

SI KAHN

FESTIVAL BOOKING

In a world rife with many talented songwriters, Si Kahn stands alone. And his deeply thoughtful, elegantly simple, sometimes majestic, often achingly moving and always hard-hitting songs have stood, and will continue to stand, the test of time.

–Dave Higgs, Bluegrass News

SUMMARY

Si Kahn is a folk, bluegrass and roots music legend, once described as “a rumor in his own time.” At almost 73 years old, he is at the peak of his powers as performer, songwriter and recording artist. His songs of family, community, love, work and freedom have been recorded and performed by hundreds of artists in North America and Europe.

Si’s body of published work includes 16 CDs of his original songs, including six releases on the Dutch record label Strictly Country Records, plus albums on Rounder, Flying Fish, and the Swiss label Doubletime Music; a CD of original songs for children, *Good Times and Bedtimes*; a collection of traditional labor and civil rights songs recorded with Pete Seeger and Jane Sapp; and the songs and/or scripts for seven musicals. He has toured with Pete Seeger, Andy Irvine, Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer and John McCutcheon, and has shared concert and festival stages with such artists as Maria Dunn (Canada), Buffy St. Marie (Canada), Peggy Seeger (England), the Looping Brothers (Germany), The Kruger Brothers (Switzerland/U.S.), Dick Gaughan (Scotland), and U.S. artists the Fairfield Four, Hazel Dickens, Ani DiFranco and the original Red Clay Ramblers.

Ironically, Si has never even attempted to earn a living as a musician. For 52 years, he’s worked professionally as a civil rights, labor and community organizer. He’s currently the lead organizer for Musicians United To Protect Bristol Bay, an international network of over 650 musicians and music lovers using their music and media access to help stop the proposed Pebble Mine in Alaska. Si has sometimes described his music as “a hobby that got out of hand,” which indeed it has.

FESTIVALS

Si has performed at festivals in Portugal, Germany, England, Northern Ireland, Canada and the U.S. The furthest thing from a prima donna, he arrives prepared to work hard, participate in as many functions as the artistic director wants, and hang out with other artists and audience members. He’s always happy to spend an hour with musicians of any age who are just starting out who’d like to meet and talk with him.

Si’s over 50 years as a civil rights, union and community organizer have helped make him an excellent workshop facilitator, able to submerge his own ego (not always easy for artists) in order to make sure all the performers present have a chance to shine, and that everyone has a wonderful time. He’s a wryly funny emcee who does his research on the acts he’s introducing, whether they’re famous, infamous or virtually unknown.

Si Kahn is proud of his family's Canadian roots. In 2017-2019, in addition to performing at festivals in Europe and the U.S., he will honor them with a special tour of festivals in Canada. His paternal grandfather Gabriel Kahn, who was drafted into and escaped from the Czar's army in Russia, was a pick-and-shovel laborer for the Canadian Pacific Railway when the CPR built the northern spur through the Ontario Shield in the early 1900s. He worked as a "hod carrier" helping to build the Royal Alexandra Hotel in Winnipeg, lugging over 100 pounds of bricks on his shoulder up a dozen flights of stairs. He and Si's paternal grandmother Celia Liebowitz Kahn were married in Winnipeg in 1903. Their first child, who died in infancy, is buried there; her gravesite remains unknown.

SONGS

Artists who've recorded Si's songs include Qristina & Quinn Bachand, Margaret Christl, Renaud, June Tabor & the Oyster Band, Kathy Mattea, Peggy Seeger, Hazel Dickens, John McCutcheon, the Red Clay Ramblers, Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer, Robin & Linda Williams, Laurie Lewis & Tom Rozum, the Dry Branch Fire Squad, Dale Ann Bradley, Charles Sawtelle, Rosalie Sorrels, Patrick Street, Planxty, Eleanor Shanley, Dolores Keane, the Fureys, Dublin City Ramblers, Dick Gaughan, Brian McNeill, Eddi Reader and the Looping Brothers.

Such songs as *Aragon Mill* (aka *Belfast Mill*, *Oregon Mill*, *Weave and Spin*, *Douglas Mills*), *Gone Gonna Rise Again*, *Go To Work On Monday*, *Wild Rose of the Mountain* and *Rubber Blubber Whale* have become part of the oral folk tradition, and are sung in folk clubs and living rooms, at demonstrations and on picket lines around the world.

RECOGNITIONS

At its 2011 conference in Toronto, Folk Alliance International gave Si a special Triple Crown for his album *Courage: #1 Artist, #1 CD and #1 Song*, based on weekly airplay reports submitted to the international Folk DJ list by hundreds of DJs around the world.

Si has been inducted into the Blue Ridge Music Hall of Fame, joining such legendary artists as Doc Watson, Roy Acuff, Etta Baker, Uncle Dave Macon, Ralph and Carter Stanley, Emmylou Harris, Dolly Parton, Jens Krüger, Earl Scruggs and Lester Flatt.

MEDIA

Reviews of Si's CDs, books and musicals, as well as articles and personal profiles, have appeared in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Progressive*, *The Nation*, the *Washington Post*, the *Village Voice*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Charlotte Observer*, *Rolling Stone*, *Variety*, *Penguin Eggs* (Canada), *Folk Roots* (U.K.), *Folker Magazine* (Germany), *Performing Songwriter*, *Oxford American Magazine*, *Sing Out!*, *Bluegrass Unlimited* and *Bluegrass News*.

"If the 'arc of the moral universe bends toward justice', as Martin Luther King said, then Si Kahn has devoted his life to riding that arc. His powerful impulse to service, combined with deep compassion, is a force of nature. I put Si in the same category as Woody Guthrie, as Pete Seeger, and in a strange way, with my Dad, who shared his righteous sense of humanity, and his love of the 'meek', who he truly believed would 'inherit the earth.'" --Rosanne Cash, singer, songwriter, author

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