

PRESS RELEASE: BLUE ELECTRIC

Music: Tom Smail / Libretto: Alba Arikha

Directed by Hugh Hudson

WHEN: Tuesday 7th August 2018, 7.00-7.40 pm

WHERE: RADA Studios, 16 Chenies St, London, WC1E 7EX (Tête-à-Tête Festival)

A teenage girl in 1980's Paris attempts to lead a normal adolescent existence - falling in love, rebelling, searching for her identity - against the backdrop of her volatile artist father's secret history of war, holocaust and exile.

By day, 17-year-old Alba smokes in secret, wears blue electric eye shadow, dreams of boys and tries to fit in. By night, she wonders why her father screams in German and where his anger comes from. She fights him and he fights her back. As the gulf between them widens, the harrowing truth will gradually emerge.

BLUE ELECTRIC, based on Alba Arikha's acclaimed memoir, *Major/Minor*, is a collaboration between husband and wife and an opera of juxtapositions: contemporary orchestral music and bursts of pop music, adolescent preoccupations and S.S. death camps. It is about a father and daughter and the effect - years later - of the Holocaust on their relationship.

Tom Smail's works have been performed recently at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Barbican, the Riverside Studios, the Royal Court and around the country with English Touring Opera. His latest commissions include a cello sonata, a First World War song cycle and a choral setting of Blake's *Thro' midnight streets*.

Alba Arikha is the author of four books, both fiction and non-fiction. Her memoir, *Major/Minor*, was shortlisted for the Spear's Awards and translated into several languages. Her new novel, *Where to find me*, will be published by Alma Books, in September 2018. She is also a singer/songwriter and has recorded two CDs.

Hugh Hudson is the director of Academy Award winning *Chariots of Fire* (1981), *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes* (1984) and *I Dreamed of Africa* (2000). His latest film is *Altamira* (2016). He made his opera debut with *The Crucible* (Staatstheater, Braunschweig, 2015), music by Pulitzer Prize winning composer Robert Ward and stage sets by Brian Clark.

Singers: Mimi Doulton (*Alba*), **Jonathan Brown** (*Vigo*), **Helen Charlston** (*Anne/Schoolgirl 3*), **Camilla Seale** (*Barbara/Schoolgirl 2*), **Jennifer Coleman** (*Noga/Schoolgirl 1*)

Laura Albeck, costume and set designer, is a 2017 Linbury Prize finalist and was awarded The Royal National Theatre bursary for 2018.

About Tom Smail:

'One of the most fascinating and lyrical composers of his generation'.

The Sunday Times

'Stylish, confident, complete.' The Telegraph

About Major/Minor:

'A fiercely honest and compelling account of what it is to grow up in an artistic household'.

John Banville

'I read it straight through in a single sitting - unable to stop.' Paul Auster

'Heartbreaking and extraordinary.' Edmund de Waal

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More information (including four-minute taster):

<http://www.tomsmail.net/2018/02/blue-electric>