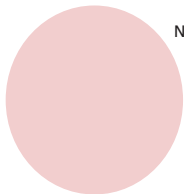


# THE SONGS THAT ARTISTS WRITE



ONE EXTRA HOUR



NATIVE SON



PERUVIAN GENT



BLUE EYED BOY



COINS ACROSS HIS HIPS



HAPPY HOUR



DOES HUMMUS GO WITH CHEESE?



CACTUS SONG



THE BLUEBIRD OF HAPPINESS

I was thrilled to be asked to guest edit *Victor and Hester*, and shortly after being offered the opportunity, I found my inspiration for issue 15: J. Maizlish and his *Wild Weeds*. J. Maizlish (known as Mole) is a very fine artist whose draughtsmanship leaves many of my generation of art school graduates awestruck. As exciting to us is the fact that he writes and performs brilliant songs with his band Marseille Figs. *Wild Weeds* is a recently published booklet of his lyrics, made in collaboration with designer Emma Williams, (originally developed by Williams in response to a design brief set by Fraser Muggeridge at Typography Summer School in 2010).

For the launch of *Wild Weeds*, Mole chose to read some of the songs aloud, and for the first time he took to the stage alone, without his band. I listened carefully, as if the reading itself was a tribute to those words that are often sung but too rarely spoken. They sounded so different from the sung versions, and I wondered how other songs would sound without their music. This got me thinking about visual artists who write and sing songs. I myself am one of these, and although I perform infrequently my songwriting is every bit as important to me as my drawings and objects. Somewhere I read that Martin Creed said ‘When I’m doing music work I want to do visual work, and when I’m doing visual work I want to do music work.’ I can really relate to that.

Glasgow School of Art was a hotbed of musical talent when I was there between 2008 and 2010, and so there were many other songwriters around me, as there had been at home in London. These are not failed pop stars, but identifiably visual and conceptual artists who also write and perform songs. These are the artists I wanted to invite to contribute to this edition, *The Songs That Artists Write*.

These nine songs represent the beginnings of a larger collection. The selection, in this case, is made up of artist-songwriters I know personally: people whose work has had a great impact on me. The reader, unless already familiar with the songs as sung, will probably not be able to determine the *sound* of these songs by reading alone. The Muscles of Joy lyrics, for example, surprised me by being set so tightly on the page, having heard them in the abstracted and expansive performance of the song. Without music, and without performance, something else emerges. It is this *something else* which excited me in gathering together these nine different songs by nine very different artists.

Celeste Carballo builds worlds around herself, generating a highly particular atmosphere. I have seen her singing and playing the guitar, dressed to suit the themed environment she's created. Like Carballo, Amy Marletta designs and builds sets to perform within or against, as well as occasionally choreographing dance troupes to accompany her. My connection to Muscles of Joy is through Charlotte Prodger, who is one eighth of that band. Prodger's musical project is less of an integrated part of her visual work, and more of a separate but simultaneous practice. Rhys Coren is both a poet and a visual artist, and his approach to music-making could easily have been inspired by punk poets like John Cooper Clark. We met in Bristol in 2005, while we were both at art school there. Hamburg-based Silke Thoss paints, builds environments, sews costumes, makes records and performs in a variety of bands. Painter, singer and songwriter DM Bob (a.k.a. Bob Tooke) is also based in Hamburg and works closely with Thoss. For both these artists, the musical and visual work is often separate but profoundly inseparable, as the one is invariably carried along by the sensibility of the other. Aaron Williamson is an artist who makes conceptual performances and videos, and his band Clippityclop is where he performs his songs. I have had the pleasure of playing drums with them. And lastly J. Maizlish, who I've already mentioned – among many other things, he has performed and recorded with my band Girl Band.

I realise that having editorial control over other people's submissions is both an honour and a great responsibility. I have decided to keep close to the contributors' original layouts, as sent electronically from New York, Hamburg, Glasgow and London; these were set down in very individual ways, which seemed to somehow reflect their authors' various approaches. Like the *Wild Weeds* reading, this booklet is a kind of tribute to the unsung words. In designing it, the all-important conceit has been to put the songs into the form of an inlay for a CD which doesn't exist.

I'd like to thank all those who have contributed. It is brave of them to allow me to print the words of these songs, all of which sound so great in their complete form, and to allow them to be read aloud by others – strangers, even – at the launch of *Victor and Hester* issue 15 at the CCA, Glasgow.

Kitty Finer, April 2011

## NATIVE SON

J. Maizlish Mole, 2006

I must have been down every road this side of Highway 1  
It doesn't matter where you go, they ask you where you're from  
And when you die, you die a native son of where you're born  
And I'm a native son of Californ'  
Where the eucalyptus air is soft and sweet upon the breeze  
You can hear cicadas singing in the shade of a pepper tree  
I was young when I left home but I see it all the same  
And I've come too far in the freezing cold, I won't go back again

*It's a long, long way to Californ'  
I ain't going back to Californ'  
You don't have to ask me twice  
I ain't going back to Californ'*

It ain't Easy Street I'm living on  
There ain't nobody gonna miss me when I'm gone  
I've been lost and I've been low  
There's trouble everywhere I go  
And I've been roughed up along the road  
I've been roughed up along the road  
But every diamond's made of coal

The mountains glow like gumdrops of indigo and sage  
And in-between, the evergreens they whisper serenades  
The creek is sweet with manzanita, juniper and pine  
And when you drink it, man you'll think it's huckleberry wine  
Just up the coast a golden host of poppies are in bloom  
The valley oaks are thicker-choked with ticklegrass and broom  
Yes I remember every one of the pleasures I have known  
But I been there once before and I ain't going back to Californ'

*It's a long, long way to Californ'  
I ain't going back to Californ'  
You don't have to ask me twice  
I ain't going back to Californ'*

I've been everywhere that isn't home  
I've stood on crowded corners all alone  
The streets of heaven, I've been told  
And my back teeth are paved with gold  
And I've been roughed up along the road  
I've been roughed up along the road  
But every diamond's made of coal

Those *coolies* came from far Cathay to cross the Golden Gate  
And up the road come old Tom Joad from Oklahoma state  
In '49, from Caroline, Chicago, San Antone  
I understand that promised land is west in Californ'  
I've been all over God's green earth, ten thousand miles or more  
And the prettiest thing you'll ever see is that wide Pacific shore  
And I'll take on any man alive that says it isn't so  
But they're gonna have to drag my dead ass back to Californ'

*It's a long, long way to Californ'*  
*I ain't going back to Californ'*  
*You don't have to ask me twice*  
*I ain't going back to Californ'*

## COINS ACROSS HIS HIPS

Muscles of Joy, 2010

How is better than why, Oh  
How is better than why, Oh  
How feels better than why, Oh  
How feels better than why

Don't try to rush her  
Never can rush her

Her eyes are rolling  
Her voice is calling  
Her lips made an O  
Her mouth made an Ugh  
Her body's strong

She is becoming  
Pale eyes are rolling  
Orange shirt swaying  
She is commanding  
Her eyes are up

How is better than why, Yes  
How is better than why, Yes  
How feels better than why, Yes  
How feels better than why, Yes

Sun's on telly dancing  
His dress is orange  
Coins across his hips  
Mouth a big O

Don't genuflect her  
No genuflecter

## CAN HUMMUS GO WITH CHEESE?

Rhys Coren, 2011

Can hummus go with cheese?  
Can humus go with cheese?  
Can hamos go with cheese?  
Can hommos go with cheese?  
Can hommus go with cheese?  
Can homos go with cheese?  
Can hommos go with cheese?  
Can houmous go with cheese?  
Can hummous go with cheese?

## THE BLUEBIRD OF HAPPINESS

Aaron Williamson, 2005

In our small town tonight  
The snow's crisp and bright  
And Winter is crawling towards Spring  
The air lightens  
The sun brightens  
And the breeze brings a whisper of fluttering wings

### C H O R U S

The Bluebird of Happiness will fly  
Singing for each snowflake falling from the sky  
Bluebird – dance across the clouds  
Fly back to us again

A new year's underway  
Our children skip and play  
Time's sands irreversibly trickling  
If you carefully listen  
To the icicles glisten  
And the Pecan Tree calling our friend migrating

### C H O R U S

The Bluebird of Happiness will fly (etc.)

### M I D D L E 8

Picture a sunset  
Picture a scene  
A rainbow that arches  
Through everyone's dreams

The cornfield will sway  
The river shall rise...  
Sunshine on dragonflies' wings  
The riverboat's horn  
Means the morning is born  
And nature in all of its glory can sing

### C H O R U S

The Bluebird of Happiness will fly  
Singing for each snowflake falling from the sky  
Bluebird – dance across the clouds  
Fly back to us again

Fly back to us, fly back to us... fly back to us again!

## HAPPY HOUR

Silke Thoss, 2007

Happy hour happy hour my life is ruled by a certain hour  
I can't move I can't go away I need my happy hour every day  
Just one hour just one hour we make love for one hour  
Baby you are perfect for me you hit my spot that's all I need

One hour lunch break ain't enough 'cause when you're greedy patience is tough  
No! why wait? let's have some more  
Happy hour right here on the floor

Oh you make me feel so fine  
I swear to you if I could I would spare more time  
To be with you forever it seems like it will be never  
Happy hour love time is the right time to be together

One hour lunch break ain't enough 'cause when you're greedy patience is tough  
No! why wait? let's have some more  
Happy hour right here on the floor

Happy hour happy hour let's make love in the shower  
Sweetest lips one kiss turns me on don't let me wait I gotta have one  
Just one hour just one hour we make love for one hour  
For you I'll do just anything you are the one who makes my bell ring



## CACTUS SONG

Kitty Finer, 2009

Sleeping under the Milky Way  
I heard two cacti brawling  
One called the other a prick  
In love they were falling

Found a bar  
Love was in  
The air  
Conditioning

And on the jukebox  
Was the song we used to sing  
And as I hitch-hiked  
A trip down memory lane  
A rudeboy stopped the music  
Poured my drink right down the drain  
Kicked me out, chucked me down  
With no excuse  
As the one horse townies watched and laughed  
Sipping on their gin and juice  
Sipping on their gin and juice  
Sipping on their gin and juice

I walked on  
And on and on  
And on and on

I walked on  
And on and on  
And on and on

I went to see a psycho  
He told me I would die  
Held a gun against my head  
Shot me dead so he was right

Now I'm lying by his feet  
And he's trying to save me  
But the kiss of life  
Don't feel right  
From the man who tried to kill me

And on the jukebox  
Was the song we used to sing  
And as I hitch-hiked  
A trip down memory lane  
A rudeboy stopped the music  
Poured my drink right down the drain  
Kicked me out, chucked me down  
With no excuse  
As the one horse townies watched and laughed  
Sipping on their gin and juice  
Sipping on their gin and juice  
Sipping on their gin and juice

I walked on  
And on and on  
And on and on

## BLUE EYED BOY

Celeste Carballo, 2011

Someone told me  
You were gone  
No longer standing  
At the center of  
Your frontier show  
Spectacle  
Was just a myth  
Didn't you know?

How do you like your blue eyed boy?

I've crossed the desert  
Traversed the plains  
Quenched my thirst  
In your river's veins  
One, two, three, four thousand more!  
Buffalo shot postwar

How do you like your blue eyed boy?

There was a time  
You used to ride  
A pretty stallion  
With a silver hide  
Jesus!  
You were slick  
Could break those targets  
With your pistol tricks

How do you like your blue eyed boy?

## ONE EXTRA HOUR

DM Bob, 2011

If you had an extra hour  
In your day  
Would you do something with it  
Or just give it away

If I had an extra hour  
Don't know what I'd do  
Procrastinate some more  
Yeah I'd waste it with you

If you had a Million dollars  
What would you trade it for  
(Come on) one extra hour  
25 in a day

Oh what would you say  
What do you say  
To a longer day  
A longer day

Pretty pompous politicians  
Not much to say  
Give them something more  
They'll just take it away

If I had an extra hour  
I'd spend it with you  
Another happy hour  
More time to play

More time to play  
More time to play  
This song

If I had an extra hour  
In my day  
I'd do something with it  
Just give it away

## PERUVIAN GENT

Amy Marletta, 2011

A Peruvian gent in a beret eating a pear  
He makes jumpers out of llamas hair  
He wants to know do you get papayas and mangoes in Scotland

A Peruvian  
A Peruvian

Sitting at a checked table with pink roses  
He brings out the finest chocolates and cookies  
He's kooky  
His cravat's tucked into his v-neck with care  
You see it is made from llama's hair

A Peruvian  
A Peruvian

(He offered up his elbow sleeve)  
My friend rubbed it between her fingers  
I could have done it too  
(But it was too weird)

She said it was good  
She said it was good  
She said it was good  
She said it was good to know

A Peruvian  
A Peruvian

Celeste Carballo is an artist and musician from New York City. She recently completed her MFA at The Glasgow School of Art.

Rhys Coren is an artist and writer who matured to adulthood as the High King of a fantasy realm behind his wardrobe. He was born in Plymouth in 1983.

DM Bob (R. Tooke) received his Master of Fine Arts degree from LSU Baton Rouge, under the tutelage of music man/painter Ed Promuk. He then found himself living in Hamburg, Germany, where he has been active as a painter and frontman ever since. He has performed and exhibited in many European cities, as well as in New Orleans in his native Louisiana.

Kitty Finer has shown her paintings, drawings, sculptures and videos in venues around the UK, and has performed in both planned and impromptu solo performances around the world. She is also a songwriter, and has performed her songs in bands of her own devising, as well as playing drums in Aaron Williamson's 'country and deafness' band Clippetyclop. She builds temporary bars, which sometimes last, and is the proprietor of the 'flat pack' Mari Paz gallery. She lives and works in London and is currently recording her first album of original songs.

J. Maizlish was born in California in 1973. Among his works are drawings, videos, installations, interventions, essays and songs. He attended art schools in New York and London, receiving degrees from St. Martins College of Art and the Slade School of Art. His band, Marseille Figs, was formed in London in 1999. Recent projects include the installation *Desert Bunting* (Amargosa Valley, Nevada, 2006), the ongoing mapping project *The Promised Land* (begun in 2006), the Marseille Figs 12" *Jumbo/The Long Goodbye EP* (2009) and the forthcoming album *The Bee Sting*. He has performed, exhibited and recorded under a variety of names, including J. Mole, J. Maizlish Mole and Michigan Flint.

Amy Marletta was born in Scotland in 1980. She recently completed her MFA at The Glasgow School of Art.

Muscles of Joy are an all female, instrument-swapping music collective who formed in 2008 when they began jamming in Leigh Ferguson's living room. Members include Katy Dove, Sophie Macpherson, Charlotte Prodger, Jenny O'Boyle, Leigh Ferguson, Victoria Morton, Anne-Marie Copestake and Ariki Porteous. They have played at Stereo, Tramway, CCA, Glasgow International and DCA, and supported The Slits last year. They have upcoming gigs with Lydia Lunch, The Tenniscoats and Cluster. Their forthcoming EP will be available on 12" vinyl and CD.

Silke Thoss lives and works in Hamburg and performs and exhibits internationally. She was born in 1968 in Osnabrueck, Germany, and received an MA in Sculpture from the Chelsea College of Art and Design, London.

Aaron Williamson has created over 200 performances and video works in many countries, including Greenland, Japan, USA and China, as well as throughout Europe and South America. Beginning in 1977, he sang and played bass in various bands before becoming profoundly deaf in his 20s. In 2004, he formed the band Clippetyclop, for whom he wrote tunes by collaging together snippets from his memory of old songs. He completed a Doctorate in performance and writing at the University of Sussex (1997). He was a 3-Year AHRC Fellow at the University of Central England (2004-7); the Helen Chadwick Fellow at Oxford University and the British School at Rome (2001-2); and the Cocheme Fellow at Byam Shaw, University of London (2008-9).

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