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## MARTHA'S TROUBLE

The clamor and shouting are over, yet they buzz in the eardrum like a lingering memory. Outside, couples still high on the music laugh and call out in the cool evening. But inside the mood fades. A bartender swipes a damp towel across shiny wood. A lone figure coils amplifier cords on stage. She hunches over a robin's egg blue suitcase as she works, her platinum faux-hawk standing at attention. She is Jen Coates-Slocumb, a woman of one-thousand haircuts, a singer of a thousand songs, a dreamer of one thousand dreams, lead vocalist for the Alabama-based Martha's Trouble. The crowd screamed for her.

Founding band/soul mates Jen and Rob Slocumb met 19 years ago with a twist of fate inside a Houston, Texas, coffee shop where Jen worked booking bands. Rob was home to see his parents after a music venture fizzled. It started as a simple bond over music. Time led them to realize it was something much more. The two fell in love and were married. They continued to write and play music, building up enough of a repertoire to start producing albums and touring around the country and the world.

Their work has not gone unnoticed. Some of the most influential and well-respected music critics of our time have paid tribute to the duo. They have been listed and featured in *Billboard Magazine*, *USA Today*, AOL Music, XM Satellite Radio and *Performing Songwriter*. Their songs have received awards and have been featured in made-for-TV movies shown to national audiences, such as:

- "Some Peace Tonight" used in an episode of *Army Wives*
- "Brighter From Here" was part of the soundtrack to the Lifetime Network's made-for-TV movie "Playing House" (original air date May 15, 2006)
- "Some Peace Tonight" featured on a soundtrack for CBS made-for-TV movie "It Must Be Love"
- Best Americana Album of the Year (Just Plain Folk Awards)
- "Forget October" charted at #3 on XM Cafe's Nude Music Reviews, XM Satellite Radio
- "Christmas Lights" selected for *USA Today*'s Top Holiday Albums of the Year list
- Cover of "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now" selected as *Billboard Magazine*'s Top 10 Cover Songs of the Year

And all of it is part of a dream that is still in the works. A dream that Jen and Rob keep on dreaming. The duo now lives in Auburn, AL. Not exactly where they pictured themselves, but they wouldn't give it up. Jen, from Ontario, Canada, and Rob, from Nashville, TN, are sure they're where they are supposed to be. Everything the couple has done has been in pursuit of a musical dream, one that, so far, has paid off.

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“I think about the years we spent living in a van, traveling across the country and it’s hard to believe that we did that,” Jen said. “Now we have two children, a mortgage, bills, a dog ... things that wouldn’t fit in the van. But those times help us remember what Martha’s Trouble means.”

The name Martha’s Trouble comes from a story in the Bible about two sisters, Martha and Mary. Jesus came to see them one day. Martha was running around, trying to clean up and prepare food while Mary was hanging out at Jesus’ feet. The story says Martha was “troubled” because Mary wasn’t helping. The story, the duo says, is a reminder to stop and smell the roses, the idea of keeping an eye on the bigger picture and the important things in life.



### **At Your House Tour and “Anchor Tattoo”**

Martha’s Trouble completed the “At Your House” concert tour in the fall of 2011, which saw them performing house concerts across the East Coast, Southeast U.S. and Southern Ontario. The House Concert Tour caught the attention of *Billboard Magazine*, and the duo was featured in their November issue in a story entitled: [“House Band: Martha’s Trouble Makes Itself at \(Fans’\) Home\(s\).”](#) Martha’s Trouble was invited to the *Billboard* offices in NYC to perform three songs for the *Billboard* Studio Sessions which was released on YouTube.

The “At Your House” tour was in support of their album, “Anchor Tattoo,” which was released in February 2011. “Anchor Tattoo” was the band’s tenth self-released record and the follow up to the critically acclaimed, “Forget October,” which came out five years prior. Said *Billboard* of the record: “With its 10th album, ‘Anchor Tattoo,’ the Alabama-based husband-and-wife duo Martha’s Trouble continues to intensify the mystery as to why it remains a hidden gem.”



### **“A Little Heart Like You”**

In 2012, Martha’s Trouble released an album of lullabies for children entitled “A Little Heart Like You.” Featuring 10 songs, the album included four original songs, four traditional songs, one “mash-up” (of “You Are So Beautiful” and “Brahm’s Lullaby,” dubbed “Slocumb’s Lullaby”), and one song that includes three bedtime prayers put to music. The duo created a very organic, acoustic record, utilizing soothing, calming instruments and repetitive beats (with only hand percussion such as djembe, cajon, kanjira, and frame drum) for a sound that is both feel-good and relaxing. Says Jen of the album: “Since we’d been touring the country for years, I’d had mothers come up to me all the time and say, ‘My child knows your voice,’ ‘We play your music for my children and it calms them down.’ We’d been asked time and time again, ‘When are you going to do a children’s CD?’ Well, this is it. These are the songs that we sing to our kids and have since they were babies. The Martha’s Trouble lullaby album is a collection of music that works not only for babies, but for older children as well. In this busy world that our kids are growing up in, we all need a little peace and we hope that this music brings a little of that to children at bedtime.”

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“A Little Heart Like You” received national acclaim in the top parenting blogs and zines, such as, Parents.com, Pregnant Chicken, Lay Baby Lay, *Natural Child*, MOPS International, AOL Music, and *Billboard Magazine*.



### “A Prayer For A Broken Heart”

Following a tragic event that rocked the little sleepy town of Ancaster, Ontario (Jen’s hometown), the duo penned the song “A Prayer For A Broken Heart” from their home in Alabama. They dedicated the song to the widow of Tim Bosma (Sharlene Bosma), whom they’d never met. Tim Bosma, age 32 from Ancaster, Ont. was senselessly murdered after giving a test drive for the truck he was selling online. Tim Bosma went missing after he took two strangers out for a test drive after posting his Dodge Ram pickup truck for sale online in May 2013. Bosma had just said goodnight to his daughter and told his wife he'd be right back. She would never see him again.

An agonizing search for him lasted 8 days until police announced Bosma’s remains had been found. The song Jen and Rob wrote when they heard the story caught the attention of the Bosma family and the news media across Ontario, which led to Martha’s Trouble performing a memorial concert at the Burlington Botanical Gardens in Burlington, ON. All proceeds from the digital download of “A Prayer For A Broken Heart” are given to [TimsTribute.ca](http://TimsTribute.ca).



### JenCoates.com

Last year, Martha’s Trouble launched the lifestyle blog, [JenCoates.com](http://JenCoates.com). To celebrate the launch of JenCoates.com, the duo released a 7-song EP entitled “Seed Sessions” under the name Jen Coates, Jen’s maiden name. “Seed Sessions” was recorded live in an old train station in downtown Opelika, AL in front of a live audience. A video of the “Seed Sessions” has also been released on YouTube. At JenCoates.com, readers can follow along with Jen and her family as she tackles raising kids, cooking and choosing healthy, nutritious foods, dealing with personal challenges, and managing to stay true to her great sense of style, with fashion and beauty tips. With blog entries, pictures, music, and merchandise, Jen shares her unconventional, sometimes hectic, yet always satisfying life.



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