

Classical

By ALLAN KOZINN

NEIL ROLNICK, a composer who combines electronic and acoustic instruments in inventive ways, has spent the last three years working on "MONO," a 12-movement exploration of sensory perception, and the lack of it, inspired by the sudden loss of hearing in his left ear in March 2008. Hearing loss is traumatic for any musician, but composers mine the emotional experiences available to them, and Mr. Rolnick's first response, the "MONO Prelude," is a haunting work that juxtaposes the noise and ringing of tinnitus with vital, driven music that conveys his determination to overcome the challenge. Mr. Rolnick's meditations on deafness led him to collect stories from others – six people all told – who have lost their ability to see, hear, smell, taste or touch, and to shape their experiences into a multimedia work he expects to unveil in its complete form in 2013.

As part of the Gershwin Hotel's Contagious Music series, Mr. Rolnick is presenting an extended preview of the work – 7 of the 12 movements – with a starry ensemble of new-music performers that includes the vocalists Mellissa Hughes, Dafna Naphthali, Nick Hallett and Robert Osborne, as well as Kelli Kathman, flutist; Alicia Lee, bass clarinetist; Viky Chow, keyboard; Yuki Numata, violinist, Caleb Burhans, violist and Clarice Jensen, cellist. Mr. Rolnick narrates and oversees the computer sounds, and Todd Reynolds directs. *8:30 p.m., Wednesday, Gershwin Hotel, 7 East 27th Street, Manhattan; 212 545-8000; neilrolnick.com; \$10.*