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## Swing band sensation Big Bad Voodoo Daddy joins Philharmonic for pops concert Saturday

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel  
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Listen to the interview with Glen Marhevka.

Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, who'll be performing this Saturday at a Fort Wayne Philharmonic Pops concert at the Embassy Theatre, brings a refreshing sense of the past to a world awash in text messages, smart phones and computers.

The group's sound is rooted in swing music from the '30s and '40s, but they also mix in Dixieland, big-band music and jazz to create an unique blend that has garnered them multiplatinum CD sales, performances before three U.S. presidents, a Super Bowl half-time show appearance and a solid fan base.

Glen "The Kid" Marhevka, trumpet player for Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, says that the group will perform songs from all of their older albums at the Embassy as well as preview a few brand new songs from their upcoming album due later this year.

Playing with a symphony orchestra gives the group's music a heavier sound, and Marhevka says that's something Big Bad Voodoo Daddy really enjoys.

"It's really fun actually," Marhevka said in a telephone interview.

"We get to play with amazing musicians for one, which is really cool for us. We love being on stage with the whole orchestra, ... it just has such a great sound. It's a much bigger sound, it sounds really elegant.

"It's like driving a big old Cadillac — they just sort of float on the road. You take the corners kind of bigger versus when it's just the band it's much smaller, like driving maybe more of a race car than a cush, cool Cadillac."

Marhevka said Big Bad Voodoo Daddy's shows are a testing ground for new material. Performing songs on the road gives the band time to perfect new music so, when they go to record it, they're prepared and can record quite quickly without wasting time and money.

"Scotty Morris is our main songwriter, and our piano player, Josh (Levy), does the arranging," Marhevka said of working up new material.

"They sort of come with the basic structure of the tune, and then we just start playing it at sound checks, playing it live ... (and) usually, by the time we go into record, we've played it a lot and it's pretty much ready to go.

"Time really is money when you're recording," Marhevka added. "We try and be really, really prepared before we record in the studio and have played the music many, many times."

Big Bad Voodoo Daddy also makes sure that, when they record, they use recording studios that have an older, more traditional sound; the sound you might find on a jazz album from the 1950s.

Marhevka feels using older recording studios and equipment inspires the band and gives their music a solid connection to the past.

"We've recorded most of our albums at the Capitol Records recording studios in Hollywood," Marhevka said. "This one (their upcoming album) we did at EastWest Studios, which is right in Hollywood, ... they've recorded tons of old, classic albums — like The Beach Boys recorded 'Pet Sounds' there. Frank Sinatra's recorded there, Nat King Cole. There have been so many albums done in that studio.

"We like to go for the old sounding rooms. Those rooms were built a long time ago, and they all have such a great sound and old gear, the great microphones.

"It's really inspiring to walk into any of those old studios," Marhevka continued. "Once you get into a room, it feels like you're in 1950, you know. The rooms look that way inside. You look at the old pictures, and the rooms look the same. It's stayed that way for a reason because they sound so good."

A career that lasts even 10 years is a minor miracle in the music business. That Big Bad Voodoo Daddy still is going strong after almost 20 years and band members are still enjoying it is something that Marhevka cherishes.

"The best part, the most satisfying part to me, is that the band has been together almost 20 years, and we're all really good friends and we're all together out playing music," Marhevka said.



### More Information

#### Swing music sensations

**What:** The Fort Wayne Philharmonic Pops performs with swing band Big Bad Voodoo Daddy in a Sweetwater Series Pops concert.

**When:** 8 p.m. Saturday

**Where:** Embassy Theatre, 121 W. Jefferson Blvd.

**Cost:** \$25, \$43, \$52, \$57 and \$65. Tickets available at the Embassy box office, Phil box office at 481-0777 or at [www.fwphil.org](http://www.fwphil.org). For information, call the Embassy box office at 424-5665 or The Phil box at 481-0777.

“We could be playing a small club tomorrow night for 200 people or we could be playing for 20,000. The fact that we’re still doing it and we haven’t stopped at all this whole time, and everyone’s as committed and excited about it as we were in the beginning, I think that says a lot to me.”