

## Steven J. Schmidt -- Long Bio

Steven J. Schmidt, Sally Ordway Commitment Award winner recognizing his lifetime achievement, contribution, and leadership in the arts (<https://youtu.be/uEYSBOPsbsk>), is a Midwestern singer/songwriter who has written hundreds of songs, and each one is like a bottle of fine, bourbon barrel-aged stout. He performs his rich, full-flavored original tunes, crafted over the last fifty years, at house concerts, coffee houses, brew pubs, wineries, and festivals. A highly skilled guitarist some refer to as "a folkie with chops," Steve is noted for his fingerpicking, novel chord voicings, use of alternate tunings, and playing up-the-neck.

Steven has been touring in support of his recently released "The Driftless Sessions" project and his "Heartland" and "The Road" CD's. Both albums are available on his web site ([www.stevenjschmidt.net](http://www.stevenjschmidt.net)) and through Amazon and I-Tunes/Apple Music. His music has been featured in a PBS-affiliate KSMQ-TV's "Off 90" segment (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAkvfXhDy9o>), KBEM's "Twin Cities Weekend" broadcast entitled "Steve Schmidt Creates Midwestern Songwriting Legacy" (Public Radio Exchange -- <https://exchange.prx.org/p/349058>), three "Open Mic America" segments (<https://openmicamerica.com/performer/schmidt-S.html>), and a "Music of America" podcast (<https://player.captivate.fm/episode/f46bdc6e-45e4-45e6-9348-96d969d79365>).

Two-Time GRAMMY® Award Winners, Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer (<https://www.cathymarcy.com/>) write, "Beautiful imagery and guitar playing!" about Steven's 2023 National Public Radio "Tiny Desk Concert" submission, "The Witch of the Reeds".

Ken Onstad, President of New Folk Records (<https://newfolk-records.com/>), says about Steve's "Heartland" album, "There could be no better title for this CD. With these songs, Steven has courageously opened up his heart and invited the listeners to experience an amazing reflection on some of the highest and lowest moments in his life. His guitar work is extraordinary; embracing the sad whimsy of a Nick Drake and the creative fury of a Leo Kottke. It is a perfect CD for anyone who enjoys great guitar and great stories."

Jeff Pieters of the Rochester Post-Bulletin ("5 Things to Do This Weekend," February 27, 2015) referred to Steve as "...a talented guitarist and gentle, introspective lyricist." Sean Dowse, retired Executive Director of the Sheldon Theatre in Red Wing, MN wrote, "Steven J. Schmidt's song lyrics are a vivid mix of deep honesty and vulnerability that seamlessly meld with haunting and engaging melodies. In the midst of an audience unfamiliar with Steve's artistry, I observed immersed attention and enthusiastic response to deft musicianship and a new and penetrating vision... I highly recommend his show, his songs, and his appealing brightness."

Steve has direct links to and has worked with many folk music icons during his career. As a board member of Sing Out, Inc., (<https://singout.org/>) publisher of Sing Out! Magazine, folk music books and recordings, Steve worked with and swapped songs with Pete Seeger. While on a business trip to Washington, D.C., folk music great Cathy Fink asked Steve to perform on the "I Have Seen Freedom" album she and Marcy Marxer were producing for Si Kahn. He developed friendships with and learned songs from such artists as The Boys of the Lough and Lydia Mendoza as a performer, stage manager and host at the National Park Service's "Border Folk Festival."

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While working for a concert series during graduate school, Steve sat in with Dewey Balfa when Dewey's guitarist was unable to make a trip and helped present a workshop with Elizabeth Cotton and Mike Seeger. Steve has played in various settings ranging from workshops to song circles and conferences to festivals, with such performers as Doc Watson, David Holt, Bryan Bowers, John McCutcheon, Tom Paxton, and George Kahumoku Jr.

While working in Topeka, Kansas, Steve competed at the National Flatpicking Championship and National Fingerpicking Championship at the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas and placed third in the Folk Guitar Division and fifth in the Folk Singing Division of the Kansas State Fiddling and Picking Championship. Steve's music was twice featured on in-studio performances on the "Flint Hills Special" radio show aired on KANU-FM (University of Kansas). While working as Director of Arts Resources for the City of El Paso, Texas, he was a frequent performer on Dan Lambert's "Blues Train" program on KTEP-FM (University of Texas at El Paso) and he performed during the 10th Anniversary Celebration for "A Prairie Home Companion," broadcast from the Chamizal National Memorial Theater.

Steven makes his home in Rochester, Minnesota. He recently retired from his "day job" as General Manager of the City of Rochester Music Department/Riverside Concerts where booked and supported more than one hundred distinct services each year. Steven and his wife, Elizabeth, are the principals at West Channel Records and West Channel Music publishing.

**Steve's Website:**

<https://stevenjschmidt.net/>

**Steve's Facebook Artist Page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/stevenjschmidt.music>

**Steve's YouTube Channel:**

@StevenJSchmidtSongwriter

**Steve's Spotify Channel:**

<https://open.spotify.com/artist/7LAAFA7xSzmXXxTkNJEAjK>

w e s t  
channel  
records