

A hallway with colorful stained glass windows on either side, casting light onto a patterned carpet. The text is overlaid on the image.

**THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL  
JAZZ ORCHESTRA**  
presents

# Spirit of Light

composed by  
**TOMMY SMITH**

featuring  
**KURT ELLING**  
and  
**CAPPELLA NOVA**

**DECEMBER 2017**

# THE **SCOTTISH NATIONAL JAZZ ORCHESTRA** **SPIRIT OF LIGHT** COMPOSED BY **TOMMY SMITH** AND FEATURING **KURT ELLING** AND **CAPPELLA NOVA**

*Spirit of Light* is a celebration in music and song that combines the sacred and the secular in an illuminating new work composed by **Tommy Smith**.

The celebrated jazz vocalist **Kurt Elling**, and ten voices of **Cappella Nova** will join the **SNJO** to perform this new work: an extraordinary choral and orchestral jazz experience.

Inspired by the seasonal iconography of the Star, Three Kings, Christmas Night, Winter Snow and the dawning of Christmas Day, it features settings of poetry by eminently humanitarian writers such as **Liz Lochhead**, **Rainer Maria Rilke**, **Norman MacCaig**, **Robert Frost**, **Franz Wright**, **Jim Heynen** and **St. Francis of Assisi**.

## snjo.co.uk

If you enjoyed tonight's concert, please do consider becoming a **Friend of the SNJO** and help support our future and that of jazz in Scotland. We welcome new friends at any time.

Membership is available by

- filling in the form in this programme
- collecting a form at the SNJO desk
- joining online at [snjo.co.uk](http://snjo.co.uk)

We do look forward to welcoming you.

We also encourage everyone to please sign up for our newsletter at [snjo.co.uk](http://snjo.co.uk), to like us on facebook  [theSNJO](https://www.facebook.com/theSNJO) and follow us on twitter  [@snjo2](https://twitter.com/snjo2).

With your help, we can promote our fabulous musicians and National Jazz Orchestra and disseminate our news to ensure as many people as possible know about the SNJO and have a chance to hear this great music.

## SPONSORS

We would like to extend special thanks to our main sponsors, Creative Scotland for their continued support of the orchestras.

We also thank the cathedrals: Glasgow, St Machar's and St Mary's for giving permission to allow us to play these concerts in such atmospheric venues.



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL



design by Nadja von Massow, nadworks

# PROGRAMME NOTES

*Spirit of Light* is a celebration in music and song that combines the sacred and the secular in an illuminating new work by Tommy Smith that prominently features the poetry of eminently humanitarian writers. The featured poems include verses by Rainer Maria Rilke, Norman MacCaig, Robert Frost, Franz Wright, Jim Heynen and St. Francis of Assisi.

The celebrated jazz vocalist Kurt Elling and the ten voices of Cappella Nova will join the SNJO to perform a cycle of eleven songs inspired by the seasonal iconography of The Star, The Three Kings, Christmas Night, Winter Snow and the dawning of Christmas Day.

The SNJO is delighted once more to share the stage with Kurt Elling, and warmly welcome Cappella Nova for their first collaboration with the orchestra. We are also very proud to present new poetry especially written for these *Spirit of Light* concerts by Liz Lochhead.

Tommy Smith, as composer, artistic director and principal soloist, has created an extraordinary choral and orchestral jazz experience. The work itself began at the piano and took two years to complete. Smith first set the poetry to his carefully crafted songs, and recorded them with Kurt Elling, before turning his attention to the orchestrations for these unique performances.

Together, these fine musicians, led by Tommy Smith, will summon the traditional, the hymnal, and the modern for a series of memorable performances in the acoustic splendour of Scotland's finest Cathedrals.

At the turn of the year, a time for reflection and observation, *Spirit of Light* is the sound of hope restored and optimism renewed, with strong messages of lasting peace, quiet joy, and genuine understanding.

*Michael S. Clark*

# TOMMY SMITH

Tommy Smith (*born 1967*) is held in high regard worldwide as a distinguished saxophonist, and an authoritative figure in European jazz.

He began his prolific career at age sixteen when he recorded his first album *Giant Strides* and was rewarded with a scholarship to Berklee College of Music, an experience that has shaped his affirmative approach to jazz.

Tommy has performed and recorded with many of the most iconic and influential figures in 20th century jazz including Gary Burton, Chick Corea, Kenny Wheeler, and Arild Andersen. He has released over 30 albums for Blue Note, Linn and his own label Spartacus Records. His most recent recording *Embodying the Light* (2017) is a critically acclaimed tribute to the inspirational influence of John Coltrane.

Primarily a jazz composer noted for assertive pieces such as *Torah and Beauty and the Beast*, Smith's work frequently takes him into other spheres. His first classical pieces were *Unirsi In Matrimonio* (1990), and *Un Ecossais A Paris* (1991). He later collaborated with classical pianist Murray McLaughlin for *Sonata No.1 - Hall of Mirrors* and *Sonata No.2 Dreaming with Open Eyes*, both for saxophone and piano. His saxophone concerto *Hiroshima* was premiered in 1998, followed by

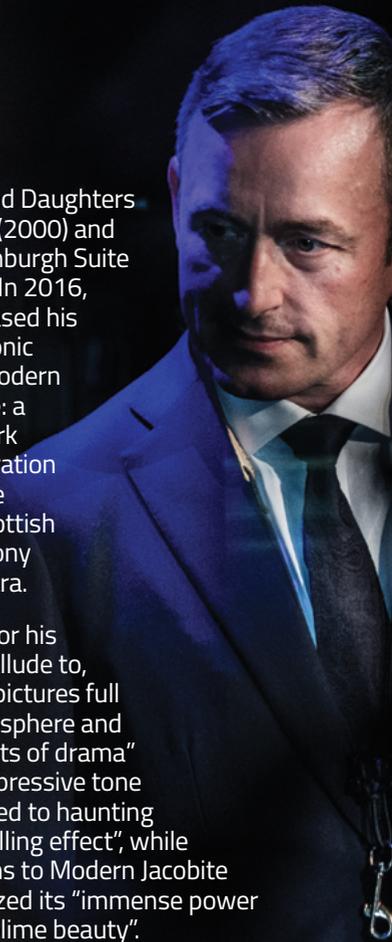
*Sons and Daughters of Alba* (2000) and the *Edinburgh Suite* (2002). In 2016, he released his symphonic work *Modern Jacobite*: a landmark collaboration with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Praise for his works allude to, "mood pictures full of atmosphere and outbursts of drama" and "expressive tone employed to haunting and thrilling effect", while reactions to *Modern Jacobite* recognized its "immense power and sublime beauty".

Recipient of 3 honorary doctorates, Tommy continues to be recognized for his tireless work; most recently in 2017 with the Parliamentary Jazz Award for jazz education.

He is founder/director of the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra and Tommy Smith Youth Jazz Orchestra and is Professor of Jazz at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

[tommysmith.scot](http://tommysmith.scot)



# KURT ELLING

**The New York Times has named Kurt Elling, "the standout male jazz vocalist of our time."**

A GRAMMY® winner and 12-time GRAMMY nominee, Kurt Elling has been awarded two German Echo Awards, the Dutch Edison and the Edison Oeuvreprijs, the Prix Billie Holiday from the Academie du Jazz in Paris and has been named Jazz Ambassador by the nation of Poland. He was named "Male Singer of the Year" by the DownBeat Critics Poll for fourteen consecutive years and by The Jazz Journalists Association on eight occasions. The Washington Post confirmed the acclaim declaring, "Since the mid-1990s, no singer in jazz has been as daring, dynamic or interesting as Kurt Elling. With his soaring vocal flights, his edgy lyrics and sense of being on a musical mission, he has come to embody the creative spirit in jazz."

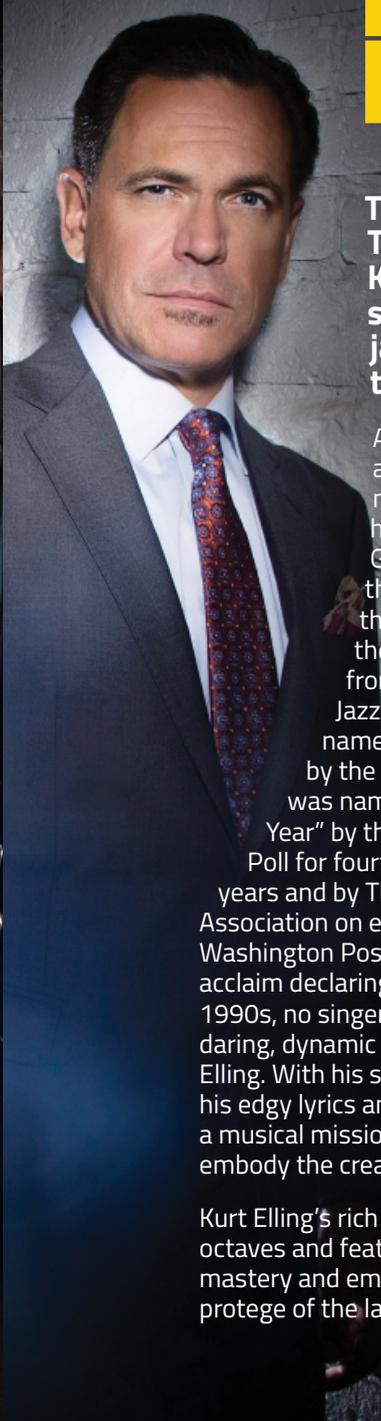
Kurt Elling's rich baritone spans four octaves and features both technical mastery and emotional depth. A close protegee of the late master-singers

Jon Hendricks and Mark Murphy, Elling has collaborated with many of the finest instrumentalists in the jazz world, including the pianists Kenny Barron, Joey Calderazzo, Fred Hersch, and Bill Charlap and the saxophonists Branford Marsalis, Bob Mintzer, Tommy Smith, and Ernie Watts. He performed twice at The White House for then-president Barack Obama, and is a past Vice-Chair of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

Kurt Elling's repertoire includes original compositions and modern interpretations of standards, all of which are springboards for inspired improvisation, scatting, spoken word, and poetry. He often incorporates images and references from writers such as Rilke, Rumi, Neruda and Proust into his work. The late poet Robert Creeley wrote, "Kurt Elling takes us into a world of sacred particulars. His words are informed by a powerful poetic spirit." Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky, concurred, writing that, "In Kurt Elling's art, the voice of jazz gives a new spiritual presence to the ancient, sweet and powerful bond between poetry and music."

A new release from Kurt Elling for Sony/Masterworks entitled, *THE QUESTIONS*, will be released in March of 2018. The recording features special guests Branford Marsalis, Joey Calderazzo, Marquis Hill and Jeff 'Tain' Watts.

[kurtelling.com](http://kurtelling.com)



# CAPPELLA NOVA



Founded in 1982 by Alan and Rebecca Tavener, Cappella Nova has an unrivalled reputation as champions of Scotland's unique treasury of early vocal music.

The group is "famous for its performances of contemporary music" (The Guardian), having commissioned and premiered many new works including Sir John Tavener's monumental three-hour oratorio, *Resurrection* (1990), broadcast on BBC Radio 3, and Sir James MacMillan's celebrated cantata for Holy Week Seven Last Words from the Cross (1994), recorded in seven short films for BBC2 TV.

Cappella Nova and its medieval offshoot ensemble, *Canty*, have released twenty CDs, including many of medieval and renaissance music which are 'world premieres in modern times', and the group has recorded three critically acclaimed CDs of the sacred choral music of Sir James MacMillan and a disc of music by Sir John Tavener for Linn Records. The

Company also promotes an increasingly popular education and outreach programme.

The group has appeared at many British festivals, and toured extensively abroad with several visits to Germany and France, and tours in Ireland, Belgium, Hungary, Russia and the USA. Among Cappella Nova's awards are several Enterprise Awards from the Performing Right Society and a Glenfiddich Living Scotland Award for their groundbreaking performances of Scottish early music. The group has sung for H.M. The Queen and has shared the platform with a wide range of artists including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Evelyn Glennie, John Sessions, The Scottish Brass Ensemble, St Petersburg Baroque Brass, Tom Fleming, Concerto Caledonia, Sheena Wellington, Sister Sledge, Theatre Cryptic, Kim Edgar, The Delgados, Scottish Ensemble and many more.

[cappella-nova.com](http://cappella-nova.com)

## THE VOCALISTS

**REBECCA TAVENER (Soprano)** is co-founder and Creative Director of Cappella Nova as well as Scotland's only professional medieval/contemporary ensemble, *Canty*. She has taken part in more than 100 world premieres including major works by Sir James MacMillan and Sir John Tavener, and 'world premieres in modern times' of medieval and renaissance works. Her discography of over twenty titles maps three decades of engagement with ancient and modern sacred music.

Rebecca writes articles and reviews for a variety of music journals and is the Early Music Editor of *Choir & Organ Magazine*. She is on a seemingly permanent quest to create her own performing edition of the music of Abbess Doctor St Hildegard von Bingen. Vocal workshops and individual singing tuition are a significant part of her work as well as helping to train ministers in public speaking for the Church of Scotland

**MICAELA HASLAM (Soprano)** Founder and musical director of Synergy Vocals, Micaela has a wealth of experience as a singer, having been a member of both The Swingle Singers and the BBC Singers. She has sung in concert with many other leading UK vocal ensembles and is equally at home in the studio, recording sound tracks for film, television, or backing vocals for pop CDs. Micaela has sung backing vocals for *These New Puritans*, *Goldie*, *Anna Calvi*, *Steven Wilson*, *Björk*, *Henry Priestman*, and

*Kompendium*, and for the Heritage Orchestra's *Joy Division* Remix tour. Having worked closely with Steve Reich for over 20 years, Micaela regularly sings all of his vocal music and coaches both professional and student ensembles in this repertoire – notably in the preparation of *Music for 18 Musicians*. As well as her work as a coach, Micaela has adjudicated choral competitions including the Grand Final of *Sainsbury's Choir of the Year* for BBC television.

**LOUISE WAYMAN (Soprano)** studied at the Wales International Academy of Voice and at the Birmingham Conservatoire with Christine Cairns, winning several prizes. Opera credits include *Amore* in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *Papagena* in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, *Micaëla* in Bizet's *Carmen*, *Belinda* in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, *Zerlina* in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. She joined the chorus of *Wexford Festival Opera* in 2016 where she has recently performed

the role of *Una Donna* in Alfano's *Risurrezione* and having sung with *Opera North* for their *Turandot* she is looking forward to rejoining *Opera North* shortly for their production of *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Solo engagements have included Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Mass in C Minor*, Haydn's *Creation* and Bach's *Passions* and numerous Cantatas. She was a finalist in the 2012 *Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards* and the 2015 *Dean and Chadlington and London Bach Singing Competitions*.

**ANNE LEWIS (Alto)** studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and has since performed as a consort singer and soloist in oratorio, early and contemporary music. She has performed and recorded with Cappella Nova, Scottish Voices, Dunedin Consort and Canty, as well as touring performances of Scottish eighteenth-century songs. In 2016, she toured Scotland with Cappella Nova in the award-winning contemporary music show Echoes and Traces. She teaches, conducts and arranges for several community choirs, and now also directs popular courses in Health and Wellbeing through Song at the Centre for Lifelong Learning in Glasgow.

**DANIEL KEATING-ROBERTS (Counter Tenor)** studied in Sheffield, before completing his Masters at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, with awards from the Foyle Foundation and the Countess of Munster Trust and where he won the 2009 Guildhall aria competition. In 2010, he became the first counter-tenor to be accepted onto the English National Opera Operaworks programme. Daniel has performed with companies including Scottish Opera, Garsington, ENO, Oper Stuttgart, and Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, and in roles including Unulfo in

Handel's Rodelinda, the title role in Tamerlano, Nireno in Giulio Cesare, Military Governor (A Night at the Chinese Opera), Oberon (A Midsummer Night's Dream), and the title roles in Sergey Newski's Franziskus, and Richard Ayres' Peter Pan. Performances in 2017 include roles in Semele for MWO, The 8th Door for Scottish Opera, and Benjamin for Oper Stuttgart.

**MALCOLM BENNETT (Tenor)** This Welsh tenor began his career at an early age singing as a chorister in Brecon Cathedral. He then went on to study clarinet at Trinity College of Music before embarking on his career as a professional singer. Malcolm is now in great demand as a soloist, consort and choral singer, and performs and records regularly with ensembles such as Collegium Vocale Gent, The Academy of Ancient Music, The Dunedin Consort, and Cappella Nova with whom he has sung regularly for the past ten years.

**GUY WITHERS (Tenor)** is a light-lyric tenor from Bristol currently studying at The Royal Academy of Music. A Cardiff University Music Graduate, he won The University's Vocal Scholarship, The David Lloyd Prize for Singing and The Elizabeth Griffiths Prize and was a finalist in the

2017 Dean & Chadlington Singing Competition. He made his professional recital debut in January 2015 with a programme of Handel's repertoire at The Handel House Museum. Since 2015 he has been working as a soloist / chorus with Opera Holland Park and has worked with Mahogany Opera Group, premiering their new children's opera The Rattler at The Royal Festival Hall. In addition he has developed new music-theatre pieces for The Helios Collective, English Touring Opera and The Theatre Royal Bath. Guy is an experienced oratorio soloist, and has performed a wide range of sacred repertoire with major choirs nationally.

**PAUL CHARRIER (Bass)** read music at London University and studied singing at the Royal College of Music. Since graduating he has enjoyed a cosmopolitan singing career ranging from world premières of works by Sir James MacMillan and Louis Andriessen to the soundtrack for Kung Fu Panda. He has sung with many of the UK's best-known choirs, including over 20 years with Cappella Nova. As a soloist, Paul has appeared all over the UK in repertoire ranging from Monteverdi to Weill. In 2016, in a solo performance of a different kind, Paul cycled from John O'Groats to Land's End in just ten days.

REBECCA TAVENER

MICHAELA HASLAM

LOUISE WAYMAN

ANNE LEWIS

DANIEL KEATING-ROBERTS



GUY WITHERS

MALCOLM BENNETT

PAUL CHARRIER

MATHESON DOWDY

NOEL MANN

**MATHESON DOWDY (Bass)** is a former chorister of St Matthew's Church, Northampton and studied music at the University of London and at the Royal College of Organists. Matt has been conductor of Doncaster Choral Society and the York Philharmonic Male Voice Choir, Bass Lay Clark at Ripon Cathedral and Organist and Choirmaster at Sowerby Parish Church. He has sung solos for many local choirs including Sheffield Choral Society, York Musical Society and has recorded with York Minster Choir, York Chapter House Choir and Cappella Nova. He has delivered singing workshops to >1500 primary pupils within North Yorkshire. Currently Bass Songman at York Minster, Matt sings daily services and participates in regular broadcasting, recording and touring with the choristers. A recent highlight was performing Messiah with Lynne Dawson in an aircraft-hanger whilst standing underneath a Halifax bomber.

**NOEL MANN (Bass)** studied at the Royal College of Music and has pursued a varied career, working as an opera singer, consort singer and as a stage manager. He has sung in performances and recorded with Cappella Nova on numerous occasions. Recent work includes Diva Opera's 20th anniversary production of Don Pasquale and a major European Tour celebrating the 450th anniversary of Claudio Monteverdi's birth with John Eliot Gardiner's Monteverdi Choir & Orchestra.

**Conductor/Saxophone**

Tommy Smith

**Guest Vocalist**

Kurt Elling

**THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL JAZZ ORCHESTRA**

**Trumpets**

Jim Davison, Sean Gibbs, Lorne Cowieson

**Trombones**

Chris Greive, Michael Owers

**Rhythm Section**

Alyn Cosker (Drums), Calum Gourlay (Bass)

**GUESTS**

**Flute**

Yvonne Robertson

**Bass Clarinet**

Alan Bachetti

**Tuba**

Andy McKreel

**Timpani/Percussion**

Jonathan Chapman

**Organ**

Simon Nieminski

**Harp**

Eve Brzozowska

**CAPPELLA NOVA**

**Sopranos**

Micaela Haslam, Rebecca Tavener, Louise Wayman

**Alto**

Anne Lewis

**Counter Tenor**

Daniel Keating-Roberts

**Tenor**

Malcolm Bennet, Guy Withers

**Bass**

Noel Mann, Paul Charrier, Matt Dowdy

**PROGRAMME**

**INTRODUCTION**

**“Spirit of Light”** - spoken song

words by Liz Lochhead

**KYRIE**

**FOR MARY - “Annunciation”**

words by Rainer Maria Rilke (translated by Edward Snow)

**FOR JOSEPH - “Building A Cradle”**

words by Jim Heynen

**FOR THE STAR - “Of Course I’m Jealous”**

words by St Francis

**FOR THE MAGI - “The Three Holy Kings”**

words by Rainer Maria Rilke (translated by Edward Snow)

**INTERMISSION**

**FOR CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT - “In December”**

words by Norman MacCaig

**FOR CHRISTMAS DAWN - “Perfect Morning”**

words by Norman MacCaig

**FOR THE WINTER SNOW - “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”**

words by Robert Frost

**PETITION - “Petition”**

words by Franz Wright

**FOR THE MODERN PERSON - “You Who Never Arrived”**

words by Rainer Maria Rilke (translated by Stephen Mitchell)

**INTROIT / COLLECT - “Introit”**

words by Meister Eckhart

**COMMUNION - “Communion”**

words by St. Francis of Assisi

**DISMISSAL**

All music composed by Tommy Smith

**“Spirit of Light”**  
*Lochhead*

*These are the shortened days  
and the endless nights.*

*Carol Ann Duffy, from Mean Time (1993)*

Gloomy December.  
The doldrum days of the dead of winter.  
These are the shortest days  
and the endless nights.  
So wish for the moon  
and long for the light.

Chill winds. Relentless rain.  
Dark to go to work in, darkness home again.  
But, given just one fine day of sun and sharp, clean frost,  
our lost, maybe long lost  
Faith – if for nothing more than the year’s turning –  
comes back like the light comes back.  
A promise in our bleak midwinter yearning  
once in a rare and clear blue noon  
if we wish for the moon.

Till then, the light’s soul and spirit  
is locked in its absence  
and our longing for it.

Whether you believe, with the Magi, in their miracle –  
Three Kings bow down low before the Child of Light –  
or whether we think them Wise Men on a fool’s errand,  
their gifts useless, magnificent, precious,  
who came following one star and its faltering gleaming  
till they came to the place,  
it was a brave as well as a cold coming.  
Yes.  
And whether it was a refugee waif  
or the Saviour that was born,  
whether some shepherds on the night-shift  
saw angels, or a meteor storm...

Believe in the light’s soul and spirit  
that’s in its absence  
and our longing for it.

**FOR MARY - “Annunciation”**  
*Rilke - translated by Edward Snow*

You are not nearer to God than we;  
we are all far from him.  
And yet how beautifully  
your hands are blessed.  
No woman’s ripen that way,  
shimmering thus out of the sleeve:  
I am the day, I am the dew,  
you though are the tree.

I’m exhausted now, my way was far,  
forgive me, I’ve forgotten  
what He, who great in gold array  
sat throned as in the sun,  
gave me to tell you, you pensive one  
(space has me confused).  
Look: I’m whatever is beginning,  
you though are the tree.

I stretched my wings to rest them  
and grew oddly vast;  
now your small house overflows  
with my brocade.  
And yet you are more alone  
than ever and scarcely notice me;  
it’s true: I am a breath inside the forest,  
you though are the tree.

The angels all grow afraid,  
let one another go:  
never was desire like this,  
so vague and great.  
Perhaps something soon will happen  
that you now grasp in a dream.  
Greetings to you, my soul now sees:  
you are ready and grow ripe.  
You are a great, high shining gate,  
and you will open soon.  
You, my song’s most cherished ear,  
now I feel: my word got lost  
in you as in a wood.

And so I came that way and made complete  
your thousand and one dreams.  
God looked at me: the light was blinding . . .

You though are the tree.

**FOR JOSEPH - “Building A Cradle”**  
*Heynen*

In the fourth month  
when the quickening spreads  
into your limbs,  
take a walk in the woods.  
Find the stump  
in whose open mouth  
a seed has taken root.  
Do not disturb it.

In the fifth month  
return to the forest  
through the confusion of things fallen  
or growing, find the log  
that lies nervously  
in its hollow.  
Coax it  
until it follows you home.

In the sixth month  
linger long with the woman.  
Study the grain of her skin.  
Let the lines of the wood  
and her lines  
become magnets in your mind  
pulling toward alignment.

In the seventh month  
watch the hands and feet  
working from inside.  
There’s the carpenter!  
Like an apprentice,  
follow these movements  
until they are yours.

In the eighth month  
hold your hand on the taut  
navel of the woman,  
then on the wood.  
Follow the life force in,  
working slowly with what tools you have,  
whittling, shaping with a lathe,  
with your fingers,  
with your tongue.

During the ninth month,  
when distinctions blur  
between you, the woman,  
the stranger, and the wood,  
do not argue with the shape

as it forms,  
don’t look back,  
let it go!  
That morning you find it  
rocking by itself,  
it is finished.

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**FOR THE STAR - “Of Course I’m Jealous”**  
*St. Francis*

We bless the earth with each step we take.  
And the firmament too needs our touch.  
Someday your tenderness will reach it.

Look how the birds climb some invisible staircase  
and lay their hands upon Him.  
Of course I am jealous when I too cannot do that.

The seas waited long to sing.  
Not until we leaped  
out laughing  
was their birth of us complete.

“Tell me about your heart,” my every word says.  
“Speak to me as if we both lay wounded  
in a field and are gazing  
in wonder  
as our spirits rise.”

---

**FOR THE MAGI - “The Three Holy Kings”**  
*Rilke - translated by Edward Snow*

Once long ago when at the desert’s edge  
the Lord’s hand spread open -  
as if a fruit should deep in summer  
proclaim its seed -  
there was a miracle: across  
vast distances a constellation formed  
out of three kings and a star.

Three kings from On-the-Way  
and the star Everywhere,  
who all pushed on (just think!)  
to the right a Rex and the left a Rex  
toward a silent stall.

What was there that they didn’t bring  
to that stall in Bethlehem!  
Each step clanked out ahead of them,  
and he who rode the sable horse  
sat plush and velvet-snug.

And he who walked upon his right  
was like some man of gold,  
and he who rode upon his left  
with sling and swing  
and jang and jing  
from a round silver thing  
that hung inside rings  
began to smoke deep blue.  
The the star Everywhere laughed  
so strangely at them,  
and ran ahead and found the stall  
and said to Mary:

I am bringing here an errantry  
made up of many strangers.  
Three kings with ancient might  
heavy with gold and topaz  
and dark, dim, and heathenish -  
but don't you be afraid.  
They have all three at home  
twelve daughters, not one son,  
so they'll ask for use of yours  
as sunshine for their heaven's blue  
and comfort for their thrones.

Yet don't straightaway believe: simply  
some sparkle-prince and heathen sheik  
should be your young son's lot.  
Consider: the road is long.  
They've wandered far, like herdsmen,  
while back at home their ripe empires fall  
into the lap of God knows whom.  
And while here, warmly like westwind,  
the ox snorts into their ears,  
back there they may already be bereft  
and headless, for all they know.

So: with your smile cast light  
on that confusion which they are,  
and turn your countenance  
toward dawning with your child.

There in blue lines lies  
what each one left for you:  
Esmeralda and Rubinién  
and the Valley of Turquoise.

---

**FOR CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT - "In December"**  
*MacCaig*

It was tonight the moon set glasses  
Tinkling by the waterside  
And filled our throats with frost and stilled

The lights that shivered on the road.

Over the roofs the stars rushed sideways  
Through skies as blue as milk. They fled  
making the buildings heel right over,  
Perpetually plunging to the ground.

But in that cup of poison sipping  
For truths to live for, we could find  
Space that tingled on our tongues and  
Silence that made our heads swim round.

It seemed that in the midnight's freezing  
Utterance something had been said  
As powerful as the childhood word  
That turned the heaps of straw to gold.

---

**FOR CHRISTMAS DAWN - "Perfect Morning"**  
*MacCaig*

No idle corner in the air,  
No formless seeking in a cloud  
Marred the completeness everywhere -  
As though defects were disallowed

By some huge order that would not  
Permit a disobedience.  
The real thing was the same in thought  
As trembling on a naked sense

And with a permeation full  
Of present moments could compose  
Beside a thorn tip, white and cool,  
The encyclopedia of a rose

Out of a kingdom newly come  
Where sunken treasures in the world  
Thrilled into sight like radium.  
The ladders of the air were curled

With goings up and down that made  
The air a shore of sandpipers  
Beneath a wave of blue and jade;  
Till, having nowhere to disperse

Its secret selves, even the unreal  
Emerged and took its real place,  
With civil looks admitting all  
The actual world into its grace.

**FOR THE WINTER SNOW -  
"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"**  
*Frost*

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

---

**PETITION - "Petition"**  
*Wright*

Kneeling  
at the foot of the universe  
I ask  
from this body  
in this confusion  
and pain (a condition  
which You  
may recall)  
Clothed now in light  
clothed in abyss, at the prow  
of the desert  
killed  
into everywhereness -  
have mercy  
Mercy on us all

---

**FOR THE MODERN PERSON -  
"You Who Never Arrived"**  
*Rilke - translated by Stephen Mitchell*

You who never arrived  
in my arms, Beloved, who were lost  
from the start,  
I don't even know what songs  
would please you. I have given up trying

to recognize you in the surging wave of the next  
moment. All the immense  
images in me – the far-off, deeply-felt landscape,  
cities, towers, and bridges, and unsuspected  
turns in the path,  
and those powerful lands that were once  
pulsing with the life of the gods -  
all rise within me to mean  
you, who forever elude me.

You, Beloved, who are all  
the gardens I have ever gazed at,  
longing. An open window  
in a country house – , and you almost  
stepped out, pensive, to meet me.  
Streets that I chanced upon, -  
you had just walked down them and vanished.  
And sometimes, in a shop, the mirrors  
were still dizzy with your presence and, startled,  
gave back my too-sudden image. Who knows?  
perhaps the same bird echoed through both of us  
yesterday, separate, in the evening...

---

**INTROIT / COLLECT - "Introit"**  
*Meister Eckhart*

Everything I see, hear, touch, feel, taste  
speak, think  
imagine  
  
is completing a perfect circle  
God has drawn

---

**COMMUNION - "Communion"**  
*St. Francis*

I once spoke to a my friend,  
an old squirrel,  
about the Sacraments.

He got so excited  
and ran into a hollow  
of his tree and came back

holding some acorns,  
an owl feather,  
and a ribbon he had found.

I smiled and said,  
"Yes, friend.  
You understand it:

Everything imparts His grace."

# THE POETS



## ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

1181/82 Assisi, Italy – 1226 Assisi, Italy

St Francis was a Roman Catholic friar, deacon and preacher who was born Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone, the son of a wealthy silk merchant. He is reputed to have been a relatively wealthy young man who could not square his own affluence with the abject poverty of those around him. Ultimately, his faith commanded that he renounce material things and he entered fully into the service of God and the Church. The writings of St.

Francis combined the elemental, the natural, the mystical and the holy, most profoundly in his extensively translated Canticle of the Sun.



## MEISTER ECKHART

(c. 1260, Erfurt Germany – 1327/8 Avignon)

Eckhart von Hochheim was a theologian, philosopher and one of the great Christian mystics with a distinguished career as a Parisian Professor of Theology, and leading pastor and organiser in the Dominican Order. Eckhart expounded eternal mysteries in a style that was fresh and original with vivid use of imagery that paradoxically directed readers to that which lies beyond image.

In later life, he was accused of heresy but was granted an appeal by Pope John XXII in Avignon. He died before the Papal enquiry into his teachings was decided.



## ROBERT FROST

1910 San Francisco, USA – 1963 Boston USA

The poetry of Robert Frost is one of America's great literary treasures, for it describes the complexities of the human condition with the voice of everyman. His work is therefore empathetic, spiritual and universal; and it's widely recognised as a quintessentially American lyric form. In fact, Frost's first collections, *A Boy's Will* (1913) and *North of Boston* (1914), were published in England; perhaps fittingly, given the evident

influence of Thomas Hardy and Edward Thomas. Frost was much lauded in his lifetime as a poet who articulated the trials of rural living with intellect, compassion and humanity.



## JIM HEYENEN

1940 Iowa, USA

Jim Heynen is an American writer whose formative years in the Dutch farming community of north-west Iowa inform much of his writing. His first published works were poetry collections, which appeared throughout the 1970's, beginning with *Maedra Poems* in 1974. In the mid-1980's he turned his attention to writing short stories and non-fiction before publishing his first novel, *Being Youngest*, in 1997. Heynen is noted for his

fictionalized memoirs of farm-boy life and the insular experiences of rural youth. His stories about "The Boys" featured often on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*, and were broadcast more widely in both Sweden and Denmark.

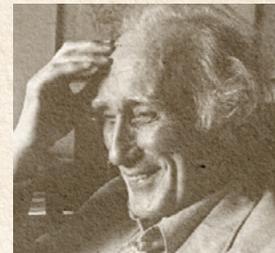


## LIZ LOCHHEAD

1947, Motherwell, Scotland

Liz Lochhead is one of Scotland's best-loved living poets. She began to write while studying Drawing and Painting at Glasgow School of Art in the late sixties. Her first collection, *Memo for Spring* published in 1972, became a poetry best-seller and marked the entrance of a bold new female-voice into the then very much all-male world of Scottish Poetry.

In the decades since, Lochhead has written prolifically for the theatre, including many acclaimed adaptations and more than a score of her own original plays, but writing poetry has remained her first love. *A Choosing*, her Selected Poems (2011), was – at the end of her recent five-year tenure as Scots Makar, or National Poet of Scotland – followed by a brand new collection, *Fugitive Colours* (2016). She was awarded the Queens Gold Medal for Poetry, 2015.



## NORMAN MACCAIG

1910 Edinburgh, Scotland – 1996 Edinburgh, Scotland

Norman MacCaig is one of Scotland's most popular poets, and his lyrical work paints an authentic portrait of the modern Scottish character. MacCaig worked for many years as a primary school teacher before publishing his first collection of serious poetry in the 1940's. He eventually achieved wider recognition in 1955 with *Riding Lights*, and further landmark collections followed throughout the 1960's and 70's. His later work became

more reflective and dwelt on themes of loss and isolation. Many of his best-loved pieces, though, are wonderful descriptions of wildlife, wilderness and landscape.

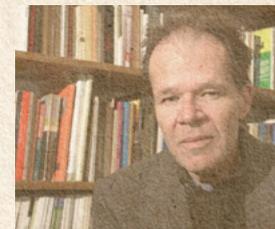


## RAINER MARIA RILKE

1875 Prague, Bohemia- 1926 Valmont, Switzerland

Rilke is considered to be one of the most influential poets of the early 20th Century. His use of haunting imagery and existentialist symbolism significantly influenced later writers such as W. H. Auden, Dylan Thomas and Stephen Spender. Rilke is famous for *Sonnets to Orpheus* and the *Duino Elegies*, and the prose works *Letters to a Young Poet* and *The Notebooks of Malte*

*Laurids Brigge*. Rilke's enduring popularity, particularly in America, has also contributed to his status as a cultural icon.



## FRANZ WRIGHT

1953 Vienna, Austria – 1999 Waltham, USA

Franz Wright was a poet of the late 20th Century whose first work *Tapping the White Cane of Solitude* appeared in 1976. He was published regularly throughout his life, and many times posthumously; most recently with *The Toy Throne* in 2016. His most critically acclaimed poems appeared in later collections such as *Walking to Martha's Vineyard* (2003), *God's Silence* (2006), and

*Kindertotenworld* (2011). He was a translator of Rilke, and shared with him the poet's search for spiritual enlightenment, personal peace, and release from self-inflicted torments.

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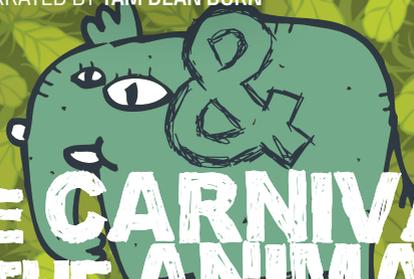
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