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The Wanton Sublime

NEW YORK CITY Ear Heart Music, American Modern Ensemble & American Opera Projects | Roulette 4/22/14

On Tuesday, April 22, Ear Heart Music, in partnership with American Modern Ensemble and American Opera Projects, added its name to the list of companies repaving the landscape for new opera in New York City with the world premieres of two chamber operas at Roulette in Brooklyn: Tarik O'Regan and Anna Rabinowitz's *The Wanton Sublime* and Robert Paterson and David Cote's *The Companion*.

A thirty-minute monodrama depicting the internal dilemmas of the Virgin Mary, *The Wanton Sublime* is an enigmatic work. Although Anna Rabinowitz's libretto is both sprawling and crowded, Tarik O'Regan's score provides a clearly structured roadmap for the audience to follow. The sound world of the score spins through three distinct spaces or mindsets: Mary's everyday life, her encounters with the angel Gabriel, and her internal distress. O'Regan marshals meaning from Rabinowitz's swirling text with a fluid, enticing score. Dividing the score into sections is the drone of a cello and bass, from which other sounds, erratic and mellifluous, germinated. O'Regan's vocal lines transform the asymmetric rhythms of Rabinowitz's text into compelling and theatrical music. As Mary, soprano Hai-Ting Chinn shifted easily from lyrical arches to jagged angles of anxiety and angst with a voice of reinforced steel.

—STEVEN JUDE TIETJEN