

🎻 Notes About The Program 🎻

Throughout the nineteenth century, the classical guitar in Europe played a significant role in music written for small chamber ensembles of one form or another. Approximately one-third to one-half of all surviving facsimile guitar scores written by European composers in this time period featured the guitar not as a soloist, but as an ensemble voice with a variety of combinations of violin, viola, cello, flute, or piano. *Terzetto*, M.S. 69 is one of the most beautiful examples of this instrumentation.

Italian composer **Nicolò Paganini** was the most celebrated violin virtuoso of his time, and he left his mark as one of the pillars of modern violin technique. His *Terzetto*, M.S. 69 for Violin, Cello, and Guitar is one of the most beautiful examples of his chamber music works that include the guitar. He treats the three instruments equally in a compositional style that straddles the formal clarity of the departing Classical era and the impassioned expressiveness of the emerging Romantic era. As is typical of Paganini, he endows the violin line with the brilliance and virtuosity that was reflective of his own legendary capabilities on the instrument. Sadly though, this trio and others for the violin, cello, and guitar are not frequently performed due to the plethora of great string quartets and piano trios from which string chamber musicians can choose. Thus, these trios fall into the hands of flutists covering the violin line, adding a new tonal palate of a woodwind, plucked string, and bowed string instrument combination.

The title *Terzetto* comes from the Romantic-era *Terz Guitar* (as in *terz*, the German word for third). This was a smaller-sized classical guitar tuned a minor third higher than a regular guitar, and it was used for chamber ensembles as opposed to solo performances, since its higher range and brighter timbre projected more strongly.



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ON STAGE AT CARNEGIE HALL

Ursula Kwong-Brown is a composer, multimedia artist, research scientist, and political activist based in New York City. Described as “atmospheric and accomplished” by *The New York Times*, her work has been frequently performed in the United States, Europe, and Asia in diverse venues including Carnegie Hall, le Poisson Rouge, Miller Theatre, the Manhattan Movement & Arts Center, the National Portrait Gallery and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Her numerous honors include ASCAP and NACUSA awards, a two-year Berkeley Symphony Composer Fellowship supported by the New Music USA Music Alive program, and a San Francisco Friends of Chamber Music Commissioning Grant with the Black Cedar Trio.

Ursula received her Bachelor of Arts from Columbia University in 2010, graduating with honors in Music and Biology. In 2018, she received her Ph.D. in Music Composition and New Media from the University of California, Berkeley. Currently, Ursula is composing and collaborating with musicians around the world while teaching music at Molloy College on Long Island and doing independent research in Dr. Darcy Kelley’s laboratory at Columbia University. She has received funding from the Columbia Presidential Scholars in Neuroscience and Society Program and the Sloan Foundation to develop a musical instrument that is controlled with an EMG wristband developed by CTRL-labs.

The Black Cedar Trio commissioned *In Transit* in 2017 with a grant from InterMusic SF. The work was inspired by BART, both the sounds of the train itself and the journeys of the over 60,000 people who use it daily. Kwong-Brown recorded the trains in motion at multiple BART stations. She enhanced the

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sounds at the U.C. Berkeley Center for New Music and Audio Technologies. She then wrote music for the acoustic instruments – including alto flute, bass flute, and piccolo – based on the tones from the audio recordings.



Johann Sebastian Bach was not widely known in Europe during his lifetime. He considered himself to be a conscientious craftsman merely doing his job to the best of his ability towards the service of his superiors, for the enjoyment of his fellow man, and to the glory of God. Yet two hundred years after his death, his music holds the highest position in the canon of European art music, and his name is venerated more than that of any other composer. Bach would have never envisioned such accolades since he led a life and career that were confined to a very limited geographical space within Northern Germany.

Upon his ascension to the throne in 1740, Frederick II, King of Prussia, appointed Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Johann Sebastian's eldest son, as Court Harpsichordist in Berlin. Johann Sebastian visited his son at court in 1747 in what would be his final trip from home, just a few years before his death. King Frederick, an amateur flutist and modest composer himself, presented the elder Bach with a melody of his own making, challenging Bach to immediately improvise a fugue for harpsichord built upon this unusual theme. Bach obliged, but he went a step further when he later presented the King with the complete *Musical Offering* based upon the king's rather strange melody.

The Musical Offering is a massive, multi-section work containing a three-part fugue, a six-part fugue, ten highly inventive canons, and this trio sonata for flute, violin and continuo. Bach deliberately branched away from his own Baroque contrapuntal style here, opting instead for the melodic, gallant style that his son Carl Philipp Emanuel favored as the wave of the future.



Chilean composer **Javier Contreras** is the winner of the Black Cedar Trio's 2018 Commission Competition. He was born in the Patagonian region, where he received his initial musical training from his father, Manuela Contreras. Javier crafted his skills as a performer with the legendary Chilean guitarist, Jose Antonio Escobar, but as a composer, he has remained largely self-taught. His compositions span multiple forms, with works for solo instruments, chamber music ensembles, large orchestras, and choral pieces. In addition to his award from the Black Cedar Trio, his compositions have earned first prize in the Boston Guitar Fest Composition Competition, first prize in Chicago's Lisker Music Foundation Composition Competition, first prize in the Liliana Perez Coroy National Classical Guitar Competition in Chile, plus top awards in Barcelona's Miguel Llovet Classical Guitar Competition and Austria's International Guitar Festival Rust. The Black Cedar Trio commissioned *Tres Colores* in 2018.