

EDINBURGH'S HOGMANAY 19

Press release for immediate use

Message from the Skies 2020 returns with Shorelines as part of Edinburgh's Hogmanay



Artist's impression of Kayus Bankole's 'Sugar for Your Tea' projected onto City Chambers

- **Message from the Skies 2020, Shorelines runs from 1st – 25th January 2020**
- **Confirmed locations are; Edinburgh's City Chambers, Nelson Monument, Northern Lighthouse Board, The Union Canal and Malmaison Hotel in Leith**
- **Featuring new work by writers Charlotte Runcie, Irvine Welsh, Kathleen Jamie, Kayus Bankole and Robin Robertson**

[IMAGES AVAILABLE HERE](#)

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From New Year's Day to Burns Night on 25 January 2020, *Message from the Skies* returns for a free journey of discovery through the streets of Edinburgh, the world's first UNESCO City of Literature. *Message from the Skies 2020 - Shorelines*, presents a collection of written pieces to Scotland reflecting on our relationship with our seas, waters and coasts and our maritime heritage at the start of Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters 2020.

Message from the Skies 2020 marks the third edition of the innovative cross artform collaboration, delivered by Edinburgh's Hogmanay producer Underbelly on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council in partnership with The Edinburgh International Book Festival.

Welcoming the beginning of Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters, the words of five celebrated writers: Charlotte Runcie, Irvine Welsh, Kathleen Jamie, Kayus Bankole and Robin Robertson – will illuminate and animate landmarks around the city, from Fountainbridge to Leith with a maritime theme this January. These are told through a series of dazzling projections created by artists, designers and filmmakers including; Bright Side Studios, Double Take Projections, Kate Charter, Norman Harman, Rianne White, and Thomas Moulson and feature original music by Alasdair Roberts, Kayus Bankole, Pippa Murphy, and Steve Mac.

For *Shorelines*, each acclaimed author has penned words to Scotland, exploring how we regard ourselves as a coastal nation while considering how the world sees us across the seas, each told with a very different voice, often reflecting troubled waters past and present. Each is a living piece, animated and brought to life through a set of new collaborations with composers, visual artists and artists who have worked to realise each writer's words in live animation to be projected across the city, creating a new trail of enlightenment which is free for all to discover in the dark winter nights.

Charlotte Runcie – Kate Charter- Pippa Murphy (narration by Karine Polwart)- Northern Lighthouse Board, George Street

In "Lightkeepers," Runcie writes about lighthouses, real and symbolic, and their connection to literature and hope. Using its location as inspiration, this piece looks at Scotland's history of lighthouses including those built by engineering pioneer, Robert Stevenson, grandfather of the acclaimed Scottish writer, Robert Louis Stevenson.

Visuals designed by animator Kate Charter, music composed by Pippa Murphy, and narration and singing by Karine Polwart blend together onsite in a combined visual and musical experience that celebrates both Scotland's literary and maritime heritage.

Irvine Welsh - Steve Mac - Norman Harman –Double Take Projections - Malmaison, Leith

In "The Sea", Irvine Welsh recounts particular lessons and inspirations he received, as a boy, from a very well-travelled sailor he met growing up in Leith that ultimately made him who he is today.

Edinburgh-based artist Norman Harman uses his digital disruptive style to create a surrealist sea landscape of fused archive film underneath Welsh's words projected on the façade of the Malmaison Hotel, formerly a sailor's mission itself, by Double Take Projections.

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The film is complemented by an industrial-inspired, mesmeric track composed by one of Welsh's long-time musical collaborators, Steve Mac.

Kathleen Jamie – Thomas Moulson - Bright Side Studios - Union Canal, Fountainbridge

Kathleen Jamie's poem, "Seascape with WEC," captures her curiosity with new wave energy converters she witnessed being tested on the Orkney Islands.

Thomas Moulson designed the visuals, using abstract elements, bold text, and a vibrantly colourful palette inspired by ideas of kinetic energy and symmetry to bring the poem to life while Bright Side Studios gently animates his work creating a playful reflection on the water above the Union Canal at Fountainbridge.

Kayus Bankole – Rianne White – Edinburgh City Chambers, High Street

Kayus Bankole's "Sugar for Your Tea" reflects on the darker side of Scotland's maritime history, bringing into focus those Scottish merchants and businessmen who profited off of the slave trade and whose names are still on streets and landmarks across our cities. Additionally, Bankole's words and original soundscape share a personal reflection of his own identity as a Scotsman while also offering a memorial to his ancestors who had yet to be remembered properly.

Bankole himself is filmed through water and light by choreographer and filmmaker, Rianne White, performing his written words as projected on top of Edinburgh's City Chambers with the help of projection mapping designers, Double Take Projections.

Robin Robertson - Bright Side Studios - Alasdair Roberts – Nelson Monument, Calton Hill

Robin Robertson's "Ten Thousand Miles of Edge" takes us on a journey across Scotland's vast island and coastal geography, incorporating personal reflections on what makes the country's seaside landscape so integral to Scotland's identity as an island nation.

Robertson narrates his piece while composer Alasdair Roberts creates a fitting musical score inspired by strains of Scottish music both elegiac (*piobaireachd*) and sacred (Hebridean psalmody). Designers and filmmakers, Susanna Murphy and Cristina Spiteri of Bright Side Studios, bring it all together with powerful, expressive imagery, pulling out locations in time with the narration across the Nelson Monument, immersing the audience in the spoken word, the music, and the visuals.

A **Message from the Skies App** has been specifically designed to enhance the experience; for non-English speakers it translates the pieces into four different languages: Chinese, French, German and Spanish, as well as giving greater access for all with text and audio versions of the letters and maps for guidance built into the app as well as some audio commentary from the writers themselves.

Message from the Skies is commissioned and presented by Edinburgh's Hogmanay in partnership with the Edinburgh International Book Festival, and produced by Underbelly in association with Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust, and funded by Creative Scotland through the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals EXPO Fund.

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Message from the Skies is a free event, no ticket required. The projections will run daily at each location from 1 to 25 January, from 17:00 – 22:00.

Ed Bartlam & Charlie Wood, Directors of Edinburgh's Hogmanay, said: "There doesn't seem to be a more important time in recent memory for Scotland to consider our place as a coastal nation and how others view us across the water and, at the start of Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters, *Shorelines* seems especially relevant. Our amazing writers, in partnership with their visual artist and musical collaborators, have looked both inward and outward and explored our deep relationships with the waters that surround us, the stories of old that have travelled across the seas, and the murkier parts of our shoreline history. *Shorelines* is the third edition of Message from the Skies and we're delighted to share it with Scotland and the world as they come to celebrate Hogmanay in our capital city."

Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development Ben

Macpherson said: "As we enter the Year of Coasts and Waters, it is great to see Edinburgh's maritime heritage as the focus for the latest Message from the Skies.

"For next year's celebrations, the words of five celebrated writers will illuminate and animate landmarks around the city as part of the Shorelines collection of letters to Scotland, reflecting on our relationship with our seas, coasts and waters.

"I encourage everyone to go to one of the Scottish Government's EXPO funded events – they are free to attend and an excellent way to engage with the Year of Coasts and Waters 2020."

Ali Bowden, Director of Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust said: "It's just fantastic to have such great writers and artists illuminate our dark winter nights in this way, with enlightening words and images, inspiring and delighting us as the New Year unfolds."

Nick Barley, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival said: "Over the last couple of years, Message from the Skies has carved out a fascinating place for Scottish writers in Edinburgh's Hogmanay streetscape. This year's contributors have taken on the theme of Shorelines and each, in very different ways, has come up with an especially thought-provoking text. Be in no doubt: these writers have compelling and surprising things to say about Scotland's relationship with the waters and seas around us, offering new ways of looking at this amazing city, but also new ways of thinking about our rich history."

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ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Creative Team

App developers: Odd Panda Design

Projection mapping consultants: Bright Side Studios, Double Take Projections

Producer: Amanda Rogers

Production Manager: David Graham

Voiceover artist and singer for Charlotte Runcie's piece: Karine Polwart

Voiceover artist for Irvine Welsh's piece: Ali Murray

Translators: Juana Adcock, Corinne Durand, Katrin Frahm, Yanan Yang

Author and Artist Bios

Charlotte Runcie

Charlotte Runcie is the author of *Salt on Your Tongue*, a lyrical exploration of the sea. She is also a journalist and is the Daily Telegraph's radio columnist and arts writer. After several years of living in Edinburgh, she now lives in the Scottish Borders.

Kate Charter

Kate Charter grew up on her family farm in rural England, but her love of cartoons and icy winds brought her to Scotland to study animation. Today Kate creates animation and motion graphics from her cosy studio in Edinburgh, exploring the way we consume and interact with stories. Her heartfelt short films are laced with humour, winning awards and screening at festivals across the world.

Pippa Murphy

Pippa Murphy is an award winning Scottish composer and sound designer who writes for theatre, dance, film, choirs and orchestras. She has written music for BBC 2, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 3, Scottish Opera, Edinburgh's Hogmanay, Edinburgh Book festival, St. Magnus International Festival, and numerous theatre companies including The Royal Lyceum Edinburgh, Stellar Quines, Dundee Rep, Birmingham Rep, Grid Iron, Tron Theatre, Eden Court, Traverse Theatre, 7:84. She composed Anamchara with writer Alexandra McCall Smith performed by Scottish Opera as part of the Commonwealth Games 2014. Recent projects include orchestra arrangements for Celtic Connections with Karine Polwart, Julie Fowlis and the BBC SSO, original songs for POP-UP Duest with Janis Claxton Dance Company now on International tour. She won the CATS award 2017 for best Music and Sound for Wind Resistance and her album with Karine Polwart 'Pocket of Wind resistance' was nominated for best album at BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. Pippa was classically trained on piano, violin and percussion from an early age. She completed her BMus, MA, and PhD in composition at University of Birmingham. She lectures at Edinburgh University and guest

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lecturers at RCS, Aberdeen and St Andrews University. She was Artist in Residence at the Scottish Parliament 2014.

Irvine Welsh

Irvine Welsh was born in Edinburgh and is an acclaimed Scottish writer of novels, stories and stage and screenplays. He is most notably known for his novel, *Trainspotting*, written in 1993 that was eventually adapted into a film directed by Danny Boyle. More books have followed, *Ecstasy* and *Filth* being two that went straight to No 1 on the Sunday Times best-sellers list. He also branched into film and is a partner in two film production companies.

Norman Harman

Norman Harman is an award-winning artist from Edinburgh. A graduate of Edinburgh College of Art, and winner of the RSA Latimer Prize for Painting, Harman's work has been exhibited internationally and he is a member of the art collective Ltd Ink Corporation. Harman's practice incorporates painting, photography and moving image; exploring the discordant interference between analogue and digital processes. Deliberate digital misrepresentation reveals the beauty of lost transmissions and corrupted imagery. Harman's work allures to the space between abstraction and figuration through painting, digital and film.

Steve Mac

Steve Mac is a music producer and DJ with over 25 years of experience in the music business. He began his career as a scratch mix DJ at the age of 11, but he is best known for being one half of the house music duo, Rhythm Masters. He often collaborates with Irvine Welsh on various music projects, having recorded two albums together, and now taking their recent project live, Klaus Blatter, live to the stage with many festival dates booked in for 2020.

Kathleen Jamie

Kathleen Jamie is a poet and essayist. Raised in Currie, near Edinburgh, she studied philosophy at Edinburgh University, publishing her first poems as an undergraduate. Her 1995 collection *The Queen of Sheba* won the Somerset Maugham Award and the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize and was shortlisted for the T S Eliot Prize and the Mail on Sunday/John Llewellyn Rhys Prize; *The Tree House* (2002) also won the Forward Poetry Prize and the Scottish Book of the Year Award; *The Overhaul*, brought out in 2012, won the Costa Poetry Award. In 2016 Kathleen won both the Saltire Poetry Book of the Year and the overall Saltire Book of the Year for her collection *The Bonniest Companie*. In recent years she has turned her pen to essays to much acclaim, with her collection *Sightlines* winning the John Burroughs Medal and the Orion Book Award in the USA. *Surfacing* was published in 2019. Kathleen is currently Professor of Poetry at Stirling University.

Thomas Moulson

Thomas Moulson swapped Yorkshire for Edinburgh where he now lives, works and finds inspiration as a graphic designer and animator. As well as producing commercial work, his personal design work and short-film have been featured in exhibitions around the world.

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Kayus Bankole

Kayus Bankole is a member of the award-winning Edinburgh based musical trio, Young Fathers. The band has received critical acclaim from Scotland and beyond for their genre defying, visceral music and unforgettable live performances. Young Fathers continually invoke refreshing approaches to the music they create and visual output. Stemming from his love of writing, Kayus crosses the world of spoken word, cultural conversations and exhibition curation, each encapsulating his uncompromising and punk ethic.

Rianne White

Rianne White is an award-winning Scottish Film Director and Choreographer born and raised in Edinburgh. From a young age creativity was inspired through dance and movement which also built a momentum into a love of theatre, directing her first piece aged 15 at the Kings Theatre, Edinburgh. Rianne went on to study a BA in Choreography at Falmouth University, where she began to experiment and merge film within her degree. Her artistic expression within film expanded and was recognised, working within the industry across multiple departments to inform the dream and demand of not only directing, but being a female director. Rianne has directed projects with Young Fathers, Ellie Goulding, Kate Tempest, Aurora, The Proclaimers, The Ninth Wave alongside other incredible musical talents. As a Choreographer she has worked with Outlander TV Series and critically acclaimed short film pieces by Ruth Paxton. Currently signed by globally recognised production company Partizan she is venturing into new waters, this is just the beginning.

Double Take Projections

Double Take Projections Ltd is an innovative Scottish design consultancy specialising in creating immersive visual experiences using a technique called Projection Mapping. We are a bespoke company, creating unique one-off spectacles. Projection Mapping is a new and exciting technique which harnesses the recent advances in high powered projection equipment to allow us to animate any surface. We are able to radically alter the character of an environment or object by projecting from different angles onto a variety of surfaces. Video mapping creates an illusion, with moving images, which will captivate live audiences, leaving them with an unforgettable impression of your brands or events.

Robin Robertson

Robin Robertson was brought up on the north-east coast of Scotland. After taking degrees in Scotland and Canada he moved to London and a career in publishing. He has written five collections of poetry, selected in *Sailing the Forest* (2014), and translated Euripides and the Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer. His narrative poem, *The Long Take*, won the 2019 Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction, the Goldsmiths Prize for innovative fiction and was the first poem to be shortlisted for the Booker Prize. *The Long Take* has been optioned for film.

Bright Side Studios

Cristina Spiteri and Susanna Murphy of Bright Side Studios, connect the space between art and technology to create powerful human experiences. Together they create rich animated and interactive digital content and are established innovators in the creation of immersive

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environments. They have a passion for playing with illusion and visual wonderment to weave compelling stories that create emotional connections with their audience.

Alasdair Roberts

Alasdair Roberts is musician of mixed Scottish and German parentage, raised in the Trossachs, resident in Glasgow for a quarter of a century and currently temporarily exiled in London. Primarily a singer, guitarist, composer of new music and interpreter of traditional songs and ballads, he has released several LPs via Chicago-based label Drag City and has toured extensively in Scotland, Europe and beyond. He has collaborated with a diverse range of fellow musicians as well as with film- and theatre-makers, poets, poseurs, painters and puppeteers. His most recent LP *The Fiery Margin* was released in September 2019.

Partners

The Scottish Government Expo Fund

The Expo Fund aims to build innovation across Scotland's leading festivals, helping to promote Scottish artists overseas and showcasing Scottish creativity through ambitious projects. Since 2008 the fund has awarded more than £25 million to Edinburgh's festivals, leaving a lasting legacy of new works and tourism opportunities.

EventScotland

EventScotland is working to make Scotland the perfect stage for events. By developing an exciting portfolio of sporting and cultural events EventScotland is helping to raise Scotland's international profile and boost the economy by attracting more visitors. For further information about EventScotland, its funding programmes and latest event news visit www.EventScotland.org. Follow EventScotland on Twitter [@EventScotNews](https://twitter.com/EventScotNews).

EventScotland is a team within VisitScotland's Events Directorate, the national tourism organisation which markets Scotland as a tourism destination across the world, gives support to the tourism industry and brings sustainable tourism growth to Scotland. For more information about VisitScotland see www.visitscotland.org or for consumer information on Scotland as a visitor destination see www.visitscotland.com.

The Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust

The Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust is the development agency for Edinburgh as a UNESCO City of Literature. It works to bring literature to the streets of Edinburgh, involving people in the city's literary life, bringing organisations to work together collaboratively for greater impact, and sharing Edinburgh's literary story with the world.

cityofliterature.com / [@EdinCityofLit](https://twitter.com/EdinCityofLit)

The Edinburgh International Book Festival

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is one of the largest public celebrations of the written word in the world. For 17 days every August it brings together writers, poets, politicians, illustrators, musicians and thinkers from around the world to share stories and ideas and discuss the things that shape our lives. Book Festival events feature 1000 authors from over 50 countries in an entertaining and inspiring programme of 900 events, including

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hundreds for children. During August the Edinburgh International Book Festival also runs 3 large independent bookshops. Around 240,000 visits are made to the Book Festival's home every year, a specially created tented village in the leafy green space of Charlotte Square Gardens and along the west end of George Street. The 2020 Book Festival runs from 15-31 August and the programme line-up will be announced in June 2020.

www.edbookfest.co.uk / @edbookfest

Creative Scotland

Creative Scotland is a public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland. They enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. Creative Scotland distributes funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery.

Underbelly

Underbelly is a UK based live entertainment company. Their events and festivals division operates one of the largest operations at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, selling over 460,000 tickets for over 200 shows, in 22 venues over 25 days in 2018.

2018 was the sixth year Underbelly produced Edinburgh's Christmas for City of Edinburgh Council which saw 771,074 tickets sold to visitors from more than 40 countries, and the second year of producing Edinburgh's Hogmanay also on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council, which welcomed 160,000 over 3 days.

2019 marks the eleventh year of Underbelly Festival on the Southbank - one of the biggest multi-arts offerings in London and London's original pop-up festival, with over 140 shows programmed over 6 months on the South Bank.

Underbelly also produces Christmas in Leicester Square, Underbelly Festival in Hong Kong, West End Live in Trafalgar Square for Westminster City Council and the Society of London Theatre.

In 2018 Underbelly sold over 1.5 million tickets to their various events.

www.underbelly.co.uk