Tri Set

by Ucaimhu

As befits its title, this puzzle will give you tributes and trigrams (three-letter sequences) galore. These are found via other party-related items; namely, entertaining GUESTS, one of my favorite DISHes, a festive NOISEMAKER, and a METAPUZZLE, of course.

GUESTS. In most clues, a bigram (two-letter sequence) must be replaced by a single letter before solving. These letters, in clue order, will identify a trio of guests; the corresponding bigrams will form their three individual tributes, which, when a single bigram is deleted from each, all become the same identical tribute. The single letters corresponding to the deleted bigrams form a trigram saying what those bigrams are.

DISH. All other clues work normally, but for some of them, entering the answer requires you to (in one instance) fill one box with two or three tasty letters! These bi- and tri-grams, read left to right and top to bottom, form another tribute. To indicate where you start and which way you go, a conduit (appropriately) will meander through the grid from the box near the starting bi-or-tri-gram to the box near the second one, always going from box to box horizontally or vertically. That first bi-or-tri-gram, followed by the letters in the conduit, will form one four-word phrase that says what this tribute is, and also clues yet another trigram.

NOISEMAKER. For most of the other clues, entering the answer requires you to put two or three letters outside the grid where they can be heard! These bi- and tri-grams, read around the grid, will form yet another tribute. To indicate where you start and which way you go, a conduit (appropriately) will meander through the grid from the box near the starting bi-or-tri-gram to the box near the second one, always going from box to box horizontally or vertically. That first bi-or-tri-gram, followed by the letters in the conduit, will form another four-word phrase that says what this tribute is, and also clues yet another trigram.

METAPUZZLE. There are, in fact, a final tribute and trigram — or rather, a first. Specifically, the tributes you have found are really the fourth, third, and second in a set of four, and from them you should be able to deduce the first tribute. Meanwhile, the noisemaker and the dish are labeled in appropriate places in the grid, and a label for the guests can be inferred from what they do, which is given by the final bigrams of the three remaining clues. From all these labels you can figure out who organized all of this; what might precede his name is the first trigram.

**Trigrams:**

1. Comfort-seekers, at first, love open-work fabric
2. Letters exhibiting how Currier’s partner’s daughter might be stymied?
3. Parse “idol” to mean “peels”
4. Athenian lawgiver, at the pivotal point, might see you (2 wds.)
5. Shock at finally being surrounded by your Tiberian navy
6. Round-grained stone ring duplicated by the Parisian reporting it
7. Memorable part of Cyrano de Bergerac soon melted pardoners heart
8. Salad Roy tossed for 24 hours, according to the sundial (2 wds.)
9. Mind us in Marseille
10. Knapsack of man who has fared north of Cork’s borders
11. Agent who nabs counterfeiters with fake Manet after faxing Earl (hyph)
12. Throw TiVo at rap singer Luciano
13. Just said, “Have a trouser brand”
14. Lone fly has landed on fork
15. Start of film where Lettermen’s comedic limits begin to expand
16. State question right after Dora
17. Old comic about an orphan repinning clothes from island no. 500
18. Decorate Spot or Dobbin’s tail
19. Say “An 11-year-old amphibian about to eat a dodo” in Morse code
20. Cupid ought to be covered with aluminum particles when floating aloft
21. Taxonomic groups of organisms found in photography lab
22. French river is . . . um, English

**Tributes:**

1. Adds venom to over 50% of smelts, including gutted fish from Fifi
2. Birdlike one in contact with fairy undressed giant
3. Rent DOA, Rent, and Twister
4. Actor Elliott’s initially uninterested fan highly valued metal
5. Stop after Charlie gets miffed, and relax
6. Waldo in one Italian river with Austrian and one-legged supporter
7. Fishy individual’s manuscript contains 101 grammatical errors
8. Later result of a needleworker “parenting” alpacas out west (hyph.)
9. Celebrity takes fashionable counterpart to feast
10. Thought Doon would not appear in first half of recording
11. Sites for the worshipful sailors chasing after Ariel’s coat
12. To sit at both ends and fuss with Mexican food (var.)
13. Finish filming dwarf asp, ignoring anything that’s odd
14. Development sites in Utah were bare and icy without Fay
15. Moe’s colleague almost swallows cube containing more grease
16. Origins of something false that both yawn to put aside (2 wds.)
17. Steer east of hotel housing half-centimeter-high Catholic cleric of the sixteenth century (2 wds.)
18. Round-grained stone ring duplicated by the Parisian reporting it
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**ACROSS**

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