**STEVE KNIGHTLEY BIOGRAPHIES**

**NOVEMBER 2023**

**Press Quotes & Links at The End**

**Short Biography For “The Winter Yards Tour”**

***130 Words***

Renowned Westcountry songwriter Steve Knightley, former Show of Hands frontman, announces a ground-breaking nationwide solo tour—the first since the iconic band disbanded. Focused on promoting his latest album, ‘The Winter Yards,’ this tour signifies a profound shift in Knightley’s musical journey.

Booked by Midnight Mango, the move is a calculated step for the seasoned artist. The agency stated, “We are proud to be involved in the launch of the fresh chapter in the remarkable career of legendary songwriter Steve Knightley.”

Notably, the tour includes Knightley’s inaugural performances in Scotland and Ireland, expanding the geographical reach of his musical influence. With a reputation for haunting narrative songs and captivating storytelling, fans can anticipate Knightley’s solo career as a powerful and evocative continuation of his influential legacy in Acoustic music.

**Biography**

***300 Words***

Steve Knightley, a highly acclaimed singer-songwriter and founding member of 'Show of Hands,' is a prominent figure in English Folk/Acoustic music. Celebrated for his deep connection to the West Country, his extensive body of work, uniquely blends historical narratives with contemporary themes. In 1994 with multi-instrumentalist Phil Beer he formed 'Show of Hands,' praised by Peter Gabriel as one of the 'Great English Bands.' As a songwriter, Knightley earned the title of Tom Robinson's Songwriter of the 90s and he has won three BBC Folk Awards. His influence extends to the visual arts, serving as the artistic director of the 'Shrouds of the Somme' installation in 2016. He also collaborated with actors Jim Carter and Imelda Staunton on an Album of Great War Poetry and music.

Knightley's commitment to addressing social issues is evident in songs like 'Country Life' and 'Arrogance, Ignorance and Greed,' earning recognition at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. His impact extends beyond accolades, with compositions like 'The Galway Farmer' recognised as a 'traditional' Irish folk song, and 'Cousin Jack' now taught in Cornish schools. In 2014 he began the ground-breaking 'Grow your Own Gig' tour empowering local communities to host concerts without financial risk.

Plymouth University made Steve an Honorary Doctor of Music and he was also made an Honorary Rifleman by the local 6th Rifles Regiment. Despite pandemic challenges, his creative output remained robust, generating over 100 hours of content. With more than 4,000 performances and over fifty appearances at Glastonbury, Knightley leaves an enduring impact on audiences worldwide.

Described by Tony Hall as 'A Showman and Craftsman at the peak of his powers,' praised by Mark Radcliffe for writing 'some of the best songs in the last twenty years,' and acknowledged by former head of Sony publishing Fran Malyan as ‘One of my favourite frontmen,' Knightley's essence is best encapsulated by Robin Denselow of The Guardian as 'The Gravel-voiced Spokesman of the rural poor.

**Long Biography**

***800 Words***

Steve Knightley, a highly acclaimed and multi-award-winning singer-songwriter and musician, occupies a prominent position in the Folk/Acoustic and Roots music scene. As a founding member of the revered 'Show of Hands,' Knightley's musical journey is deeply intertwined with a profound connection to geographical places, particularly the West Country, where he currently resides. His body of work, infused with a profound love of English traditional folk music, the songs of Bob Dylan and the poetry of Ted Hughes showcases a unique ability to craft compositions that authentically bridge historical narratives with contemporary themes.

A recurrent theme in Knightley's extensive repertoire is his unwavering commitment to addressing social issues. The influential 'Country Life' not only earned him the title of 'The gravel-voiced spokesman of the rural poor' but also secured a nomination for the best song at the 2004 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. His impactful anti-banking anthem, 'Arrogance, Ignorance and Greed,' went on to clinch the 'Best Song' award at the 2010 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. Notably, 'The Galway Farmer,' one of Knightley's compositions, has transcended its origins to be recognised as a 'traditional' Irish folk song, while 'Cousin Jack,' a Cornish anthem, is part of the educational curriculum for children in Duchy.

Despite an array of accolades, Knightley remains grounded, steadfastly rejecting any notion of superiority or separation from his audience. Embracing the vast tapestry of stories in the world, he humbly acknowledges, "Out there, there are more tales of bravery and perseverance than most singer-songwriters can muster up in a lifetime." This humility underscores his dedication to actively involving the audience in his work, whether through participatory voting for tracks on albums or robust promotion of his live shows.

Knightley's ground-breaking 'Grow your Own Gig' tour, initiated in 2014, stands as a testament to his commitment to empowering communities. The innovative concept allowed anyone to host a concert in their local village or town hall without financial risk, thanks to the successful business model established with Show of Hands. Beyond mere performance, Knightley sought audience feedback and encouraged collective singing during shows, fostering a warm and embracing sense of community, thereby recognising the symbiotic relationship between the artist and the audience.

While Knightley had a stint in the London rock scene in the eighties, his return to the West Country marked a pivotal shift in his musical trajectory. Assuming the role of a guitar teacher, he played a formative role in shaping the talents of young musicians, including the future acclaimed artist PJ Harvey. However, it was in 1994 that Knightley's music career truly soared when he co-founded the iconic band 'Show of Hands' alongside multi-instrumentalist Phil Beer. The group, lauded by Peter Gabriel as one of the 'Great English Bands,' became a cornerstone of Knightley's enduring musical legacy.

Knightley's prowess as a songwriter garnered significant recognition, earning him the title of Tom Robinson's Songwriter of the 90s. With three BBC Folk Awards and six performances at the Royal Albert Hall, including his most recent in 2023, Knightley has firmly established his place in the music industry. Beyond the realm of music, he ventured into visual arts, serving as the artistic director of the 'Shrouds of the Somme' installation in 2016, a poignant commemoration of soldiers lost during the Battle of the Somme.

In acknowledgment of his profound contributions, Knightley received honorary titles, including an Honorary Doctorate of Music from Plymouth University in 2015 and being named an Honorary Rifleman by the 6th Battalion The Rifles in 2019 for his services to his grandfather’s Regiment. Collaborating with renowned actors Jim Carter and Imelda Staunton, Knightley contributed to an album of Great War Poetry and music. Additionally, his compositions found a place in the hit musical 'Fishermen's Friends' and the movie 'North Star,' starring Scarlett Johansson.

By 2017, Knightley expanded his influence by publishing five songbooks and conducting workshops on song writing, stagecraft, and performance. As a patron of the Sidmouth, Costa, and Shrewsbury festivals, he has graced over 4,000 venues, showcasing his versatility in folk clubs, community centres, theatres, festivals, churches, and cathedrals. With over fifty appearances at the iconic Glastonbury Festival, Knightley's influence spans diverse musical landscapes.

Even amid the challenges posed by the pandemic, Knightley's creative spirit remained undaunted, generating over 100 hours of content. Steve Knightley continues to be a formidable musical presence, leaving an enduring impact on audiences worldwide. His passion for music, art, and history has shaped a remarkable career, and his unwavering dedication positions him as a sought-after performer for years to come.

In the words of Tony Hall, former Director-General of the BBC, he is 'A Showman and Craftsman at the peak of his powers.' BBC’s Mark Radcliffe commends, 'Some of the best songs written in the last twenty years,' while Fran Malyan, former head of Sony Music, calls him, 'My favourite frontman.' Finally, Robin Denselow of The Guardian encapsulates Knightley's essence as 'The Gravel-voiced Spokesman of the rural poor'.

**Quotes**

'A craftsman at the peak of his powers' - *Tony Hall former director general of the BBC*

‘Some of the best songs written in the last twenty years’ - *Mark Radcliffe*

‘My favourite frontman’ - *Fran Malyan former head of Sony Music Publishing*

‘The gravel voiced spokesman of the rural poor’ - *Robin Denselow The Guardian*

‘One of the ‘Great English Bands’ - *Peter Gabriel*

**Social Links**

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<https://open.spotify.com/artist/7bEdfQZ5D4PoPlqTgeeZv8>

<https://music.apple.com/gb/artist/steve-knightley/156045021>