

We have a new Scots Makar!

✘ Poet and playwright, Liz Lochhead, has been announced as Scotland's new Makar. The announcement was made by the First Minister Alex Salmond and former First Ministers Lord McConnell and Henry McLeish.

Ms Lochhead, who will undertake her first official engagement this Friday when she opens the new Burns Museum in Alloway, will replace Edwin Morgan who died in August last year. Making the announcement at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh today, First Minister Alex Salmond said:—"I am extremely pleased to announce the appointment of Liz Lochhead to the post of Scots Makar. In creating the post of national poet, the communities of Scotland demonstrated the importance it places on the many aspects of culture which lie at the heart of our identity. As an author, translator, playwright, stage performer, broadcaster and grande dame of Scottish theatre, Ms Lochhead embodies everything a nation would want from its national poet. With a natural ability to reach all ages and touch both sexes through her writing, Ms Lochhead has also been immensely successful at championing the Scots language. She continues to reach out to school pupils through her work which is widely read in Scotland's schools and she is also a much valued role model, advocate and inspiration for women who are given a strong voice in her writing."

Ms Lochhead said:—"I am as delighted as I am surprised by this enormous honour., I accept it on behalf of poetry itself, which is, and always has been, the core of our culture, and in grateful recognition of the truth that poetry – the reading of it, the writing of it, the saying it out loud, the learning of it off by heart – all of this matters deeply to ordinary Scottish people everywhere."

A Fellow of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, the Glasgow Institute of Art, Glasgow Institute of Architects and

the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland and a holder of honorary doctorates from 10 Scottish universities, Ms Lochhead will take up her post with immediate effect. She will stand down from her post as Glasgow's Makar in order to fulfil this new role.

Ms Lochhead was selected from a shortlist recommended by a committee of representatives from Scotland's literature community.

Robyn Marsack, Director of the Scottish Poetry Library, said:- "As National Poet, Liz Lochhead will be a great ambassador for the poetries of Scotland – past, present and future. We are delighted to be working closely with her in her new role, furthering the Scottish Poetry Library's aim of bringing people and poems together."

Andrew Dixon, Chief Executive, Creative Scotland, said of the appointment:- "The appointment of Liz Lochhead as national poet sends out an important message about the role which artists play in celebrating the culture of Scotland. She commands enormous respect from the literary community and is held in huge affection by the Scottish public. Liz Lochhead's work is extraordinarily wide-ranging, from Classical Greek tragedy to cabaret, all with poetry, in English and Scots, at the heart. Creative Scotland is looking forward to working with Liz, the Scottish Poetry Library and other partners to realise the full potential of the role."

Councillor Deidre Brock, Convenor of the Culture and Leisure Committee of The City of Edinburgh Council, said: "This richly deserved recognition of Liz Lochhead's tremendous talent is wonderful news and personally I'm particularly delighted that [Scotland's new National Poet](#) is a woman! All our [libraries](#) are now busy putting up displays of her works, to celebrate her appointment and to introduce – or reintroduce – Edinburgh residents to her fabulous, heartfelt poetry."