

Exclusive Interview With The Great Olympic Tap Dancer: Travis Knights

Written by Patricia Turnier
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Travis Knights was born to dance. He is a native of Quebec. His father is from Trinidad and his mother from Nova Scotia. Everything began for Knights in Montreal. He started tap dancing in 1993 at the age of ten at the Ethel Bruneau Dance Studio in Montreal. It is important to note that Mrs. Bruneau, called the « [Tap](#) Queen of Montreal » by the late Gregory Hines, is the pioneer of [tap dancing](#) in Quebec. Knights was inspired as a child to become a tap dancer after seeing the legendary Gregory Hines pay tribute to Sammy Davis Jr. and he hasn't never looked back. He danced with the great Gregory Hines at the reputable Montreal International Jazz Festival in 1996. Knights studied the film « Tap » and on stage he did a couple steps from that picture in the Jazz Festival. In this respect, his talent was recognized and he appeared later with Hines and Savion Glover (one of the youngest males to be nominated for a Tony Award) in the biopic movie Bojangles (2000) which portrayed the life of the late performer Bill Robinson, considered the greatest tap dancer of all time. In 2000, Knights was featured in a CFCF TV documentary about dance Variations on a New Generation in which he represented the realm of tap across Canada. In 2006, Travis Knights was chosen to dance in the Warner Brothers animated movie « Happy Feet ». In 2007, he became a tap consultant for the Cirque du Soleil's first dance research project and performed at the Vancouver International Tap Dance Festival. The same year, he was involved in the Vancouver International Tap Dance Festival. In 2008, he appeared in the TV Commercial for

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the popular show So You Think You Can Dance. The same year, he was cast as a soloist in a touring show called « Wonderland: A Tap Tribute to Stevie Wonder », and he realized a dream by performing at The Apollo Theatre in Ayodele's Diary of a Tap Dancer with Jason Janas. On February 12th 2010, Knights along with Justin Jackson, another native from Montreal had the honor of tap dancing at the Opening ceremonies of the Winter Olympics Games in Vancouver. As of last spring, Knights joined the famous international Australian troupe Tap Dogs (for a North American tour) which had a great impression on him since his childhood. He danced with this troupe in 2010 at the Just for Laugh Festival (the third time that Knights participated at this great event) in Montreal where he started the tour. Moreover, he appeared in popular Quebec shows such as « Bons Baisers de France » and on Christiane Charette's radio program on Radio-Canada. Knights also collaborated with a myriad of great Canadian artists such as Grégory Charles, René Simard, Patrick Huard and others.

Throughout his career, Knights has won many awards such as the Golden Reel Award in 2000, the YTV Achievement Awards and Specialty Award-Tap Dance in 1997, the Gold Medal for Canada in the International Dance Competition in Germany (1999), etc. He also danced at different events in Canada and the U.S. His talent and dedication have drawn large audiences in Genova, Chicago, New York and Washington D.C. to name a few. Knights' body of work have been chronicled in Montreal Gazette, Spectator, Suburban, Montreal Community Contact, Who's Who in Black Canada from Dawn P. Williams, etc. In 2006, Knights was contracted to be the principle motion capture dancer for the video game adaptation of the Warner Brothers picture Happy Feet. He is currently working with Tapestry Dance Company in Austin, Texas under the Artistic Direction of the incomparable Acia Gray. Travis Knights wears many hats. He is a tap performer, a choreographer, a speaker, a teacher and believer who is inspired by his family. It is important to note that he does not rely only on his artistic talent. He is multi-faceted.

In terms of education, he was a student in the Commerce Program at John Abbott College in Montreal and in 2006 he obtained a Bachelor's Degree in International Business at Concordia University. Knights' education will allow him longevity and ability to switch hats easily. He is young and has already accomplished so much. We are looking forward for his next contributions and we believe that Knights just began to blow audiences away around the world. For Travis Knights, tap is about sharing and giving while connecting with people on an emotional level or giving positive energy to their lives. Tap is Travis' language. He has worked with la crème de la crème in the Tap Dance and Entertainment Industries. He remains modest, unassuming and unpretentious. He takes his career very seriously by practicing eight hours per day to refine his techniques and by being careful with his eating habits. This allows him to be on scene 80 minutes without taking a break. In this respect, he has a lot of discipline and knows where he is going professionally. He perceives himself as a soldier of tap dance and is very dedicated to this art form. Tap dance will never die and with Travis Knights on the throne, it will continue to thrive. He is a star for today and tomorrow. In January 2011, Mega Diversities had the great pleasure to speak to Travis Knights from a location in Texas. *Interview conducted by the Editress-in-Chief Patricia Turnier who holds a master's degree in Law, LL.M.*

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Photo: Marcel Dubois



