

Charlotte Square Gardens, Edinburgh

10 - 26 August 2019

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**MEDIA  
RELEASE**



**Edinburgh  
International  
Book Festival**

Wednesday 7 August 2019

For immediate release

## ***365: STORIES + MUSIC*** ***JAMES ROBERTSON · AIDAN O'ROURKE***

### **New *365: Stories & Music* Sound Installation Launches At Edinburgh International Book Festival**

The Edinburgh International Book Festival today launched the latest chapter in the *365: Stories and Music* collaboration between James Robertson and Aidan O'Rourke. Commissioned by the Book Festival, and supported by Creative Scotland, an immersive sound installation of stories and music by the two leading Scottish artists can be enjoyed, free of charge, by the public in the Book Festival's George Street Bookshop from Wednesday 7 August 2019.

James Robertson, one of Scotland's most respected authors, wrote a short story every day for a year. Each story was to be 365 words, no more, no less. It became an enchanting, roaming collection of fairytales, memories and provocations published in 2014 as *365: Stories*. That was only the beginning. Fiddler/composer Aidan O'Rourke (of the folk supertrio Lau) wrote a tune every day in response, resulting in a major new body of 365 tunes. Aidan's fiddle tunes are sparse and emotive; his playing is famous for its lyricism, here paired with kaleidoscopic harmonies from Mercury-nominated keyboardist Kit Downes, guitarist Sorren Maclean and harpist Esther Swift. The album *365: Volume 1* was released in May 2018. *365: Volume 2* will be released on 9 August 2019.

The installation is a piece of art in itself, beautifully crafted from oak and steel with no digital screens in sight. It allows up to six people at a time to browse through all 365 stories and listen through headphones. Each spoken word-recording is paired with a piece of music.

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Robertson reads many himself; other storytellers include Tam Dean Burn, Gerda Stevenson, Cathy Macdonald, Matthew Zajac and Kate Molleson providing rich and varied accents from around Scotland.

James Robertson said “This project has grown in ways I couldn’t have imagined when I began writing these stories. It has become a vast, multiform patchwork of fiction and stunning melody - an expansive and emotive catalogue of public art.”

Roland Gulliver, Associate Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival said, “This new installation is an exciting embodiment of a brilliant project. We have worked with James and Aidan since the inception of *365: Stories & Music* and are delighted that we can now offer an opportunity for the public to select their own choices of these wonderful stories, and beautiful music, to listen to here at the Festival.”

The installation launches today at Edinburgh International Book Festival in Edinburgh and will be available in the Festival’s George Street Bookshop until Sunday 25 August. James Robertson, Aidan O’Rourke and Kit Downes will be performing music and stories from *365: Stories and Music* at the Book Festival on Saturday 10 August at 5,00pm. Full details and tickets from [www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk).

The 365: Stories & Music sound installation will tour the country from September 2019 visiting Shetland Mareel, Orkney Library, Linlithgow Palace, Wigtown Book Festival, the Scottish International Storytelling Festival and many more.

-ends-

For further information please contact:

Frances Sutton, Press Manager, Edinburgh International Book Festival

0131 718 5654 or [frances@edbookfest.co.uk](mailto:frances@edbookfest.co.uk)

*NOTES TO EDITORS:*

365: Stories and Music is a not-for-profit venture. Our thanks extend to Reveal Records and Penguin Books for allowing the music and stories to be included in the installation

The installation is free and will tour public spaces

The installation was designed by Yann Seznec in collaboration with design team Old School Fabrications

The website for the project is [www.three-six-five.net](http://www.three-six-five.net)

Principal partner: Edinburgh International Book Festival

Principal funder: Creative Scotland

With support from: PRS for Music Foundation's The Open Fund, the University of Glasgow's Scottish Literature department, BBC Scotland, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Scottish Poetry Library.

Live performances of 365 are also taking place. Full listings at [www.aidanorourke.net](http://www.aidanorourke.net)

Aidan O'Rourke, James Robertson and Kit Downes (directed by Shilpa T-Hyland) premiered a new 17- minute version of 365 as part of New Music Biennial 2019 at London Southbank and in Hull supported by PRS Foundation.

For further details, including press tickets, please contact Christopher Buttigieg, Installation Manager, [c.buttigieg11@gmail.com](mailto:c.buttigieg11@gmail.com)

*Installation Tour Dates*

Tour dates will be posted at [www.three-six-five.net](http://www.three-six-five.net)

*About James Robertson:*

James Robertson has published more than forty books and pamphlets, including novels, short stories, poetry, non-fiction and books in Scots for young readers. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and an Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Scottish Literature at Glasgow University. He is a contributing author to and general editor of the Scots language children's imprint Itchy Co, for which he has translated works by A.A. Milne, Roald Dahl, Julia Donaldson and Alexander McCall Smith. His 2003 novel Joseph Knight won both the Saltire Society and Scottish Arts Council Book of the Year awards, The Testament of Gideon Mack (2006) was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize, and And the Land Lay Still (2010) was also the Saltire Society's Book of the Year. His most recent book (2017) is Arrest This Moment, a biography of his friend, the late Dundee songwriter and performer, Michael Marra.

*About Aidan O'Rourke*

Aidan O'Rourke is a fiddler, composer, producer and curator. With his trio Lau, in multiple solo projects and in collaborations, he has pioneered a new sound in Scottish folk music and redefined traditional forms. He joined Blazin' Fiddles in 2008; in 2010 he formed the quartet Kan with whistle player Brian Finnegan; in 2016 he formed a duo with the jazz pianist Kit Downes. Lau came together in 2006 and their debut album set a precedent for politically-charged folk music that expands the form and experiments with sound while staying rooted in tradition. They have released five critically-acclaimed studio albums and won Best Group at the BBC 2 Folk Awards an unprecedented four times. As a composer, Aidan is a three-time winner of the PRSF New Music Biennial commission at the Southbank Centre; other commissioners include the Scottish Ensemble, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Sage Gateshead. As a curator, Aidan has co-directed multiple editions of the Lau-Land festival.