Academic named "broadcaster of the future"

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An academic at the University of St Andrews has been selected by the BBC as one of just ten 'broadcasters of the future'.

Dr Peter Mackay, a lecturer in English, is the only academic in Scotland to be named one of this year's New Generation Thinkers.

The scheme - run by BBC Radio 3 and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) - is a nationwide search for the brightest minds who have the potential to share their cutting edge academic ideas through radio and television.

Dr Mackay is a specialist in Scottish and Irish poetry of the 20th and 21st centuries and their place within 'English' literature. He is currently working on an anthology of transgressive Gaelic poetry over the last 500 years.

He said: "It's a great honour to have been chosen as a New Generation Thinker for 2015, particularly given the calibre of people from all over the country who were involved in the workshops held by the BBC. I'm very much looking forward to the opportunity of working with the BBC and AHRC on different projects over the coming year."

Dr Mackay was selected from hundreds of academic applicants at the start of their careers, who demonstrated their passion to communicate modern scholarship to a wider audience. He was eventually chosen by a panel of experts from the BBC and AHRC after completing a series of day-long workshops at the BBC in Salford and London.

The scheme has been a successful first step for many academics, with previous thinkers going on to appear across television and radio. Dr Mackay follows in the footsteps of previous St Andrews' winners Philip Roscoe (2011) and Sarah Dillon (2013).

Dr Mackay is joined in the 2015 list by fellow Thinkers from the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Bournemouth, Liverpool, Sheffield and Liverpool John Moores, as well as the V&A. The New Generation Thinkers were announced at the annual literary and arts festival, the Hay Festival yesterday (Sunday 24 May 2015).

This year's winners - the fifth group of New Generation Thinkers - will spend one year working with Radio 3 presenters and producers to develop their ideas into broadcasts. They will make their debut appearance on Radio 3's arts and ideas programme, Free Thinking, and will be invited to make regular contributions to the network throughout the year.

Each New Generation Thinker will have an opportunity to develop their ideas for television, making short films for BBC Arts Online.

Alan Davey, Controller at BBC Radio 3, said: "BBC Radio 3 is about pushing boundaries. We are dedicated to nurturing emerging talent across culture and music, and encouraging new ways of looking at things and surprising audiences.

"Our New Generation Thinker Partnership with the AHRC has given us access to fresh thinking and new approaches to ideas by scholars at the start of their careers. This helps us as a broadcaster to present fascinating and complex ideas in new ways, and I hope it will give our New Generation Thinkers a huge canvas to make a big impact with their work. "

A full list of the AHRC/BBC Radio 3 New Generation Thinkers is available on the AHRC website.

Notes to news editors

An image of Dr Mackay is available from the Press Office - contacts below.

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