

## Martha Tilston – Bio

Martha Tilston, the daughter of English folksinger Steve Tilston, was born in the West Country. When her parents split up, Martha went to live with her artist mother just outside London. Her stepfather was a teacher in theatre studies. As a teenager Martha played the family piano every night and eventually began writing songs. Later, she picked up the guitar. When she would visit her father, and stepmother - traditional folk singer Maggie Boyle, in Bristol, she would regularly rub shoulders with folk legends such as Bert Jansch and John Renbourn.

Late last century Martha studied acting/theatre at Rose Bruford College in London [founded 1950] and graduated with a B.A. In January 2000 she teamed up with guitarist Nick Marshall, and this acoustic music duo adopted the name Mouse. Their debut album **“Helicopter Trees,”** was recorded ‘live’ in just two sessions - 5th February and 21<sup>st</sup> April - and was released on the duo’s label, Sycamore Records. Initially performing in London pub venues like The 12 Bar Club (Soho) and The Half Moon (Putney), the duo went on to perform at festivals such as Glastonbury, the Big Green Gathering and the famed Edinburgh International Festival. The second album by Mouse was released on the Sycamore label in late 2002. Titled **“Mouse – Tales,”** the album was recorded by Jez Coode and Mike Greenway.

In late 2002 Martha was the opening act on a Damien Rice tour of Ireland, at which point she decided to launch her solo career. Early the following year, Martha and her pal Nigel recorded a ten-song ‘lo-fi’ album titled **“Rolling.”** Matt Tweed played on this ten-track recording. Tilston’s politically motivated composition “The Saddest Game,” which tackled the issue of child soldiers in Africa, was included on the Big Issue’s **“Peace Not War”** CD, in mid-January 2004, thereby reaching some 50,000 listeners. Tilston’s ‘official’ debut album **“Bimbling,”** featuring thirteen songs, was released during February 2005 on her label Squiggly Records. The album recording sessions were partly funded by the sale of a series of Martha’s paintings that also appeared in the CD liner booklet. The paintings were initially exhibited at Soho’s 12 Bar Club and then sold. Concurrent with the release of her ‘official’ debut Tilston took part on the “Twisted Folk” Tour of the UK with Hem and The Earlies. In addition, since 2003, she has opened for Roddy Frame and Nick Harper.

In 2006, based in Brighton on England’s south coast, Tilston has worked with a band, The Woods, composed of Matt Tweed [bass, bouzouki], Tim Cotterell [mandolin, fiddle], Luke Parker [guitar, vocals], Beth Perry [cello, flute, vocals], Matt Kelly [violin], Mark Fisher [percussion, cajon, bodhran], Robin Tyndale-Biscoe [percussion, zabumba, congas, oboe] and Cate Ferris [harmony vocals] With help from Paul Rawson [slide guitar, dobro], Tilston and The Woods recorded the album **“Ropeswing”** and it was available as a web only download during late 2006. Martha Tilston’s latest solo album **“Of Milkmaids & Architects”** was released in late October 2006.

Discography :

with Mouse – **“Helicopter Trees”** [2000] ; **“Mouse-Tales”** [2002] :

with The Woods – **“Ropeswing”** a web only download album [2006] :

Solo - **“Rolling”** [2003] ; **“Bimbling”** [2005] ; **“Of Milkmaids & Architects”** [2006] :

**Arthur Wood**

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