

metropolis ensemble



DOUG BALLIETT / COMPOSER, PERFORMER

Doug Balliett is a composer, instrumentalist and poet based in New York City. *The New York Times* has described his poetry as “brilliant and witty” (*Clytie and the Sun*), his bass playing as “elegant” (Shawn Jaeger’s *In Old Virginny*), and his compositions as “vivid, emotive, with contemporary twists” (*Actaeon*). Popular new music blog *I Care if You Listen* has critiqued Mr. Balliett’s work as “weird in the best possible way” (*A Gnostic Passion*) and “light-hearted yet dark...it had the audience laughing one minute and in tears the next...” (*Pyramus and Thisbe*). With a constant stream of commissions, a weekly show on New York Public Radio, and nearly 200 performances per year, Mr. Balliett has been identified as an emerging voice for his generation.

Raised in central Massachusetts, Mr. Balliett graduated from Harvard with high honors in 2007 and from Juilliard in 2012, with a Master’s in Historical Performance. During this time he received compositional guidance from John Harbison, Elliot Gyger, and Philip Lasser. Primarily a composer of vocal music, Mr. Balliett has received commissions from the St. Lawrence String Quartet, Carnegie Hall, the Tanglewood Music Center, the San Antonio Symphony, Metropolis Ensemble, SOLI, and has written for some of New York’s finest singers, including Grammy winners Estelí Gomez and Dashon Burton, members of the Trinity Wall Street Choir, as well as young breakout singers like Charlotte

Mundy, Davone Tines, and Ariadne Greif. Recent projects include the evening-length *A Gnostic Passion*, written with his twin brother and commissioned by CANTORI NYC, a cycle of songs based on stories from The Brothers Grimm which premiered at the Lucerne Festival, and a series of rap cantatas based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which have been commissioned from musicians across America. He has held composer-in-residence positions with the Bloomingdale School of Music (as winner of the 2016 ConEdison Exploring the Metropolis Composer Residency Program), the Lucerne Festival Academy, the Chelsea Music Festival, New Vintage Baroque, the Millennials, and the Colonials. His works have been performed at many major New York venues, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Juilliard, the Stone, SubCulture, (le) Poisson Rouge, Galapagos, ShapeshifterLab, and Spectrum. Recent premieres have included a double bass concerto for Robert Nairn, and a new cantata written specifically for William Christie's personal gardens.

Mr. Balliett has wide-ranging interests, many of which he shares with his twin brother Brad. The two host *The Brothers Balliett* on WQXR's Q2; a weekly show exploring new music. The brothers have also curated a monthly series at Spectrum on the Lower East Side, featuring many major NYC new music luminaries. The brothers most recently gave a series of talks about Anton Bruckner for Carnegie Hall.

Mr. Balliett has given talks at the International Society of Double Bassists on historical performance, conducted many performances of his own works, and tirelessly composes poetry. Alongside his brother and composers Elliot Cole and Majel Connery, Mr. Balliett is a member of *The Oracle Hysterical*, a half-band-half-book-club that has presented hip-hoperas, art-rock song cycles, rap cantatas, and other genre-bending works all over America and Europe. Some of their most recent endeavors took them to Chicago, where they performed their album *Hecuba* with the Chicago Composers Orchestra, and Boston, where they performed as soloists with *A Far Cry*.

Trained as a classical double bass player by Todd Seeber during his time at Harvard, Mr. Balliett maintains an extremely active career as a performer. He has performed as principal or solo double bass with Ensemble Modern, the San Antonio Symphony, Alarm Will Sound, and many other ensembles. He has collaborated with musicians from all walks, ranging from baroque opera at William Christie's French estate, to tours with pop band Pink Martini, to appearances with MacArthur fellow Steve Coleman at the Newport Jazz Festival. Deeply committed to period instrument performance, Mr. Balliett is also principal bass of the Trinity Wall Street Baroque Orchestra, the Holy Trinity Lutheran Bach Orchestra, 17th century string band ACRONYM, and has appeared as principal bass of Les Arts Florissants, Boston Baroque, the Handel & Haydn Society, and the Washington Cathedral. He performs regularly on the viola da gamba and the violone.