

One Final Hilarious Delight for Uke Boogie Co-Founder this Wednesday



by Ken O'Neill

Sad to report, but a part of Edinburgh's live music scene is saying 'Auf Wiedersehen' and heading off Berlin-wards. Alex Hight, who co-founded [Uke Boogie](#) in 2008, is heading off to pastures new but is making sure he goes out with a flourish. To mark his departure he's hosting the [Final Hilarious Delight](#) at Old St Paul's Church on Jeffrey Street this Wednesday. The event will include music of various inclinations, poetry, fun and a burrito for everybody.

Alex, and his co-conspirator Pockets, started Uke Boogie as an open mic night in the Winter of 2008. The pair had previously tried to start a general one but found that the event was always populated by guitar players, and filled with songs that people had heard too many times before. The idea behind the night was that by banning guitars, even though they both play the instrument, it would force people to do something different and unusual, avoiding some of the standard guitar-y things that can happen at open mics. The event started at the much-missed Bowery and has grown to become Scotland's biggest Ukulele open mic night and has proved to be a tremendous success. Now firmly established at the [Banshee Labyrinth](#), the session brings Edinburgh the best in undiscovered ukulele talent with performers coming back to play time and time again.

The event is also a fundraiser for [Firefly International](#), a

Scottish charity that works to overcome boundaries worldwide through friendship, education and the arts, as well as [the Forest](#), Edinburgh's own grassroots art and social charity. Entry is on the night and tickets are on a sliding scale of £4-8, with all profits split between the two charities. Not only will your ticket allow you to enjoy the many great performances, but you will also receive a Forest burrito – either vegetarian or vegan – along with a healthy serving of salad, sour cream and salsa. Sharing the bill with Alex are:

- Zorras' fusion of poetry, music and video;
- the Watch Thieves' sharp melodies combined with delicate and melancholic harmonies;
- the Moon, the Sun and the Daughters delivering heart-warming ukulele folkiness;
- Wayward Jane serving up a folk-bluegrass combo;
- plus other special guests on the night.

✘ Alex decided to hold the event as one lust hurrah before decamping to Berlin, but decided to have something bigger than the small, intimate gig he had originally planned. "I've never played with as many musicians as I will on Wednesday. Everybody involved is part of the community that Uke Boogie originates from, so it would be strange not to have it as a fundraiser. Originally I didn't see it as a fundraiser but as the plans grew it seemed strange not to have it as one, allowing me to give something back to the community that has supported and encouraged me since I moved to Edinburgh in 2005. I volunteered for years at the Forest, where my Massage Corner was based, and I miss the atmosphere and fun that I enjoyed while a kitchen manager there. That's why there's the food element, to remind people of what's been missing since the Forest left Bristo Place last August. This is going to be a great, chilled out event with a wide variety of performers, not a crazy boozy event, rather friends gathering to celebrate a evening of fun. I also wanted to make it an event that

anybody can come to, one that's open to everybody."

Given his time with the Forest, it's obvious why Alex would want to support it. Why did he pick Firefly as the other charity to profit from the event? "I realised that since last August I hadn't done any charity work and I wanted to raise money for projects outwith the UK. I know Firefly well and the people behind so know that the donation will fund their work on the ground rather than admin costs. Firefly's help foster multi-ethnic youth projects in Bosnia and the Middle East, giving young people in difficult situations some relief while showing how they can work together. That's very important to me – giving people the opportunities that I've had, to learn about others through art."

While Alex is off to start a new life in the German capital, partly to live in a different society and partly because his boyfriend told him to, he says he will miss Edinburgh a great deal.

"I've never lived in a city where I found my place so easily and received such support for the things I've done. I still find it amazing to see how the grassroots puts on so many different events while making everybody very welcome. I really will miss the people. They've been wonderful to me over the years and I'm very lucky to have lived in such a warm and giving community. We used to run Uke Boogie at the Bowery, which later became the Roxy Art House.

When it was announced the Roxy would close, we were meant to run an event that evening. That day was really sad, the venue was really coming into it's own and it was shutting, immediately, for reasons that had nothing to do with it. People were losing their jobs and it was the end of a great Edinburgh arts venue. Typically of the community though, within a few hours the event had moved to the large hall at the Forest and, despite the sadness and adversity, it was a

great night. The community still made it happen. I really will miss all these wonderful people and I hope to say goodbye to them all in the best way I know how – with food, good company and music.”