



Tom Oakes: *Forge* World Premiere, 7-29 Aug, 8pm Scottish Storytelling Centre Edinburgh Fringe 2026



**A Protest In Music, Sound And Speech.
Forging A Line Connecting Irish And
Traveller Traditions And Contemporary
Palestine. Who gets to tell The Stories?**

Forge marks the return of multi-instrumentalist Tom Oakes, expanding the ideas first explored in his highly praised *The Hearth* (which went on to perform at major music festivals including Celtic Connections) into a new piece that blends traditional music with live composition, improvisation and spoken text.

Forge combines music (flute, acoustic guitar, shruti box), soundscapes, song and storytelling with themes of family, migrants and displacement. Quietly powerful and pertinent, it foregrounds folk musicians and poets as being the rightful guardians of history, especially when it is disappeared from the mainstream.

It draws parallels between the removal/forced migration of Irish people in the famine years (thru Tom's great great grandfather), Traveller folk traditions and the genocide in Palestine.

It includes archive recording of Traveller and archivist Caroline Hughes, contemporary recording of Palestinian poet Shahd Alnaami and of Icelandic poet/theatre director Kolbrún Björt Sigfúsdóttir (who also directed the show).

Forge draws on archival broadcasts and newly commissioned writing by Kolbrún Björt Sigfúsdóttir, weaving together sound and story to explore moments of resistance — personal, political and cultural. Each performance evolves in real time, shaped by Oakes' instinctive musicianship and the shifting interplay between melody, memory and recorded voices.

***Forge* invites audiences to step inside a living musical conversation, where tradition becomes a starting point rather than a boundary — a space where past and present meet in the act of creation. Where the flames are lit and new stories are created.**

Artist BIOG

2019 Scots Trad Awards 'Musician of the Year' nominee, **Tom Oakes** is regarded as one of the UK's top Flautists and Multi instrumentalists. Edinburgh based, he has spent the last two decades ploughing many different furrows as a traditional/contemporary musician, composer, producer and sound designer. Acclaimed for his work with Shetland fiddler Ross Couper ('*Exquisite*' The Guardian ****), Genre bending pan Finnish act 'The Auvo Quartet' and new Scottish powerhouse OBT.

Working with genres as diverse as Arabic Hip-Hop + Moroccan Gnawa (in Marrakech and Casablanca), Contemporary Americana, Indian traditional, Classical and Bhangra music (in residency in Mumbai), Scandinavian Traditional music, Jazz and on projects with the Northern Sinfonia, Mr Mc Fall's Chamber and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Tom has performed with a veritable who's who of the Scottish, Irish and English scenes including Tim Eady, Chris Stout, Jackie Oates, Kevin Henderson, Adam Sutherland, Allan MacDonald, Cathal McConnell and many more.

His "lockdown album" *Water Street* is a mix of traditional (especially Irish tunes) and original compositions - *Water Street* and *The Fastest Zebra* (which began a tradition for Tom that continues in *Forge* - an original composition especially for his daughter on her birthday (she's now 7)).

Artist Website: www.tomoakesmusic.com

For more press information, interviews, hi res photos, CDs, MP3s etc,
please call **Morag Neil** on **0771 288 0965** (email info@scarybiscuits.com)

DOWNLOADS (Dropbox): **Hi res Photos and Music** (*Water Street* album – WAVs):

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/q3512i8ocqlx3i2y4pfdd/AKMMhASovVoEzXc-u8sp9WA?rlkey=5kg6gr3bisthhiibvvgnr8zqf&st=t1ru6htn&dl=0>

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