

New show performed in Scots and Gaelic to go on tour

By Mark McDougall
14th November 2024



Through the Shortbread Tin will be performed next year (Image: Eoin Carey)

A new show which tells the story of Scottish culture, history and identity as well as exploring the myths of the country will go on tour next year.

Through the Shortbread Tin will open at Corn Exchange in Melrose on April 2, 2025 and head on a tour that sees it performed in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Ullapool, Stornoway, Portree, Dornie, Cumbernauld, Oban, Helensburgh, Lerwick and Inverness over the course of a month.

Directed by Lu Kemp, the show is performed in Scots with Gaelic songs. It tells the story of Scottish poet James Macpherson, who lit up the world in 1760 with stories of third-century Scottish bard Ossian.

It was a story of Highland history and captured the imagination of thousands and was told through the Fragments of Ancient Poetry book to great critical and commercial acclaim in 1760.

The poems were collected around Scotland were presented as the work of Ossian, who was soon dubbed 'The Homer of the North'.

Through the Shortbread Tin will be performed next year (Image: Eoin Carey)The Ossian effect soon saw a rise in interest in Scottish and Highland ways of life and an increase in

tourism and cultural interest but debates over the legitimacy of it soon emerged and it plagued the writer and his legacy.

Now, Martin O'Connor revisits the story and questions his own relationship with Scottish culture.

Mr O'Connor is an award-winning theatre-maker, performer and poet from Glasgow who has an interest in Scots, Gaelic and Verbatim.

In this new show, the poet explores whether 'gift-shop' images of Scotland hold the country back or help bring it forward as he looks into whether the tales of Ossian have been a myth over the years.

He'll be joined by three female Gaelic choral singers, singing original songs composed by Oliver Searle.

Mr O'Connor said: "I'm looking forward to staging this work after many years of research and development, and I can't wait to begin working with Lu and the rest of the creative team to tell this story.

"I have been fascinated with the history of Ossian and Macpherson since I started learning Gaelic and since I have rediscovered my Scots voice, and it gave me a jumping off point to explore all things linguistic, cultural and historical about Scotland, and my own upbringing.

"It seems that not many people know about Ossian and Macpherson, the hoax that he created, and the impact that it had on him and wider Scottish culture, so I am very excited to be staging this work and telling this tale at a time when we are still asking big questions about our country and identity."