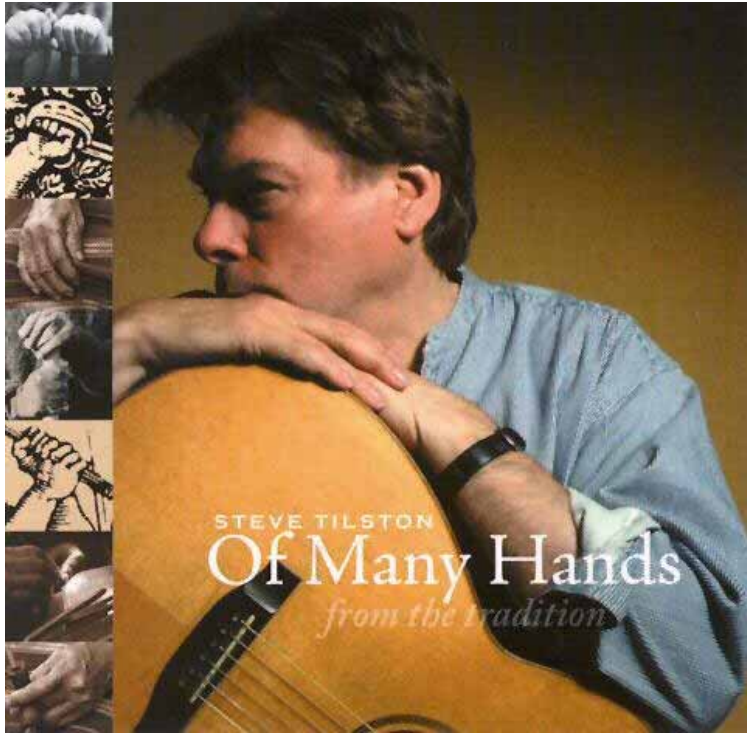


NEW RELEASE NEWS



STEVE TILSTON – OF MANY HANDS (ADA106CD)

Available now through Proper Music Distribution (UK)

Tracks: The Girl I Left Behind Me / One Night As I Lay On My Bed / Going To The West / The Streams Of Lovely Nancy / The Leaving Of Liverpool / Mountain Streams Where The Moorcocks Crow / Barbry Allen / Spencer The Rover / Lovin' Hannah / Captain Ward / New York Gals / Willow Creek

His first ever traditional album looks set to speed further growing interest in one of Britain's most skilled singer-songwriters.

'Of Many Hands' (ADA Recordings ADA106CD) reflects **Steve Tilston's** love for the tradition and his regard for the belief of Robert Graves that the traditional song and lyric was a single concept on which others have improved down the years to be truly *'from or by many hands'*.

For Steve, making a traditional album has been long in gestation.

"I've lost count of the number of traditional songs I've arranged, only to place them on earlier albums nestled amongst my own pieces, or to let them fall by the wayside - less a form of musical culling, more a case of forgetfulness," he reflects.

"Most of these songs have already travelled well. Most are unhindered by national boundaries and although it's pretty obvious where some of them originated, I have not set out to make any narrow nationalistic point or wave any flags, the only criteria being that they are songs in the English Language."

Steve sums up them up in the album's booklet notes as "quite simply a bunch of songs that have touched me in a special way, in their documentation of the human condition and the window they open into life experiences that ordinarily I would have no inkling about."

The album includes reworking of songs such as 'Leaving Of Liverpool' and 'New York Gals', 'The Streams Of Lovely Nancy', 'The Mountain Streams Where The Moorcocks Crow' and 'Barbry Allen'. The album is traditional but for one exception - Willow Creek, written by Chris Parkinson to which Steve has conjoined

a set of verses.

Joining Steve on guitar/vocal on this fine new release are some of UK folk's finest performers: **Chris Parkinson** on accordion and mouth organ; **Martin Simpson** on slide guitar; **Nancy Kerr** and **James Fagan** on fiddle and piano; **Maggie Boyle** and **Scott Devine** on flute and bass on 'Moorcock' and engineer and co-producer **Mike Hockenhull** adds five-string banjo to 'Captain Ward'.

The album comes with a generous sized booklet with entertaining and informative notes by Steve and **Nigel Schofield** about each track.

The Songs (with notes by Nigel Schofield)

"The Girl I Left Behind Me"

Known in England as Brighton Camp and in Ireland as The Rambling Labourer, the tune certainly dates back to the reign of Elizabeth I: its link with American be traced back to a reference in a journal dated 1651. The tune is commonly associated with the US Cavalry, thanks to its use in the films of John Ford who named it his favourite melody of all time ... "wherever they rode – and whatever they fought for – that place became the United States!"

There have, over the years, been many different sets of lyrics applied to the tune. Aside from those featured here (which date from the late 18th century), there are many localised rewrites (as industrial ballad, emigration song, cowboy lament and country blues); there's Waxie's Dargle, Brighton Camp and several parodies (most of which have use the same title, though it's worth hunting out The Forsaken Barbecue OR The Grill I Left Behind Me),

By the time of the American Revolution (or War Of Independence, depending on which side of the Atlantic you are reading this), the tune was being played with equal enthusiasm by regiments on both sides. At the Battle Of Bunker Hill (June 17, 1775), it is recorded, "Across the valley below Breed's Hill could be heard the selfsame melody, played harmoniously on both parts by those who soon would face each other with such discord."

A century later (June 25, 1876), General George Custer ordered the tune to be played as his Calvary rode into Little Bighorn – "that the lads might be reminded what they are fighting for."

As the March of the Seventh Infantry, the tune is known as The Spoils Of War, thanks to its having been "captured" from a British soldier at The Battle Of New Orleans. The Mexican Army adopted it and renamed it Santa Anna (and the army of Texas responded with a new set of lyrics referring to the General's disability – The Leg I Left Behind Me.)

During the Civil War, it had been played by the regiments of both the Confederacy and the Union: it became the State anthem of Tennessee with an amended lyric which included the lines:

*"But now I fight for Tennessee
In the sixteenth you will find me
Though still I think of the girl I love
The girl I left behind me"*

As seen in films like She Wore A Yellow Ribbon, it was a regimental march for the Seventh Infantry, the Seventh Cavalry among others. To this day, it is the tune played at the annual passing out parade at West Point.

"One Night As I lay On My Bed"

Collected in Dorset in 1907

This song has always been popular among gypsy singers of England's southern downs. It dates back at least as far as the Elizabethan era, when John Dowland adapted it as "Go from my window".

It is a night-visiting song, which means it belongs to a curious genre of song which hovers between the supernatural and the erotic. The visitor, who has usually endured an unpleasant journey, is faced with practical difficulties (Mam and Dad in this case) before being admitted and spending the night. Only the

enforced departure at dawn reveals his or her ghostly nature. This variant of the genre avoids being either spooky or sexy and settles for the most discreetly understated ending of any folk song.

“Going To The West”

From Folk Songs Of Alabama by Byron Arnold.

The song dates from the 1880s when there was a large migration of impoverished workers to Texas. Like several songs on this album, its theme is enforced parting in the face of economic pressure.

Janie Barnard Couch, from whom it was collected in July 1947, believed the song to have been composed locally (in Marshall County) in the 1880s when there had been a mass migration of people from the area to Texas.

In America, the song has leapt genre boundaries to embrace folk, country, blues and bluegrass. Despite being widely recorded in the USA, it remains virtually unknown in the UK.

“The Streams Of Lovely Nancy”

“Fluvia Nanciae in tres partes divisa est”. Collected right at the start of the last century by Cecil Sharp, this song is a triumph of imagery over clarity. If folk songs survive because they tell the story clearly, this one should have become extinct decades before. So obscure is the lyric that it has prompted boundless speculation, which has embraced Cornish tin-miners, Arthurian legend, the fourteenth century poem Cursor Mundi and Celtic parable.

Much has been written on the link between the Streams of the first line and the streamers (children who washed the ore from tin mines) in the last verse. The song, which has many variants, many of them intensely garbled, has been compared to southern blues for the way it introduces and juxtaposes floating verses.

It is a structure of relationships, many of which are tenuous or unattainable.

“The Leaving Of Liverpool”

Way back in the 1960s, there was a whole set of songs which had their meaning beaten out of them through overly hearty boisterous chorus singing. This version restores the sense of loss and longing to this much recorded sea song (with a nod in the closing bars to another victim of the same process, fine song it is!).

Details in the song suggest it refers to a specific event: the David Crockett was built in New York in 1853. John Burgess was its fourth captain, taking over command in 1860. The ship saw service in the American Civil War and its visit to Liverpool, commemorated in the song, may have been to transport mercenaries. In 1874, Burgess began his last trip to Liverpool, transporting wheat from San Francisco. His departure was delayed when the crew mutinied. Two months into the voyage he was washed overboard and lost at sea.

Bob Dylan learned the song from Nigel Denver when he visited England in 1963 and rewrote as Farewell. In the same year, The Spinners turned it into their theme song through its appearance on their BBC TV series.

Steve concludes this song with a brief quote of a variant of the song best known in its Irish form as The Holy Ground. There are a number of regional variants of this capstan shanty: the best known is Swansea Town, as recorded by Mike Waterson; others namecheck Whitby, Boston and Durham. Steve's lines come from a Merside version.

“The Mountain Streams Where The Moorcocks Crow”

The song was handed down within the Tunney family and is a great example of how the Irish tradition preserved the poetic within its narrative songs. This is a simple tale of love unrequited because of class differences, but, like a Hollywood movie, a song can turn the most mundane into the inspirational by providing a great setting.

Maggie Boyle's recording appears on her album Reaching Out, on which Steve plays guitar.

“Barbry Allen”

The story of cold hearted Barbara Allan is one of the most widespread in all folksong, with versions appearing (often in strikingly different forms) throughout the English speaking world. It is also widely recorded with almost 1500 released versions spanning genres which include folk, folk-rock, blues, brass band, old timey, country, soul, choral and classical.

It was also popular among song collectors: a version appears in almost every great folksong collection. One of the earliest song collectors, Samuel Pepys, wrote in his diary (January 2, 1666), “In perfect pleasure, I was to hear her sing and especially her little Scottish song of Barbary Allen”. Pepys’ title reminds us that some versions attribute her cruelty to the fact she was a foreigner, not used to genteel English ways.

Most versions of the song conclude with one of the most striking images in folkmusic – the wild and the garden rose growing in natural entanglement to form a true love’s knot.

“Spencer The Rover”

The song is most commonly associated with The Copper Family of Rottingdean: in fact Bob Copper collected it in 1954 from Jim Barrett. Given that folksongs normally become localised, it is surprising that the Sussex/Hampshire version retains a reference to Rotherham. Unless, of course, Spencer was a real person....

He is not the normal gypsy wanderer of folksongs. He is forced from his home by poverty and leaves in search of work – peripatetic rather than peregrinatory. There has been much conjecture about the song – including a very plausible theory that it relates to a soldier returning from the Peninsular campaign. The song makes its first appearance in the 1830s and was clearly a hit of its day, given the large number of broadside reprints of its words.

The choice of Guy Fawkes’ Day for his departure is also seen by some as laden with significance. Certainly, it is an odd time of year to commence on one’s travels.

“Loving Hanna”

Like several songs on this set, this began as a tale of lovers parted by a sea voyage. It is a variant of the song Handsome Molly. In this variant, no reason is given for love’s failure, but the lover’s depression is self-evident (and he chooses to wallow in it!). The image of the spurned lover seeing the object of his affections wed to another is a common motif in folk songs; given that many reflect a time when marriages were governed by the will of parents and the restraints of social class, it was not an uncommon experience.

Freud introduced the word angst into the English language in 1908: clearly folksingers had known about it for centuries!

“Captain Ward”

The song was published in 1679 under the title The Famous Sea-Fight between Captain Ward and the Rainbow. Ward was a popular hero of ballads, the earliest of which was published in 1609, the year of his death. There was even a contemporary play based on his life, The Christian Turned Turk. As one might expect, the historical figure behind the song had become the stuff of legend. It is likely he was a Captain in the King’s Navy, who in 1604 turned pirate, possibly because he was not prepared to shift allegiance from the Tudor monarchs to the Scots Jacobites.

The Rainbow was a famous ship of its day: it had been part of Drake’s fleet when he attacked Cadiz.

Scots poet, William McGonagall wrote his own version of the death of Captain Ward:

*“But the men on board the ‘St. Denis’ fought desperately hard,
And just as the ‘St. Denis’ was captured a ball struck Captain Ward
Right on the forehead, and he fell without a groan,
And for the death of Captain Ward the men did moan.”*

“New York Gals”

This may be the other end of that Leaving Of Liverpool journey. Certainly the tale of the naïve sailor duped of his hard-earned pay is a common one in folk songs. Here, with a lot of specific reference and a smattering of sardonic humour, it is attached to a hauling shanty – (Away {Pause}, Yo Shantee [Grip], My Dear Annie [Pull]).

Among the precise references in the song are: Tiffany’s Jewellers which opened in 1837 and was noted for its non-negotiable price tags (an innovation). The Black Ball line which was the first regular passenger service on America’s East Coast.

Given the song’s precise 19th century referencng and use of slang (flashman for pimp), it is worth noting the “sailing the blackball line” and “dancing the polka” were both common euphemisms at the time. This was one of Peter Sellers’ favourite folksongs, featured in the Goons and recorded with Sellers on vocal and mandolin by Steeleye Span.

Steve has added a little from “that infernal nonsense Pinafore” to the mix.

“Willow Creek”

Willow Creek is a real place in Ohio: it inspired Chris Parkinson to compose the tune to which Steve wrote the ballad of an encounter with a mysterious female. Though the majority of Steve’s writing sits outside the folk tradition, he has created a number of songs which are often introduced as folksongs by performers unaware of their source.

The Naked Highwayman and Slipjigs & Reels fall into that category, both of which, like this song, have been recorded by Fairport Convention.

About Steve Tilston:



“... exquisite guitarist of the English folk-baroque school, hard on the heels of Richard Thompson in the perennially underrated stakes.”

Q Magazine

“... musicianship is beyond question, while the arrangements set a standard against which other acoustic guitar albums ought to be measured.”

Weekend Telegraph

“Tilston’s work simply gets better as time goes on.”

Mojo

“Steve is that very rare combination of singer/songwriter and guitarist who actually excels in all departments ...”

fRoots

“... a singer/songwriter of rare talent ...”

Folk On Tap

Steve Tilston is a celebrated British singer-songwriter, winning as much praise for his superb guitar playing as his songwriting and vocal style.

His canon of work is widely recognised within the world of folk and contemporary music throughout Europe, Australia and the USA, supported by consistently high quality record releases and extensive touring.

Born in Liverpool and raised in the Midlands of England, Steve has been ploughing his own artistic furrow, turning out quality albums since the early 1970s. In the past Steve has toured as guitarist with **Ballet Rambert**; as a member of **Ship of Fools**; with **John Renbourn**; and more recently **WAZ!**

From a career that spans more than thirty years, some of Tilston's best known songs include, "*The Slip Jigs & Reels*", "*The Naked Highwayman*" and "*Here's To Tom Paine*" (adopted recently by The Tom Paine Society Of America as its theme song.)

Tilston songs have been recorded by **Fairport Convention**, **Dolores Keane**, **The House Band**, **Peter Bellamy**, **North Clegg**, **Bob Fox**, amongst other fine artists. His work has also been used for radio and TV documentary work.

Tilston's Timelines ...

Steve's story over the years ...

1971

Steve records first album, "**An Acoustic Confusion**" on the **Village Thing** label. Becomes **Album of the Month** in **Melody Maker**.

Rod Stewart likes it and orders a box full to give to friends.

1972

Records 2nd album, "**Collection**," for **Transatlantic Records** and **MCA** in the US, where his style is beginning to develop a fan base. Tours Scandinavia with **Fairport Convention** and **Mott The Hoople**.

*Booked to represent Britain in a musical capacity at the **Munich Olympics**, but due to terrorist activity, has a week's holiday instead.*

1973-76

Continues touring Europe & Scandinavia. Moves to Bristol.

1977

Sets up own **Cornucopia Record** label and releases 3rd album, "**Songs From The Dress Rehearsal**," with support from **Mike Giles (King Crimson)**, **John Parry** and pre-fame **Rupert Hine**, who also **produced**.

*(This rare and sought-after album to be reissued on **Market Square Records** in late 2004)*

1978-81

Moves back to London. Secures publishing deal and concentrates on writing, performing mainly around London with his band, **Loose Shoes**.

*Meets and marries singer **Maggie Boyle**, by now a doyenne of London Irish scene.*

1982-85

Back to Bristol, Steve forms and performs with his own rock band and releases a 4th album on the **TW** label: '**In For A Penny In For A Pound**.' Also performs in an acoustic/folk duo with Maggie Boyle and the two become part of a group of touring musicians for the **Ballet Rambert Dance Company** which then tours Europe, Egypt and Jordan.

1985

Helps set up **Run River Records** and records its first album, the highly-acclaimed '**Life By Misadventure**.'

1986

Records tracks for US label **Shannachie's** music of O'Carolan & Christmas album: '**Silently Falls The Snow**.'

1987

With John Renbourn, **Tony Roberts** & Maggie Boyle, forms 'Ship Of Fools,' and records album for US label **Flying Fish**.

Tours Canada and USA (playing New York's Central Park) with great success.

1988

Embarks on a 2nd US Ship Of Fools tour and includes Italy & UK.

Fired by his own interest in the instrument, he commissions the Kinkade brothers of Bristol to resurrect the Arpeggione (bowed guitar)

1989-90

Records a 2nd Run River album, the all instrumental '**Swans at Coole**.' Plays mandolin and arpeggione on friend **Bert Jansch**'s album '**The Ornament Tree**,' also on Run River. Both albums released on Gold Castle in US. Moves to Yorkshire.

1990-91

Records '**Of Moor & Mesa**' with Maggie Boyle for Run River in the UK and **Green Linnet** in the US.

1992

'Of Moor & Mesa' voted Album Of The Year on Boston's prestigious folk radio station, **WUMB**.

1993

Steve and Maggie tour USA and Canada.

1995

Sets up own label, **Hubris**, and releases '**And So It Goes**.' Secures a US release on **Rounder/Flying Fish**. Completes a solo tour of US.

Fairport Convention record Steve's classic songs, '*The Slip Jigs & Reels*' and '*The Naked Highwayman*,' for their album '**Jewel in the Crown**'.

1996

A further Rounder release for he duo, '**All Under The Sun**,' is recorded with backing from **Fairport Convention** members.

1997

Tours Australia. Steve and Maggie Boyle split up. **Fairport Convention** records '*Here's to Tom Paine*,' from 'All Under The Sun.'

*Irish songstress **Dolores Keane** records 'The Night Owl,' (from 'Of Moor & Mesa') as the title track of her latest album.*

1998

Steve records '**Solorubato**' for **Fellside**; as the title suggests it is virtually solo Steve vox and guitar. Tours US.

*'An Acoustic Confusion,' re-released on American label, **Scenescoff**.*

1999

Releases first 'Best Of,' album: '**The Greening Wind**' for Hubris to great critical acclaim. Tours US. **Fairport Convention** records '*Rocky Road*' from Solorubato.

2000

Tours UK & US.

2001

Tours UK with Fairport Convention. Releases 1st Live Album '**Live Hemistry**' for Hubris with tracks taken from tour plus Australian live radio recordings.

'Life by Misadventure' re-released on **Market Square Records**.

2002

'I Really Wanted You' from 'Acoustic Confusion,' covered by Chicago band **Mascott**.

*Track subsequently used as a **Super Bowl** soundtrack.*

2003

New album '**Such & Such**' released to further acclaim on **Market Square**. Voted Album Of The Year on **WUMB Boston**. Steev publishes his first Songbook. Tours UK with support from **Anna Ryder, Jethro Tull's Maartin Alcock and Clive Bunker**. Special guest is daughter **Martha** who has now recorded her first album.

*Back in UK, watching TV at home, surprised to find himself the answer to a question on popular quiz show, '**Mastermind**'!*

2004

UK, US and Australia dates support ongoing sales of 'Such & Such' and an ever-expanding back catalogue.

2005

As 'Such & Such' continues to garner praise, Steve sets to work in recording and releasing his first album of traditional material: "**Of Many Hands**".

More information on Steve at www.steve-tilston.co.uk

ENDS

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