

Born in Northampton, England, Mark began his formal musical training at Chetham's School of Music studying the guitar 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, the Julian Bream Guitar prize and awards from the Principal. The following year Mark continued his studies with the renowned British guitarist David Russell in Spain thanks to financial awards from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust, Allcard grants and the Royal Academy of Music.

Mark has won many national and international prizes most notably first prize at the Scandinavian International Guitar Competition, Finland, first prize Radio Two Young Musician, South East Arts Music Platform Award, second prize at the Guitar Foundation of America, and third prize at the Alessandria International Guitar Competition, Italy.

He has performed as a soloist at many of the UK's most prestigious chamber music venues including the Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, Fairfield Halls, St George's Brandon Hill and the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh.

As a concerto soloist Mark has worked with 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. His latest recording is of Rodrigo's 'Concierto de Aranjuez' with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Nicholas Cleobury,.

Performances have also taken him to France, Spain, Italy, Finland, Holland, Hungary, U.S.A, Cuba and Barbados.

His recitals have been broadcast on BBC Radio 2 & 3, BBC World Service and Classic FM. Over recent year's Mark has premiered works by Gordon McPherson, Roxanna Panufnik, Keely Hodgson, Martin Best and Edward Watson.

Mark is currently guitar tutor at the Birmingham Conservatoire of Music and in 2003 was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music having achieved distinction in the profession.

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

The Observer

"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.

".....his performance was nothing short of dynamic."

Classical Guitar

"Mark Ashford has a wonderful musicianship and an impeccable technique. He is one of the most talented guitarists I know."

David Russell

"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