

Edinburgh's Hogmanay – Message from the Skies returns from today

Message from the Skies returns to Edinburgh today with a selection of love letters written on the theme of Shorelines.

The words of six internationally celebrated writers will illuminate and animate buildings around the city nightly until 10.00pm and until 25 January 2020.

The event is developed in partnership with Edinburgh City of Literature and The Edinburgh International Book Festival, The Edinburgh International Book Festival and funded by Creative Scotland through the Scottish Government's Festivals EXPO fund.

You need to download the Message from the Skies app to read or listen to the stories and get directions to projection locations.

The six buildings and artistic collaborations are: Edinburgh's City Chambers, Nelson Monument, Northern Lighthouse Board, The Union Canal and Malmaison Hotel in Leith

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. 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 (*piobiareachd*) 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.

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 and 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."



THERE WAS NOTHING SWEET IN THE BITTER EXPLOITATION
OF THOSE WHO GAVE YOU SUGAR FOR YOUR TEA.