



**“The more you listen, the more there is to discover.”**

**Bob Harris**

**Steve Tilston** is one of our most celebrated songsmiths, widely recognised within the world of folk and contemporary music; the words, arrangements and subtle, quite superb guitar playing could be no one else.

The story of Steve’s “lost” letter from John Lennon is the inspiration for **Danny Collins**, a new film starring Al Pacino, which went on general release in the UK in May 2015.

Steve’s brand new CD **Truth to Tell** is out now.

The writer of the classic songs **The Slipjigs and Reels**, **Here’s to Tom Paine**, **The Naked Highwayman** and the award-winning **The Reckoning**, is also a published author. Steve’s first novel *All for Poor Jack* is an historical tale set in Bristol and the New World, full of colourful characters. It’s a mighty good read and has been enjoyed by the likes of Bob Dylan no less!

In 2007 a 5 CD boxed-set was released **Reaching Back: the Life and Music of Steve Tilston** by Free Reed, the company behind the Richard Thompson anthology. In 2009 his early career was hi-lighted in a book **Bristol Folk**, the story of Bristol’s powerhouse folk & blues scene in the 60s & 70s. His 2011 release **The Reckoning** garnered 4-star reviews in the Guardian, the Observer and the Scotsman, a guest appearance on **Later with Jools Holland** and the **BBC Four Songwriters’ Circle** series, plus a **Folk Award** win: “best original song”. Followed, in 2013 by the highly acclaimed trio album **Happenstance**. Steve was also commissioned to write for the Olympics **Radio Ballads** series and the **Harbour of Songs** project.

Born in Liverpool and raised in the Midlands, Steve made his recording debut in 1971 with the classic **An Acoustic Confusion** and has been turning out quality albums ever since. **Life by Misadventure**, **And So It Goes**, **Solo Rubato** and **Such and Such** all featuring first-class song-writing, quintessentially English in style and typically Tilston, marking him out as one of this country’s finest writers. Whilst the instrumental **Swans at Coole** is testament to his guitar virtuosity. Though known as a songwriter, Steve has always had an ear for the tradition and included new interpretations of old favourites on his original recordings. **Of Many Hands** is his first “all-traditional” album; with unique arrangements of timeless classics. There’s also a “best of” anthology, **The Greening Wind** and a live album **Live Hemistry** recorded on tour with Fairport Convention. Back on song-writing form, he released **Ziggurat** in 2008 from which *A Pretty Penny* made it into Acoustic Magazine’s top 50 songs.

He joined an illustrious band of guitarists including Martin Simpson, Michael Messer and Wizz Jones, when he was invited to contribute to the **Guitar Maestro** series of DVDs; a combination of live studio performance and interviews, revealing the real passion behind these talented musicians...If anyone ever deserved the moniker Guitar Maestro, it’s Steve Tilston!

He’s toured with John Renbourn’s Ship of Fools, in a stunning partnership with traditional singer Maggie Boyle (producing the classic recordings **Of Moor and Mesa** and **All Under the Sun**), as guitarist with Ballet Rambert, with Maartin Allcock and Pete Zorn in WAZ! with Brooks Williams in A Transatlantic Song-Swap and with his daughter Martha, in the charming “like father, like daughter...” show. More recently he teamed up with Yorkshire alt-country band The Durbervilles and old Bristol pals Keith Warmington and Stuart Gordon as the Steve Tilston Trio. His latest project is **Writes and Songs** with fellow songwriter Jez Lowe.

A celebrated artist in Britain and abroad, winning accolades in Europe, Australia and the USA, others have also recorded his songs. *Here’s to Tom Paine* is the adopted theme song for the Tom Paine Society of America and it’s rumoured, has featured in Bruce Springsteen’s live set.

**[www.stevetilston.com](http://www.stevetilston.com)**

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## Steve Tilston Quotes - the musician's musician

He is one of my and Fairport Convention's favourite performers. If you haven't heard him, I suggest you go and check him out as soon as possible. A remarkable talent!

**Dave Pegg, Fairport Convention**

It seems to me that Steve Tilston has never sought fame on anything but his own terms. He has been driven by his own enthusiasm for his chosen subject matter. He writes beautiful words and melodies and when our generation of songwriters is assessed on our contribution to our time, Steve's work will rank alongside much better known artists. **Ralph McTell**

Steve Tilston has an annoying habit of doing things with his guitar and lyrics that I wish I'd thought of first, coupled with an integrity of expression that compels me to say things like this in public. **Chris Smither**

One of the select band of songwriters with the vision to write great songs rooted in the tradition. **Robin Williamson**

A songwriter and guitarist I admire. **Bert Jansch**

Over the years Steve has become my all-time favourite songwriter on the British acoustic guitar scene. He's a fine singer who combines beautifully executed original melodies with superb lyrics on almost every subject under the sun. **Wizz Jones**

## Steve Tilston Quotes - the critics roundup

[1] of the great voices of English music, [1] of the great composers of English music... I have so much respect for Steve Tilston. **Bob Harris, BBC Radio 2**

Tilston achieves a great sound that percolates. It is a wonderful combination of a great voice matched by equally impressive instrumental work blended with just-right production. This charming CD will appeal to a broader range of listeners. **Sing out!**

Steve Tilston, in case events have conspired to conceal the fact from you thus far, is that very rare combination of singer, songwriter and guitarist who actually excels in all departments.

**Folk Roots**

His musicianship is beyond question, while the arrangements set a standard against which other acoustic/roots albums ought to be measured. **The Daily Telegraph**

Please don't ask me how he does it; I don't know the chemical formula for stardust. What I do know is that Steve Tilston has a rare and precious gift that transcends mere musical ability.

**Folk on Tap**

...can stand shoulder to shoulder with any guitarist/songwriter in the world. **Dirty Linen**

Unlike many of his contemporaries though, his work simply gets better as time goes on. **Mojo**

Steve Tilston, singer songwriter and exquisite guitarist... is hard on the heels of Richard Thompson in the perennially underrated stakes. **Q Magazine**

...absurdly accomplished singer/songwriter and guitarist. **Living Tradition**

His music has a flow and poignancy, which makes it, stand out from the plethora of singer/guitarists on the scene. **Guitar Magazine**

...He's an unsung hero quietly going about the art of music making. **Zip Code**

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## Steve Tilston Quotes - recordings

### Truth to Tell...

Steve Tilston shows no sign of faulting on delivering class music that is at once timeless, intelligent and built to last. **Northern Sky Magazine \*\*\*\***

Classy, thoughtful, folk... I suspect Lennon would have approved. **The Guardian \*\*\*\***

Classy work. **The Observer \*\*\***

...another tour de force from one of the finest songsmiths and guitarists that the English folk scene has produced over the last 40 odd years. **Folk Radio UK**

### Happenstance...

...is this year's feel-good album. **R2 \*\*\*\***

...great stuff...great fun, wonderful playing and top songs, what more do you want from an evening. **Mark Radcliffe, BBC Radio 2**

a fine and thoughtful songwriter and singer and remarkable guitarist. **The Guardian \*\*\*\***

Brilliant stuff! **Mike Harding**

...an artist still very much at the top of his game. **Living Tradition**

### The Reckoning...

A great narrator on top form. **The Observer \*\*\*\***

...dominated by Tilston's exquisite guitar work. **The Guardian \*\*\*\***

...songs of great heart, delivered with authority and instrumental panache. **The Scotsman \*\*\*\***

It's impressive, enjoyable and demands a push of the repeat button. **Taplas**

...yet another excellent album... **Maverick \*\*\*\***

...proudly accomplished and gloriously strong new offering from this most consistent of our contemporary English song-smiths ...who just can't seem to put a finger wrong. **fROOTS**

Tilston is a unique, evolved character, and truly worth listening to. **Scotland on Sunday**

### Ziggurat...

...it's a testament to his skill as a songwriter that he's still penning such memorable songs.

#### Acoustic magazine

...there are some innately very beautiful songs here, whose immediate appeal is further enhanced by their truly lovely musical settings. **fROOTS**

...the delicately picked opening bars of *The Road When I was Young* made me sit up. By the time Tilston's intoxicating voice kicked in I was hooked. **Maverick**

...a lyricist attracted to the rich details that bring alive a story or a setting. **Songlines**

...the triumphant return of the songsmith's songsmith.... **Living Tradition**

### Reaching Back

...it's a set you very probably need even if you don't think you do!... **Netrhythms**

### Of Many Hands

Classic songs sung beautifully - a truly wonderful CD. **Mike Harding, BBC Radio 2**

100% - exactly what we've come to expect from Steve Tilston. **John Tams**

has always been a guitarist I've greatly admired, one of the best in Britain. **Richard Thompson**

It's all magic of the highest order, assembled with typical Tilston tastefulness... **netrhythms**

..."Best in Show" must go to... this hugely pleasurable listening experience. **Living Tradition**

...a refined and perfectly paced masterwork. **Colin Randall, Telegraph**

### Such & Such

Another highly polished collection from Tilston. **fROOTS**

Soul food for those who appreciate quality words and music... **Barfly, Australia**

Basically, you must own this; it's in a different class. **Folking.com**

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## Steve Tilston Chronology

- 1971** - Records first album, *An Acoustic Confusion* on the Bristol-based **Village Thing** label. **Melody Maker**, Album of the Month. **Rod Stewart** likes it and orders a box to give to friends.
- 1972** - Records **Collection** for **Transatlantic Records** and **MCA** in the USA. Tours Scandinavia with **Fairport Convention** and **Mott the Hoople**. Appearance at **Munich Olympics** cancelled due to terrorist activity. **1973** - moves to Bristol.
- 1977** - Sets up **Cornucopia** label and releases third album, *Songs From The Dress Rehearsal*, with support from **Mike Giles (King Crimson)**, **John Parry** and pre-Fame **Rupert Hine**, who also produced.
- 1978-81** - Moves back to London. Secures publishing deal and concentrates on writing, performing in London with his band, **Loose Shoes**. Meets and marries singer **Maggie Boyle**.
- 1982-85** - Back to Bristol, forms a rock band and releases *In For A Penny In For A Pound* on the **TW** label: performs in acoustic/folk duo with Maggie Boyle; tours with **Ballet Rambert Dance Company**.
- 1985** - Helps set up **Run River Records** and records its first album, *Life By Misadventure*.
- 1986** - Records tracks for US label **Shannachie's** music of O'Carolan and *Silently Falls the Snow*.
- 1987** - With John Renbourn, **Tony Roberts** and **Maggie Boyle**, forms **Ship of Fools**, and records album for US label **Flying Fish**. Tours Canada and USA to great success.
- 1988** - Fired by his own interest in the instrument, he commissions the Kinkade Brothers of Bristol to resurrect the arpeggione (bowed guitar)
- 1989-90** - Records the all-instrumental *Swans at Coole*. Plays mandolin and arpeggione on friend **Bert Jansch's** album *The Ornament Tree*, also on Run River. Moves to Yorkshire.
- 1990-93** - Records *Of Moor & Mesa* with Maggie Boyle (**Run River/UK & Green Linnet/USA**) Album of the Year on Boston's prestigious folk radio station **WUMB**. Tours USA and Canada.
- 1995** - Sets up **Hubris** label, releases *And So It Goes*, US release on **Rounder/Flying Fish**. Solo tour of US. **Fairport Convention** record, *The Slip Jigs & Reels & The Naked Highwayman* on **Jewel in the Crown**.
- 1996** - Duo releases, *All under the Sun*, with backing from members of **Fairport Convention**.
- 1997** - Tilston/Boyle duo splits. **Fairport Convention** records *Here's to Tom Paine*, Irish songstress **Dolores Keane** records *The Night Owl*.
- 1998** - records *Solorubato* for **Fellside**; *An Acoustic Confusion*, re-released by Scenescoff in USA; releases **Fully Chromatic** with WAZ!
- 1999-2000** - Releases first 'best of,' album: *The Greening Wind* for Hubris - **Fairport** records *Rocky Road* from *Solorubato*. Tours USA.
- 2001** - Tours UK with Fairport Convention. Releases first live album *Live Hemistry* for Hubris. *Life by Misadventure* re-released on **Market Square Records**.
- 2002** - *I Really Wanted You*, covered by Chicago band **Mascott**, later used as **Super Bowl** soundtrack.
- 2003** - *Such & Such* released on **Market Square**. Voted Album Of The Year on WUMB Boston. First Songbook Published. Tours UK with band. Surprised to find himself an answer on **Mastermind!**
- 2004** - Featured guest on Andy Kershaw Show. In the studio recording first all-traditional album.
- 2005** - **A Transatlantic Song-Swap** tour with Brooks Williams. *Of Many Hands* released.
- 2006** - A DVD in the **Guitar Maestro** series released in March.
- 2007** - Toured for the first time with daughter **Martha Tilston** the "like father, like daughter..." show. **Reaching Back** CD boxed set retrospective released by **Free Reed Records**.
- 2008** - New CD **Ziggurat** released June - Radio 2 "live": Mike Harding and Bob Harris.
- 2009** - Features in "Bristol Folk" book. *A Pretty Penny* in Acoustic Magazine's top 50 songs.
- 2010** - Celebrates 40 years as a professional musician and publishes first novel *All for Poor Jack*.
- 2011** - Band collaboration with The Durbervilles. *The Reckoning* released. **LATER with Jools Holland**, records **Songwriters' Circle** for BBC Four, **BBC Folk Awards** nomination.
- 2012** - **BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards** winner Best Original Song. Writes for new series of Olympics themed **Radio Ballads**. Contributes a song to **the Lone Boat Project** CD *Harbour of Songs*.
- 2013** - learns Bob Dylan has enjoyed reading *All for Poor Jack*. Releases CD **Happenstance**. Live in Session on Mark Radcliffe's Folk Show and features on 2013 Mark Radcliffe Sessions CD.
- 2014** - **Bob Harris** in session. Writing for a new release in 2015...
- 2015** - premier of film *Danny Collins* starring Al Pacino inspired by the story of Steve's lost letter from John Lennon. New album *Truth to Tell* released in July.

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