effort.

Then, late in the fall of 2001, the Tribe again called on his talent, this time to serve on the casino's Board

of Directors — Spirit Mountain Gaming, Inc. He became chairman of the board in the fall and on September 24, the Tribal Council named him Interim Chief Executive Officer.

"I was already familiar with the regulatory side," he said, "and for years I had been involved with the people who ran the day-to-day operations, so it was a fairly easy transition. I know most of the folks here."

With the difficult job of finding a successor in process, Pierce discussed where he focuses his efforts in the meantime. "Probably most important is not to lose the momentum of the business," he said.

Still, he added, "it's a lot of fun for me, a challenge to confront the

day-to-day issues. On the other hand, the executive team and all the employees have always been exemplary to work with."

Pierce is married with two grown sons and counts hunting and fishing as his favored off-duty pursuits.

"We appreciate the fact that he grew up in this part of the country," said Tribal Chairwoman Cheryl Kennedy, "and is well acquainted with our Tribal culture and values as well as our local community. He is a great interim choice for us. We are confident Bill will continue our spirit of excellence, while continuing to operate our casino in a manner that is attractive to the public and will provide our Tribe with the means to gain economic self sufficiency." ■