

Malik Al Nasir

Writer

Malik Al Nasir is an author, a performance poet and a filmmaker from Liverpool, whose remarkable life has been the subject of much media attention internationally. Born in Toxteth in the mid '60s, Malik grew up facing a range of hardships that saw him enter the care system in the '70s and following his release back on to the streets of post-riot Toxteth in the '80s, he encountered the legendary poet and civil rights activist Gil Scott-Heron. This chance encounter was to be life changing for this traumatised and semi literate street kid, when Gil took Malik under his wing and mentored him from semi-literacy to a masters degree through poetry.



Malik's body of work from that time entitled 'Ordinary Guy' was published in 2004 under his former name 'Mark T. Watson' and dedicated to Gil, with a foreword by legendary grandfather of rap Jalal Nuriddin (The Last Poets). Jalal introduced him to Islam and named him Malik and as Malik grew to produce music and film, he recorded with both Gil Scott-Heron and The Last Poets, who feature on his double album 'Rhythms of the Diaspora Vols 1 & 2' by Malik & The O.G's (Mentis Records 2015).

Malik has produced and appeared in several factual documentaries with Gil Scott-Heron, The Last Poets, Benjamin Zephaniah, Public Enemy, and many other luminaries of the spoken word and has been hand-reared by the urban griots and founders of revolutionary RAP. Gil once described Malik as his 'protégé'.

Malik started tracing his roots back through slavery over 15 years ago and has made some remarkable discoveries, which have featured on the BBC, as well as in the Times, The Daily Mail and The Wall Street Journal. Malik's pioneering research has been recognised by Sir Hilary Beckles (Chair CARICOM Commission for slavery reparations), historian David Olusoga, as well as The University of Cambridge. Malik commences a PhD in history at the University of Cambridge with a full scholarship in Oct 2020 in recognition of the significance of his life story.

Malik is writing two books, one about his life in the care system and his remarkable relationship with Gil Scott-Heron and another about his roots quest back to the slave plantations of Demerara.

Malik Al Nasir has been announced as the University of Cambridge's 2023 winner of the Vice-Chancellor's Global Impact Award.

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Publications

Non-Fiction

Publication Details	Notes
LETTERS TO GIL 2021 HarperCollins	<p>‘A searing, triumphant story. A testament to the tenacity of the human spirit as well as a beautiful ode to an iconic figure’ IRENOSEN OKOJIE</p> <p>Letters to Gil is Malik Al Nasir’s profound coming of age memoir – the story of surviving physical and racial abuse and discovering a new sense of self-worth under the wing of the great artist, poet and civil rights activist Gil Scott-Heron. Born in Liverpool, Malik was taken into care at the age of nine after his seafaring father became paralysed. He would spend his adolescence in a system that proved violent, neglectful, exploitative, traumatising and mired in abuse. Aged eighteen, he emerged semi-literate, penniless with no connections or sense of where he was going – until a chance meeting with Gil Scott-Heron.</p> <p>Letters to Gil will tell the story of Malik’s empowerment and awakening while mentored by Gil, from his introduction to the legacy of Black history to the development of his voice through poetry and music. Written with lyricism and power, it is a frank and moving memoir, highlighting how institutional racism can debilitate and disadvantage a child, as well as how mentoring, creativity, self-expression and solidarity helped him to uncover his potential.</p>