



SUNSET CLUB TRIO

French-born violinist Etienne Gara, joined by Ines Thomé at the electric guitar and Michael Gratovich at the flamenco guitar, founded the Sunset Club Trio to make a new approach to the classical violin and piano repertoire.

Carefully choosing a program where these instruments can thrive, their combination enables them to revisit sound textures of the classical masterpieces along with newly commissioned ones, and to bring a whole new aspect and energy to the stage.

Since Summer 2015, the performances of the Sunset Club Trio have been very successfully received in halls to a capacity audience and they are now booking concerts two years ahead. In 2016, they won the Beverly Hills Consortium Competition, in California and appeared on Sunday Live at the LACMA, in Los Angeles.

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Welcome to a new sound dimension!

ÉTIENNE GARA, violin

Praised for the warm tone and expressiveness of his playing, French born violinist Étienne Gara has performed extensively worldwide, appearing as soloist in such renowned venues as the SOKA Performing Art Center and the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in the Greater Los Angeles Area, the Jordan Hall in Boston, the Marigny Theatre in Paris, the Wiener Saal and the Marmor Saal of the Mirabell Palace in Salzburg. Since making his orchestral solo debut in 2005 with the Savaria Symphony Orchestra in Hungary, he has continued his soloist career with orchestras in Europe and the United States. His concerts have been broadcast in the USA, Hungary, Switzerland, France and Belgium.

Mr. Gara has been a frequent guest of international music festivals, including the Stavelot Festival in Belgium, the Aurora Festival in Sweden, the Thy Festival in Denmark and the Academy of Music of Lausanne where he was nominated laureate as part of one of the best violin-piano duos. He performed at the Tons Voisins and the Juventus Festival in France where he met the composer Eric Tanguy, who later wrote a piece for him. He was invited to participate in the Perlman Music Program in New York in 2009 and 2010, and joined Itzhak Perlman for the winter residency of the festival in Sarasota, FL and travels in Israel.

A 2010 laureate of the prestigious Fondation Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet, as well as a laureate of the Fifth International Chamber Music Ensemble competition in Boston, he is a winner of Sir Yehudi Menuhin's "Music Live Now" competition and of the 2014 and 2016 Beverly Hills Audition, and won



Second Prize at the Raiffeisen Klassik Competition in Salzburg. The Lions Club of France honored him with a scholarship for their national “Young Talent” award. In 2005, he had the honor to be appointed concertmaster for the grand opening of the new Auditorium of the Mozarteum in Salzburg and since then, acts regularly as concertmaster for orchestras such as the Los Angeles Virtuosi Orchestra and the Kontrapunktus Chamber Orchestra. He also appears as guest principal violin with many ensembles in halls including the Disney Concert Hall and the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles.

A passionate chamber musician, Mr. Gara has performed with many renowned players such as Lucy Chapman, Rober Tapping, Jacob Koranyi, Julian Steckel, John Walz, Daniel Blumenthal, Plamena Mangova and Denis Pascal. As an advocate for the arts, he has collaborated with The American Contemporary Ballet, the Austin Eurythmy Ensemble, and appeared on screen in short and feature movies and stars in “Goodbye, You” and “Riptide”. He recorded for Leonard Cohen and is the founder of the award winning Sunset Club Trio, an ensemble joining the forces of the violin, the electric guitar and the flamenco guitar in their own arrangements of the great classical repertoire.

Born in Paris to a French mother and Hungarian father, Mr. Gara started playing the violin at the age of five. After studying in Paris, he continued his education at the Mozarteum University of Salzburg with Igor Ozim and Helmut Zehetmair. As an Erasmus scholarship recipient, he worked with Victor Tretiakov at the Musikhochschule of Cologne before completing his Performer Diploma with Mauricio Fuks at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. He earned his Master of Music at New England Conservatory under renowned pedagogue Donald Weilerstein and later joined world-renowned violinist Midori at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. He also worked closely with Irina Botchkova, Miriam Fried, Itzhak Perlman, Kim Kashkashian, Paul Katz, János Starker, Menahem Pressler, the Borromeo Quartet.

In 2014, he recorded on a 1714 Stradivarius for Media Hyperium3 a recital program of French music with pianist Sonia Achkar and in 2015, he was the concertmaster on the first album of the Kontrapunktus Chamber Orchestra.

INES THOMÉ, electric guitar

German-born guitarist Ines Thomé is a multifaceted musician who performs internationally as a solo and chamber musician. A multi-instrumentalist in many different styles, Ines plays electric guitar, lute, theorbo, baroque guitar, banjo, and mandolin. Highlights of the 2016/17 season showcase Ines' diverse musical interests: Her most recent solo program features music by exiled composers who came to Southern California during World War II to escape the Nazi regime. She performed the program both in the US and in Germany and will present it at the Stuttgart International Classical Guitar Festival in May. Ines maintains numerous chamber projects and is currently playing with violinist YuEun Kim as a winner of the Beverly Hills National Auditions. She is the electric guitarist and co-arranger of the newly founded Sunset Club Trio which explores new sound dimensions for violin, flamenco guitar and electric guitar. The trio won the Beverly Hills National auditions in 2016 and will perform in concert series around Los Angeles in 2017. Ines' duo „Gifts from over Sea“ with soprano Katina Mitchell won the Ensemble Outreach competition at USC and played more than 30 concerts



over the past months, including a tour to Italy and Germany in summer 2015. She was invited to join the Colburn Orchestra conducted by John Adams, and Matthias Pintscher and the USC Symphony Orchestra in Walt Disney Concert Hall, conducted by Carl St. Clair.

Since a young age Ines won first prizes as a solo and chamber musician in national competitions. Later she received awards from numerous international competitions in Germany, Italy, and the USA, including First Prizes at the International Guitar Competition in Walnut Creek, and the Guitar competition of the American Guitar Society in 2015. Her passion for Early Music was honored with a special prize for the best interpretation of a work by Johann Sebastian Bach at the International Guitar Competition in Erwitte.

She studied classical guitar in Frankfurt and Stuttgart and completed her Master's degree (with distinction) at Stuttgart State University of Music and Performing Arts where she studied with Professor Johannes Monno. In August 2013 she began post-graduate work at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and is continuing as a doctoral student and teaching assistant in the studio of Prof. William Kanengiser (LAGQ) since August 2014. Ines Thomé is supported by grants from the „Kogel & Schmidt foundation“, the „Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now“ foundation in Frankfurt, the Gluck fellows program at USC and from the „Society of Friends“ of the Stuttgart University of Music and Performing Art.

MICHAEL GRATOVICH, flamenco guitar

Michael Gratovich is an active guitarist and music educator based in Los Angeles. In 2016, he was invited to join the USC Thornton Opera in their Fall production of Osvaldo Golijov's flamenco-inspired opera, Ainadamar. He has also been an invited artist of the Colburn Orchestra, the Austin Symphony Orchestra, and the GRAMMY-winning vocal ensemble Conspirare, with whom he recorded an album of new music on the Harmonia Mundi label. The album, "Pablo Neruda: The Poet Sings," received a 2016 GRAMMY nomination for best choral performance. Michael has been invited to present solo recitals by Austin Classical Guitar and the Philadelphia Guitar Society, and presented two programs of solo and chamber music by Latin American composers in the third annual Villa-Lobos International Chamber Music Festival in Los Angeles in 2017.

Michael is a prizewinner in several competitions, including first prizes in the 2014 Philadelphia Classical Guitar Competition and the 2014 Pacific Guitar Festival in Los Angeles, as well as second prize in the 2013 ASTA-LA Classical Guitar Competition and first prize in the 2011 Classical Minds Guitar Institute and International Competition in Houston, Texas. His chamber ensemble, Sunset Club Trio, was a winner of the 2016 Beverley Hills National Auditions resulting in concert engagements throughout Southern California in 2017.

Michael Gratovich began playing classical guitar in Austin, Texas, when he was eight years old. After many years of study with Dr. Matthew Hinsley, executive director of Austin Classical Guitar, Michael continued his musical education at The University of Texas at Austin, earning his Bachelor's degree with legendary American classical guitarist, Adam Holzman. In 2014 Michael earned the degree of Master of Music from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where he is currently engaged in Doctoral studies with a Teaching Assistantship award. Michael studies guitar performance with Scott Tennant and William Kanengiser (both founding members of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet), Maestro Pepe Romero, and flamenco guitarist Adam del Monte.