

## THE SHAMAN'S WAY

### A PROPOSAL FOR A DOCUMENTARY TELEVISION SERIES

Part travel adventure, part spiritual quest, the series *The Shaman's Way* will explore the inner workings, ceremonies, rites and rituals of tribal medicine men from around the world – The series will step beyond the rational constraints of Western consciousness into a world of ancient auguries, talismen and incantation, of shape-shifting, fasting, trance and ecstatic healing.

*“We are so accustomed to the apparently rational nature of our world that we can scarcely imagine anything happening that cannot be explained by common sense.”*

**Carl Gustav Jung, Psychologist**

*“When presented with something we believe to be unreal, we doubt our senses or our sanity.”*

**Mary Schmidt, Anthropologist**

The Shaman walks through a world of spirits, where all things are alive and sacred – the sentinel trees and solitary rocks, the distant drumming of thunder, the dancing lights of the aurora, the souls of hunted prey. It is a dangerous world in which illness or drought can arise through the instrument of a malicious spell, where the future can be foretold in a vision, the ghosts of the dead put to rest through incantation, and the gods invoked through a Shaman's power. Using the “techniques of ecstasy” - dance, chanting, trance and often psychotropic drugs - the Shaman is a living bridge for his tribe, uniting the physical and spiritual worlds. Through his magical agency the young are initiated into adulthood, diseases and maladies are cured, lost objects are found, spell are concocted, defences conjured, the weather changed and the balance of nature restored.

The magical arts of the Shaman are as ancient as the drawings on cave walls, and as vital as the legends passed down from the days of the first fires. As they have for millennia, the rites of the healers remain the heart and soul of the living cultures of tribal peoples – so called “primitive” societies which still live their spiritual truth as fully integrated communities in harmony with the forces of the natural world that sustain them. It is no wonder that the psychological roots of shamanic practice have a strong appeal for a burgeoning new generation of Western seekers who recognize in tribal medicine a direct and vital connection to a profound, personal spiritual experience.

Through a series of four hour-long documentary journeys, *The Shaman's Way* will transport its audience to remote, exotic locales to experience - first hand - the magical ceremonies and ecstatic healing practices of tribal shamens.

Being sacred, shamanic rituals are traditionally closed to outsiders. Phil Borges, however, has managed to gain privileged access to the medicine men of four different tribal peoples by virtue of the relationships of trust he has established with the native guides he calls “Bridging People”. Being knowledgeable of both their tribal society and the mores of the West, these rare individuals (sometimes apprentice shamens themselves) are able to provide these documentary expeditions with critical introductions to the shamens, as well as helping to set the healing practices within a cultural context accessible to Western thought.

*The Shaman's Way* will open a window on seldom seen shamanic rituals and ceremonies of healing, divination, initiation and intercession. The objective of each program will be to record the mysterious and ecstatic communion of the Shaman - induced through chanting, through trance, through the ingestion of sacred drugs. To understand the living beliefs, profound spirituality and humanity of aboriginal peoples will be the goal of the series as a whole.

Woven throughout the series will be the comments and commentaries of leading experts in the fields of anthropology, ethnology, sociology, psychology and religious thought. Experts in each tribes the series will guide us to better understanding each culture. Popular authors such as **Wade Davis** (*The Serpent & The Rainbow*), and contemporary thinkers such as **Susan Ingerman** and **Michael Harner** (founder of the *Foundation for Shamanic Studies*) will share with us their insights.

With modern tribal peoples as our focusing lens, *The Shaman's Way* will permit us to look back across the expanse of human history, into the darkness of the distant past, where our ancestors huddled around the flickering light of ancient campfires, and magic men conjured up visions of the gods from the smoke. At the deepest recesses of our collective consciousness –imprinted perhaps on our genetic code itself - we sense in the Shaman's Way a connection to a world now open to most of us only in dreams.

