

# Guitars Sounding Out

A performance outreach initiative creating new works for guitar quartet to impact new audiences.

Team Leader and Author, Daniel Olszewski



*Featuring the work of:*

## **Cola Guitar Quartet**

Timothy Hall  
Andy Jurik  
Daniel Olszewski  
Devin Sherman

*and,*

## **The Composing Team**

Michael Bies  
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Christine Burke  
Jim White

## **Project Description**

Guitars Sounding Out is the first initiative of the Cola Guitar Quartet. As an ensemble we have formed around a shared mission to create new music and to use our talents to find and engage new audiences with the classical guitar. A hybridized project, Guitars Sounding Out will occur in two main phases: the commissioning of new works for guitar quartet, and a performance outreach 'tour' to local Columbia Middle and High School guitar programs.

Seeking a diverse program of works, the ColaGQ has reached out and secured four different composers from across the US who draw influences ranging from minimalism, electronic dance music, video game scores, and even the aleatoric procedures of John Cage. As we'll be performing to younger audiences less attuned to classical music, writing is only the beginning for our composers. Each composer is also on board to create a video message to preface their piece. These short videos will serve to introduce the piece but more importantly showcase key features of their work to excite the audience and raise the level of engagement they may have as listeners.

The second phase of Guitars Sounding Out involves putting our work into action. Targeting local guitar programs at the Middle and High School level, ColaGQ will use this program to engage this generally untapped audience enthusiastic about the guitar. As these programs tend to emphasize the pop/rock or jazz applications of these instruments, we want to showcase the diverse styles of the classical guitar while sharing classical music in an accessible way. An expected visit will involve a performance of our program followed by a meet and greet with the class in order to provide access for students passionate about music to interact with collegiate guitarists.

## **Timeline**

With many of the works already completed, rehearsal scheduling is set to begin in the early Winter months with performances expected to occur in Spring 2016.

## **Budget**

The two primary categories for the Guitars Sound Out budget are costs associated with commissioning the new works and costs for the time, preparation, and performance by the ColaGQ. While many of the composers are close friends who are equally passionate about the project and willing to contribute their work, ColaGQ is projecting costs between \$150-200 per composition. ColaGQ will not charge a fee to local public schools, leaving compensation for our time up to external fund raising. Creativity in Music Award funds will go towards compensation to composers and small stipends to cover time and expenses of the ColaGQ. Leftover funds will not be pocketed but rather invested back into the quartet to expand our reach.

## **Benefits**

This project has many different layers of meaning for me as a budding artist and entrepreneur. The literature of the guitar has always been heavily influenced and strengthened through the efforts of passionate performers reaching out to composers for new works. By bolstering the classical guitar quartet repertoire and bringing in new composers to the instrument, this is a first step for the quartet to continue that legacy and begin creating our own footprint on the guitar's literature.

On the side of performance and education, this a great way to put my own concepts of audience engagement into practice by heightening the connection a new audience can have with a musical composition. Further, guitar programs tend to have lower funding than other

music programs but I believe they must contain at least some students passionate about music who could benefit from seeing active role models within their community. By working through the ColaGQ I have the chance to make a real difference for people outside of school and generate meaning through my work on the guitar.

Forming ColaGQ and executing Guitars Sounding Out also represents the first initiative that I have grown in my own imagination, and having the opportunity to see its success or failure brings a higher level experience than what can be traditionally offered to me in school.

### **Creativity**

Guitars Sounding Out innovates upon both traditional concert events and how an ordinary ensemble would approach the commissioning of new works. By combining stage presence with video interaction from composers, we have a vested interest in inviting audiences into the world of classical guitar and classical music so they may better appreciate and engage with the experience. Guitars Sounding Out also offers a more meaningful exchange with composers. Rather than having them write for us and be finished we are treating them as partners within the ensemble. Their extra investment in our performance provides them a higher level interaction with the audience and the chance to strengthen audience engagement.