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PRESS RELEASE

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The Guildhall School of Music & Drama and The Royal Opera announce Na'ama Zisser as second Doctoral Composer-in-Residence

The Guildhall School of Music & Drama in association with The Royal Opera today announces Na'ama Zisser as the second Doctoral Composer-in-Residence, starting in September 2015.

Launched in 2013, the collaboration between the Guildhall School and The Royal Opera is one of the first examples of an opera company and conservatoire joining forces to offer a Composer-in-Residence studentship which leads to a doctoral degree. Fully funded by the Guildhall School and supported by The Royal Opera, the studentship offers one composer every two years the opportunity to be Doctoral Composer-in-Residence over a three-year period. During this time, the composer researches and writes a major work, which will be staged by The Royal Opera at the end of the residency.

The studentship aims to offer an enriching model of opera development that allows a composer substantial creative research experience in the development of operatic practice, within the setting of a unique collaboration between an opera company and conservatoire. It allows for both critical reflection and creative research, in both professional and academic contexts. The principal supervisor is the Guildhall School's Head of Composition, Professor Julian Philips, partnered by Associate Director of Opera for The Royal Opera John Fulljames.

Na'ama Zisser said of her appointment: 'I'm extremely excited about this unusual opportunity to focus on what I'm interested in within opera and modern storytelling, creating a work that is very personal to me. It's quite rare to have the time to reflect and research, work at my own pace, and have mentorship, support and resources. This will have an enormous impact on my own creative development and the work produced. I'm very much looking forward to starting, and hope to build meaningful collaborations and to explore ideas to their full potential.'

Na'ama Zisser began her compositional studies at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, having completed compulsory military service as a pianist in her native Israel's Air Force

orchestra. From here, she was commissioned by a variety of leading Israeli orchestras such as the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra and the Israel Camerata Orchestra. With this experience, she went on to gain her BMus in Composition from the Guildhall School and recently graduated with Distinction from the Royal College of Music with an MA in Composition. During her time at the Royal College, she studied under Mark-Anthony Turnage (supported by the Polonsky Award) and was awarded the Hurlstone & Cobbet RCM special prize for outstanding achievement.

Zisser's work, which centres around collaborations and has a particular focus on contemporary dance, opera, installations, theatre and instrumental music, has been presented at various well-known venues in the UK including Aldeburgh Music Festival, National Portrait Gallery, Sadler's Wells, Kings Place and the Linbury Studio Theatre at the Royal Opera House

Listeners to BBC Radio 3 and NTS online radio are also no strangers to her music. Her recent projects include: a work for members of the London Symphony Orchestra with live karaoke as part of the LSO Soundhub residency, Sound & Music New Voices Composer, a Sound & Music Portfolio Residency, and a commission for the London Sinfonietta/Kings Place Minimalism Unwrapped series which had its premiere in January 2015 and will be performed in Tel-Aviv next year. Additionally, she was commissioned by Tête à Tête Opera Company to compose an operatic work for five counter/high tenors, which was produced by Tête à Tête and performed by CHROMA ensemble.

Professor Julian Philips, Head of Composition, Guildhall School commented: 'I'm really excited to welcome composer Na'ama Zisser as our second Doctoral Composer-in-Residence with the Royal Opera House. Once again, we reviewed an astonishingly strong field of composers for this scheme, both from the UK and abroad; Na'ama Zisser's work stood out for its unsettling distinctiveness. She is already a highly experienced opera composer, and her operas are characterized by often engrossing and alluring sound worlds that surround and envelop dark and disturbing dramatic material. We feel confident that with the support of the Guildhall School and the Royal Opera House, Na'ama will develop work of real distinction during her three years on this scheme. Na'ama will be overlapping with our first Doctoral Composer-in-Residence, Philip Venables, whose new opera based on Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* receives its premiere in May 2016.'

John Fulljames, Associate Director of Opera, The Royal Opera, said: 'We're thrilled to be working with Na'ama Zisser, who has developed such a distinctive voice and body of work; and who shows such potential as an opera composer. Our partnership with the Guildhall School is enabling us to make the most of the learning opportunities provided by the world class artists who perform with The Royal Opera, and to offer a context within which to nurture and produce opera with a new generation of artists.'

Philip Venables holds the inaugural position of Doctoral Composer-in-Residence and in September enters his final year in this role. His opera *4.48 Psychosis* – the first operatic adaptation of a work by Sarah Kane – will be given its premiere performances at the Lyric Hammersmith 20–28 May 2016. The rehearsal period will offer the opportunity for Zisser to shadow Venables in the process of staging his new opera.

In addition to the Doctoral Composer-in-Residence, the Guildhall School offers an MA in Opera Making and Writing in association with the Royal Opera House. Launched in 2014, this full-time, one-year Masters programme allows composers and writers to focus on how new opera is created, developed and performed.

The Guildhall School of Music & Drama is provided by the City of London Corporation.

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