



An adventurous mix of contemporary art, music, and performance.

October 6, 2016

## The Sea: Tales of Lapham

A Far Cry  
Oracle Hysterical

"The Sea" Concerto <i>Largo: Allegro (Brad Balliett)</i> <i>Calm and Ecstatic (Doug Balliett)</i> <i>Fast (Elliot Cole)</i>	Brad Balliett, Doug Balliett, and Elliot Cole
The World is a Sea	Majel Connery, arr. Elliot Cole
The Book of Jonah	Brad Balliett and Majel Connery
How Deep is the Ocean?	Elliot Cole
A Thousand Fearful Wracks	Brad Balliett
Star-Infused and Milky Sea	Brad Balliett
Sea Musics	Majel Connery, arr. Doug Balliett
A Black Day	Doug Balliett
Strait of Messina	Doug Balliett

### VIOLIN

Robyn Bollinger  
Miki-Sophia Cloud  
Sharon Cohen+  
Alex Fortes  
Omar Chen Guey  
Jesse Irons  
Megumi Stohs Lewis  
Annie Rabbat

### VIOLA

Sarah Darling  
Jason Fisher  
Greg Luce\*

### CELLO

Danielle Cho\*  
Kee Kim\*  
Michael Unterman

### BASS

Lizzie Burns\*  
Kris Saebo\*

\*Guest Crier

+Crier Emeritus

### ORACLE HYSTERICAL

Brad Balliett, **basoon & vocals**  
Doug Balliett, **bass guitar & vocals**  
Elliot Cole, **piano & vocals**  
Majel Connery, **piano & vocals**  
Dylan Greene, **drums**

*Projections designed by Oracle Hysterical  
and cued by Nicholas Tolle*

## About the musicians:

**A Far Cry** stands at the forefront of an exciting new generation in classical music. According to The New York Times, the self-conducted orchestra “brims with personality or, better, personalities, many and varied.” A Far Cry was founded in 2007 by a tightly-knit collective of 17 young professional musicians, and since the beginning has fostered those personalities. A Far Cry has developed an innovative process where decisions are made collectively and leadership rotates among the “Criers.” For each piece, a group of principals is elected by the members, and these five musicians guide the rehearsal process and shape the interpretation. Since each program includes multiple works, this multiplicity of leaders adds tremendous musical variety to the concerts.

A Far Cry’s omnivorous approach has led the group to collaborations with artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Jake Shimabukuro, Urbanity Dance, and Roomful of Teeth. By expanding the boundaries of orchestral repertoire and experimenting with the ways music is prepared, performed, and experienced, A Far Cry has been embraced throughout the world with hundreds of performances coast to coast and across the globe, and a powerful presence on the Internet. In October 2014, A Far Cry launched its in-house label, Crier Records, with the album *Dreams and Prayers*, which received critical acclaim and a GRAMMY nomination. The second release, *Law of Mosaics*, followed in November 2014 and has also garnered much critical attention, including many 2014 Top-10 lists, notably from The New Yorker music critic Alex Ross and WQXR’s Q2 Music, which named A Far Cry as one of the “Imagination-Grabbing, Trailblazing Artists of 2014.”

The eighteen Criers are proud to call Boston home, and maintain strong roots in the city, rehearsing at their storefront music center in Jamaica Plain and fulfilling the role of Chamber Orchestra in Residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Collaborating with local students through an educational partnership with the New England Conservatory, A Far Cry aims to pass on the spirit of collaboratively-empowered music to the next generation.

**Oracle Hysterical** is a collective of 4 composer-performers: twin brothers Doug Balliett (double bass, viola da gamba) and Brad Balliett (bassoons), Majel Connery (vocals), and Elliot Cole (guitars, vocals, harmonium). Half band, half book club, OH combines eclectic musical influences with literary breadth, adapting great works of literature through the medium of song. OH has created hip-hoperas, art-rock song cycles, rap cantatas, and other genre-bending works all over America and Europe, collaborating with a variety of ensembles to cultivate a unique sound palette for each project.

OH is also putting the finishing touches on its second album, *Hecuba*, after the eponymous tragedy by Euripides. *Hecuba* is commissioned and produced by Opera Cabal (with mix engineers Chris Botta and Alexander Overington).

In its early years, 2009-11, Oracle Hysterical appeared at the MATA Festival (*The Rake*, with Metropolis Ensemble), the Berkshire Fringe Festival (*Grimms’ Fairy Tales*), and at the Lucerne Festival Academy (Billy Budd), where they were Spotlight Artists in 2011. In 2013, vocalist Majel Connery joined the group. The influence of her semi-operatic vocals fired a generation of chamber pop cycles for groups like the Marcel Trio (Afghani folktale “Babinigar”) and Washington Square Winds (Grimms’ “The Fisherman and his Wife”). OH has also performed at The Stone, Spectrum, Le Poisson Rouge, and National Sawdust in NYC, and at Constellation, The Hideout Inn, and High Concept Laboratories in Chicago. OH will be in residence at Millay Colony in Upstate NY November 2016.

**Brad Balliett** lives in New York and enjoys performing and creating. A composer and bassoonist, Brad is a co-artistic director for Decoda (Affiliate Ensemble of Carnegie Hall), and performs with many groups, including Signal, Metropolis Ensemble, NOVUS, and Deviant Septet. Brad has performed with a variety of musicians, including the Houston Symphony, Metropolitan Opera Musicians, New York City Ballet, International Contemporary Ensemble, Miguel Zenon, Zakir Hussain, and the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. In the summer, Brad has played with great musicians at festivals like Marlboro, Tanglewood, Newport Jazz Festival, and the Lucerne Festival. With his twin brother, Doug, Brad hosts a radio show on WQXR's Q2 Music (The Brothers Balliett), curates a concert series at Spectrum in the Lower East Side, and is on faculty at The Juilliard School (Evening Division). As a teaching artist, Brad regularly leads composition and song-writing workshops in schools, hospitals, prisons, and homeless shelters. Brad graduated summa cum laude from Harvard University in 2005, and holds an MM from Rice University. His hobbies include writing sonnets, running, and reading Shakespeare.

**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.

**Elliot Cole** (b. 1984) is a composer, performer, and "charismatic contemporary bard" (NY Times). His book of bowed vibraphone quartets, Postludes, evokes "sparkling icicles of sound" (Rolling Stone), and is a new staple of percussion repertoire, having been performed by over 140 ensembles all over the world, including all major American music schools, So Percussion, Blow Up Roma, and Amadinda. He has sung his Hanuman's Leap, a bardic epic for voices and drums, in 15 cities, and will record it with Grammy-winning vocal group Roomful of Teeth in 2016 after two sold-out shows at the Park Avenue Armory. He lives in Jersey City and is

on faculty at the Manhattan School of Music, The New School, Juilliard Evening Division, and is Program Director of Musicambia at Sing Sing correctional facility.

**Majel Connery** is a vocalist, composer, producer, and musicologist. Connery served as Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California Berkeley 2013–15, and is currently Mohr Visiting Artist 2016–17 at Stanford University as part of a collaboration with Pulitzer Prize winner Caroline Shaw and the Saint Lawrence String Quartet. She is also Mellon Visiting Artist (with Ken Ueno and Thomas Tsang) at the Newhouse Center at Wellesley College. Recent honors include a USA Artist Fellowship nomination, and a New Music USA Award (with Oracle Hysterical and A Far Cry). Connery is co-founder and Executive & Artistic Director of avant-garde opera company Opera Cabal, and has commissioned, produced, and performed in projects with the company including works by Caroline Shaw, G.F. Haas, and Lewis Nielson. She graduated from Princeton University with an A.B. in music composition and holds an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in ethnomusicology and musicology.

**Dylan Hunter Chee Greene** is a percussionist, composer, designer, and artist in New York. In 2015-16 he worked and performed with groups like New Music Detroit, Sō Percussion, Oracle Hysterical, Mobius Percussion, The Detroit Bureau of Sound, and The Orchestra Now (TÖN). His dance work ranged from a Bessie nominated project that sounded like "Heaven" (NY Times) called There Might Be Others by Rebecca Lazier and Dan Truman to commissions from choreographers Amy Chavasse and Imana Gunawan for performances at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) and Alvin Ailey. Dylan was a 2016 Bang On A Can Fellow at Mass MoCa and performed with the All-Stars there. Greene graduated with honors and a BM from the University of Michigan where he co-founded The Willo Collective, a Detroit based art ensemble ambient band he now plays and works with as the artistic director. He is finishing an Artist Diploma at Bard College with Sō Percussion. Portfolio, contact, and happenings at [hunterchee.com](http://hunterchee.com)

## Texts:

### Concerto

(no lyrics)

### The World is a Sea

The world is a sea. It is a sea, it is subject to storms and tempests; every man (and every man is a world) feels that. The world is a sea. It is a sea, it is bottomless to any line we can sound it with, endless to any discovery we make of it. The world is a sea. It is a sea, it hath ebbs and floods and no man knows the reason. All men change in their bodies, they fall sick, they grow poor, become sad, they wonder. The cause is wrapped in the purpose and judgment of God only, and hid from them that have them. The world is a sea. It is a sea if we consider who swims there. In the sea the great fish devour the less. And so do the men of this world too. We seek it not here but we seek it while we are here. Those are the great works which we are to do in this world. First is to know that this world's not our home. We seek one that's to come. And in this sea are we made fishers of men: not of rich men, or poor men, nor learned men, nor ignorant men, but what makes them men, their souls. -*John Donne*

### from The Book of Jonah

The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish.

He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish."

Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. So they asked

him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do

you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land."

This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?"

"Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."

Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. Then they cried out to the Lord, "Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased." Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

But the Lord provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in that fish three days and three nights.

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God:

I called to the Lord in my distress and he answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried and you heard my voice.

You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounds me, all your waves and your billows cast over me.

I am driven from your sight, O Lord, my God.

As my life was ebbing away, I remembered the Lord and my prayer came to you in your holy home.

But I with the voice of Thanksgiving will sacrifice to you.

Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

-*The Book of Jonah*

### *How Deep is the Ocean?*

(includes informative spoken blurbs)

#### *A Thousand Fearful Wracks*

Methought I saw a thousand fearful wracks,  
ten thousand men that fishes gnawed upon,  
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,  
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,  
All scattered in the bottom of the sea.  
Some lay in dead men's skulls, and in the holes  
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept—  
As 'twere in scorn of eyes—reflecting gems,  
That wooed the slimy bottom of the deep  
And mocked the dead bones that lay scattered by...

and often did I strive  
To yield the ghost, but still the envious flood  
kept in my soul and would not let it forth  
To seek the empty, vast, and wand'ring air,  
But smothered it within my panting bulk,  
Who almost burst to belch it in the sea...  
O, then began the tempest to my soul.  
who passed, methought, the melancholy flood,  
With that grim ferryman which poets write of,  
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.

-William Shakespeare: *Richard III, Act 1, Scene 4*

#### *Star-Infused and Milky Sea*

I've been gazing in the poem of the star-infused and  
milky sea, devouring the azure greens.  
(Arthur Rimbaud: "The Drunken Boat")

#### *Sea Musics (on Henry Beston)*

(no lyrics)

#### *A Black Day (Song for George Ballmer)*

On a morning bright with salty light, we're miles and  
miles from shore  
when our watch was done our slumber was cut short,  
man overboard.  
He had gone aloft to fit a strap around the topmast head  
with a strap and block and halyards and the marlin-spike  
around his neck.  
A man who couldn't swim and lived by grace of well-  
shaped planks  
and with all that gear about his neck, no question but he  
sank.  
But we dropped the quarter boats and rowed and rowed  
and rowed and rowed,

and a solid hour spent hollering hoarse, and gazing low.  
And no-one really thinks the lost man ever will be  
found,  
but no-one wants to be the first to say, OK, let's turn  
around.

And a death is always solemn, but never so much as at  
sea.  
Because on land a man is lost and mourners go about  
the streets,  
Because on land a man is lost, we take a stone, to mark  
his peace,  
But at sea the body's lost, and it imparts an air of awful  
mystery.  
Because on land a man is shot and his mangled body still  
remains  
Because on land a man is lost, we leave a stone to mark  
his grave  
Because on land a man may know his hour's up, and be  
prepared  
Because on land we have these symbols helping us to  
understand.

But at sea, all we have is the vacancy  
He was a voice, he was a form,  
he was a company, community,  
in death he's turned into a vacancy.  
Because the sea is wide,  
and the bark is small,  
and for months and months it's just us,  
and suddenly—a vacancy...  
Like a limb you lose—  
There's the empty berth.

Seventeen years alive, one hour dead,  
The auction begins.

#### *Strait of Messina*

1) Ithaca!  
After the love cooled off,  
I was in a bind.  
Am I a hero still,  
or is it pride?  
After a lifetime as a poor shepherd's toy  
After prediction that we'd all be destroyed  
After I heard that my shipmates and I would die...  
Still, home  
Still, I must get home  
I must get home.

## 2) Our Trim Ship

Love and death on the whale road  
Ankle deep in the briny cold  
Oh it feels good to be back on the sea.  
Sail is puffed by a stiff breeze  
Ship is trim, running easy and beastly and  
Oh it feels good to be back on the sea.  
I was told by that Circe  
that sirens go off on the island that's off to the  
starboard, I was duly warned,  
now we're speeding along,  
directly into their jaws,  
puffing along by a stiff breeze,  
Gee it feels good to be back on the sea.

## 3) Dead Calm

But, oh, when the wind falls  
Dastardly suddenly calm  
We glance at each other alarmed  
There's nothing so terror filled  
To see the sails fully filled  
limpening, flapping, then empty and still.  
Still, not a flap.  
Maybe great Poseidon holds us back  
Or maybe it radiates from the speck on the horizon  
that's wafting us lilacs chrysanthemum daffodil tulip  
rose  
baby's breath thistle bloom bleeding heart lily carnation  
and columbine foxglove forget-me-not hyacinth

## 4) Time to Move

Leapt to our feet on the flat swell  
Striking the mast and the limp sail  
Stowed it deep in our ship's keep  
Strong as sheep, make the sea sweep  
Twitch and leap, make the wind weep,  
Burly mass sit at the oars,  
Froth it white, give it pores,  
Dimple the sea with your brute strength  
churn it up baby trajectory length  
We have the tools to say put away nature  
we'll fly in the face of whatever you're pitching our way.  
We have the right as a people to fight the  
unflinching old deities, god it feels good to be back on  
the sea;  
We've never stood like a sorry old wood watching  
treecutters come and molest what we're building and  
I never paused in the face of a god who was  
shaming me blaming me giving the lie to me  
I always fly in the face of the guy that says  
no you can't no you can't no you can't no you can't

know you can know you can know you can know you  
can

## 5) Ear Stopping

And so I pulled out a big wheel of beeswax  
Took a knife in hand and I sliced it  
little chunks for the monks at the oarlocks  
Holding them high up to Helicon till I can  
feel the molecules moving and grooving to the  
beating and kneading of callous and hands  
(oh, these hands, that have built and rowed and fought  
and thought.)  
Strong hands, kneading beeswax.  
Took the pile down the aisle to the sailers  
they're not dumb they can see we're in danger  
but the wax when attached makes 'em strangers  
they can row and relax at the mangers  
one by one till the job is done  
I'm an agent, a scourge, I'm a plague, I'm a bird  
I sew deafness of men!

## 6) Lashing

And then they tied me up  
They lashed me tight  
Hand and foot  
Impotence to my might.  
What a picture! What a sight!  
A boat full of sailors as deaf as the night  
the captain all wild eyed and terrified  
Lashed to the masthead, immobilized!  
And the sailors return to their hard task,  
whipping the water with oars rash  
Churning the boat at a clip fast  
Rhyming the ocean with whiplash  
Now I can make out the island  
That was only a blot on horizon  
steadily growing and rising  
Like a raisin that's growing in size and  
The salty air's getting sweeter  
freshening up every meter  
The air's getting thicker with beautiful scent  
I should have stopped all senses on all my men.

## 7) Meadow Arioso

Just at this time  
I could see the meadow fine  
Studded with flowers, like stars adorn the sky  
I know they were monsters  
But if you've ever been in love  
Then you know the way it takes you

A madness

And so I almost found myself praying,  
To Athena, or whoever,  
But I think my mumbled prayers were just a way  
to somehow hear my voice,  
And I said again and again,  
This is my choice

### 8) Back to Work

The sailors were rowing at full speed  
I already wanted to stop and breathe  
So rare to smell such a beautiful scent on the sea  
Then I saw them, and they saw me,  
Their faces were an ecstasy  
I thought my eyes, would be better believed  
I thought my brain was pounding and sounding  
I thought my blood would explode like a fountain,  
I already wanted to scream  
when their beautiful bodies were launched as a team  
and I could feel the needle enter my skin  
they said:

### 9) Siren Song

“Sailor, you must be so hungry and  
Tired, your strength must be nearly expired,  
We know exactly what a man like you needs,  
A shoulder to cry on, A body to lie on  
A voice that can whisper exactly what you need to hear  
We’ll feed you and bathe you in voices,  
Refresh you, renew you with voices,  
You’ll be a new man and pick up your voyage as soon as  
you can,  
Just listen! We’re amber, molasses, and amethyst and  
gold,  
Just listen! we’ll freeze you so thoroughly,  
we’re mmm liquid nitrogen, oh, you will never feel cold,  
Come, come, come waste a while.  
Our ties are binding  
I’ll sing to you, O, Odysseus, I’ll sing to you  
I’ll sing you of madness, feigned madness discovered,  
I’ll sing you of strategy when the stars are uncovered,  
I’ll sing you of horses where battles are won and I’ll  
sing you of contests when battles are done and I’ll  
sing you of madness and I’ll sing you of madness and I’ll  
sing you of madneses madneses madneses  
come sink in madneses, join us in madneses  
madneses madneses madneses madneses...”

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An adventurous mix of contemporary art, music, and performance



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- Music by Missy Mazzoli, libretto by Toyce Vavrek and Missy Mazzoli, film by Steven Taylor, featuring Abigail Fishcer and The Firebird Ensemble.

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