

Mark Ashford is stunning audiences around the world with his unique lyricism and utter conviction to the guitar and it's music.

As Classical Guitar magazine commented;

*"Ashford's playing possesses such clarity and underlying adherence to the sense of structure of the music, as to render the innate difficulties of the guitar a long forgotten trouble that need no longer concern us."*

Born in Northampton, England, Mark began his formal musical training at Chetham's School of Music with Gordon Crosskey. He then went on to study with Michael Lewin as a scholarship student at the Royal Academy of Music, from where he graduated in 1993 with first class honours and awards from the Principal. During the following few years Mark completed his studies in Spain with guitarist David Russell, thanks to bursary's awarded to him from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, Allcard grants and the Royal Academy of Music.

Early on in his performing career Mark became a laureate of several major national and international competitions including Radio Two's Young Musician, the Julian Breaan Prize, South East Arts Music Platform Award, the Guitar Foundation of America, the Scandinavian International Guitar Competition, and the Alessandria International Guitar Competition, Italy. After winning the Radio 2 Competition Mark's career really took off performing regular live recitals on the BBC as a soloist and with the BBC Concert Orchestra. He was also given his own hour long showcase programme, broadcast live on the radio.

He has now performed at many of the UK's most prestigious music venues, including the Wigmore Hall, South Bank Centre, Fairfield Halls, St George's-Bristol, Bridgewater Hall-Manchester, Sage-Gateshead and the Queen's Hall-Edinburgh. Performances have also taken him to France, Spain, Italy, Finland, Holland, Sweden, Hungary, Germany, Poland, U.S.A, Cuba and Barbados.

As a concerto soloist Mark has performed with many leading Orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, London Concertante and the Turin Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of such eminent conductors as Carl Davis, Christopher Warren-Green, Barry Wordsworth and Ignacio Yepes.

Mark has recorded seven CD's including a recording of Rodrigo's 'Concierto de Aranjuez' with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Nicholas Cleobury. This led to a most successful promotion tour around the UK with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. His latest CD is with the Vida Guitar Quartet (Mark Eden, Helen Sanderson & Chris Stell) entitled 'Rhapsody' features their own arrangements of iconic Orchestral music by Georges Gershwin, Malcolm Arnold and Adam Gorb.

He was course director at the International Guitar Festival-Bath for six years and regularly gives masterclasses at Intenational Festivals and the leading Conservatoires of Music. He is currently head of guitar at the Birmingham Conservatoire of Music and in 2003 was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music having achieved distinction in the music profession.

"Ashford shows in turns a songlike cantabile and a riveting light touch."

*Observer*

*The*

"A most impressive performer"

*The Strad*

".....a truly remarkable guitarist"

*Classical Guitar*

"Ashford projects a full rich sound on his spruce guitar; he is polished, musical, and intense."

*Soundboard, U.S.A.*

"Ashford's playing balanced a wonderfully light, supple touch with understated technical rigour and richly hued, delicately nuanced lyricism..... His interpretation of Mozart's Piano Sonata highlighted his skill at playing to the distinct strengths of his instrument to remake the music in its own image."

*The Scotsman*

"The Bach Sonata sounded inspirational, and with both the Fugue and Allegro, Ashford, on several occasions transcended the mere excellent to something on a far higher plain".

*Classical Guitar*