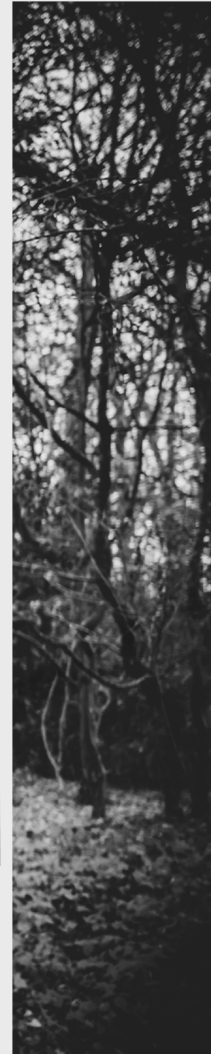
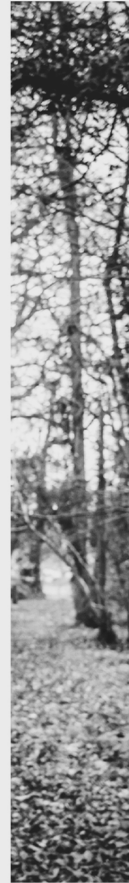


g e r a r d c o u s i n s



plays  
philip glass

t h e p o e t a c t s

PRIMA  
CLASSIC

<u>The Poet Acts</u>	3:12
Etude 1	7:31
Etude 2	6:43
Arabesque	3:15
Etude 5	9:59
Company II	1:51
Orphée's Bedroom	3:19
Orbit	7:52
Tissue 7	3:42
Melody 10	2:14

After the success of my first Philip Glass album 'Escape' I was keen to explore further the more diverse repertoire of this composer. Philip Glass has created a style that is often imitated but he remains the preeminent exponent of this art.

His unique success is largely down to his rigorous training with the great teacher (Nadia Boulanger) in Paris and his work with the great Indian Classical musician Ravi Shankar combined with an incredible work ethic that has seen him create hundreds of compositions over the last 60 years or so.

He has the uncanny ability to create music that is both initially enjoyable and increasingly rewarding with repeated listening as the music reveals hidden depths below a seemingly simple repetitive surface.

The

album begins with the title track "The Poet Acts" from the soundtrack to the 2002 film "The Hours". It is a highly atmospheric piece with a beautiful melody originally played by the Cello. In this version I use the lower strings of the guitar to evoke this warm melody set against the ever moving accompaniment.

Glass's Piano Etudes (1994) have been praised for their technical and musical challenges, as well as for their expressive power and beauty. They are widely regarded as some of the most important contributions to the contemporary piano repertoire. I chose 3 of my favourites to record here, No.1 is an exuberant and challenging piece full of memorable melodies. No.2 takes us on a wonderful journey with its meandering accompaniment, the music ebbs and flows taking us from serene calm to explosive energy. Etude 5 is a mesmerising work which uses a repeated 22 bar theme upon which Glass builds a melancholic theme.

Arabesque in Memoriam was written in 1988 in memory of Glass's teacher - the flautist Britton Johnson. It is a joyous piece full of skipping and dancing between more sombre moments.

Company (2nd Movement) was a fantastic challenge for me to take on. Originally written for string quartet for the dramatization of Samuel Beckett's prose poem "Company" in 1983, It was a huge challenge to find a way to maintain the basslines and ever changing arpeggio patterns on a single guitar but I hope I have managed to convey the drama and excitement of this vivacious piece.

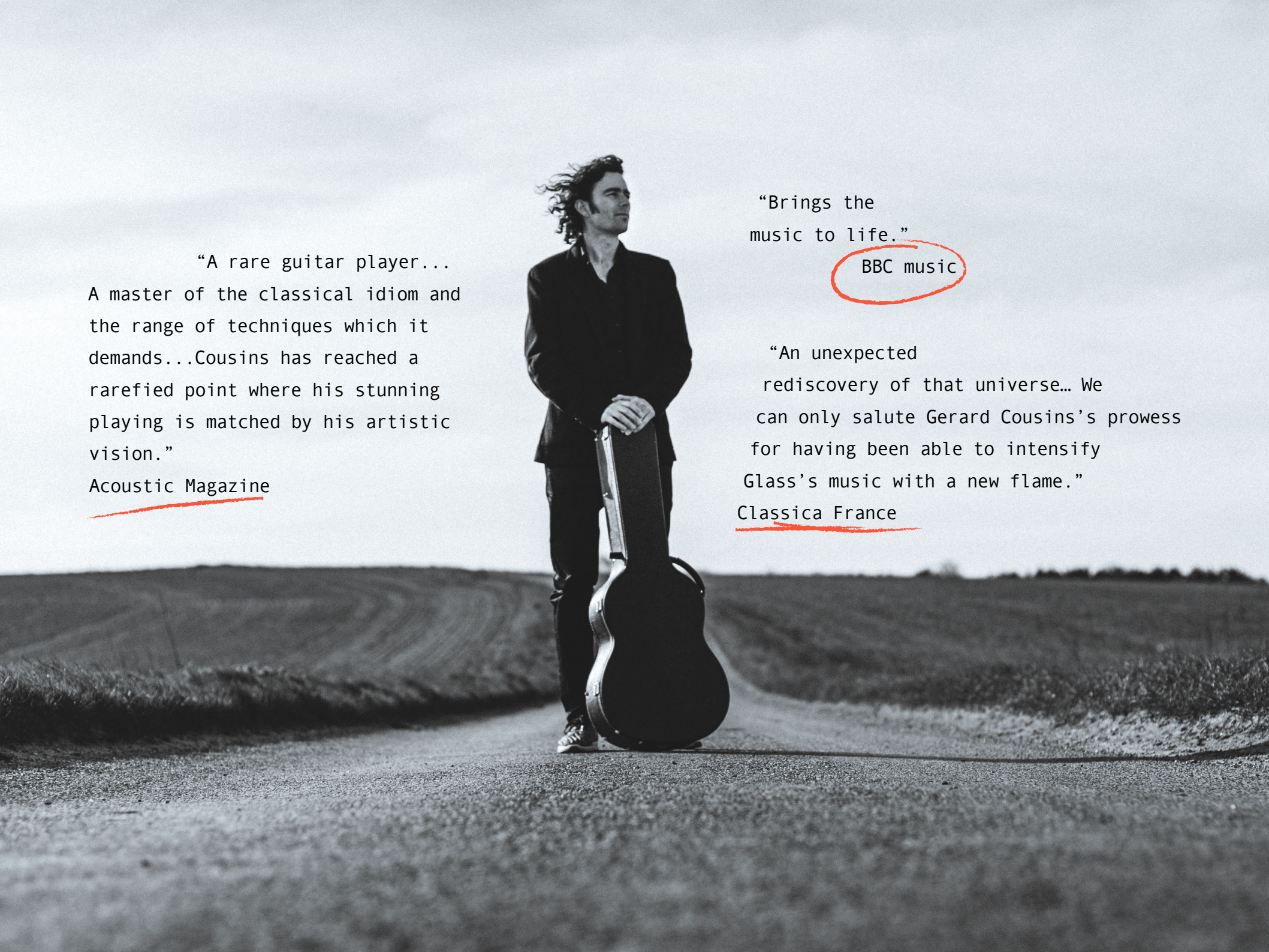
Orphee's Bedroom is taken from Glass' 1993 Opera based on Cocteau's fascinating retelling of the Orpheus myth. It is a charming miniature originally for a chamber group. I couldn't resist adding trills and ornaments to the arrangement to further evoke the Baroque atmosphere that this music conjures.

Glass is not afraid by the limitations of writing for solo instruments and Orbit is a fine example of his melodic writing. The warm and tender melodies evolve softly throughout the piece allowing the performer to lovingly craft each note. The piece was first performed by the cellist Yo-Yo Ma with the dancer Lil'Buck in 2013.

Tissue No.7 is from the 2002 film 'Naqoyqatsi'. It was originally scored for Cello, Piano and Glockenspiel, so for this guitar version I contrasted the lower warm lines of the cello with the extreme high register of the guitar and used harmonics to mimic the bell-like sounds of the glockenspiel.

The final track is the enigmatic Melody No.10 (originally from the 13 Melodies for Saxophone 1995) releasing us gently from our journey spanning 30 years of this composer's fertile imagination.





“A rare guitar player...  
A master of the classical idiom and  
the range of techniques which it  
demands...Cousins has reached a  
rarefied point where his stunning  
playing is matched by his artistic  
vision.”

Acoustic Magazine

“Brings the  
music to life.”

BBC music

“An unexpected  
rediscovery of that universe... We  
can only salute Gerard Cousins’s prowess  
for having been able to intensify  
Glass’s music with a new flame.”

Classica France

Gerard Cousins is a true innovator in the world of classical guitar, pushing the boundaries of his instrument to create mesmerising music that appeals to a wide audience. From his unique interpretations of Philip Glass's piano music to his transcriptions of choral composer Eric Whitacre, Gerard's recordings have garnered millions of streams and landed on the front page of Apple Music.

But Gerard's music is not just confined to the studio. His live performances are a true experience, featuring a repertoire that combines imaginative guitar arrangements with his own compositions. Gerard's improvisational skills and interaction with the audience make every concert a one-of-a-kind event.

Gerard's passion for music began early in life, absorbing the recordings of his guitar heroes John Williams and Julian Bream, as well as exploring the worlds of jazz, rock, electronic, Indian classical, flamenco and minimalist music. It was a concert by the legendary Joe Pass that convinced him of the power of a single guitar to captivate an audience.



Gerard's journey to create the music he wanted to hear was not easy, but his perseverance paid off. His albums show an artist who started with traditional Spanish repertoire and evolved to incorporate his diverse influences. With his 2014 album, "The First Beat is the Last Sound", Gerard found his unique voice, blending his past influences with his own original compositions.

Gerard's recordings are broadcast all over the world and he has had special radio programmes dedicated to his guitar playing and compositions on BBC Radio Wales and France Musique. In 2015 he appeared on UK television as a finalist on Sky Arts 'Guitar Star'.

A graduate of the University of Leeds and Enschede Conservatorium (Netherlands), He has performed in many festivals and concert halls around the world, from the Purcell Room on London's South Bank to concert halls all over Europe, South America and the Middle East. He has released 7 albums, each one focusing on a different area of music from traditional Spanish repertoire to his original compositions and his unique re-imaginings of traditional Welsh music.

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# CREDITS

Executive producer: Edgardo Vertanessian  
Recorded at Sally's Studio, Reading, UK in October 2022  
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Booklet design: Agustín Staffieri

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