



Prima
CLASSIC

GERARD
COUSINS
SIMPLE
TRUTHS

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GERARD COUSINS

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2. **Alexis Ffrench** - Guiding light arr. for guitar by Gerard Cousins
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SIMPLE TRUTHS

'Simple Truths' is not just the title of one of the tracks on this album, but a description of all the pieces within it. Of course, 'truth' in music is subjective, but I feel each piece here is unpretentious and carries a direct emotional appeal. I hope you, like me, will sense the heartfelt intentions of the composers through my guitar as I strive to create beauty in sound.

Clive's Song was written as a birthday present for my brother-in-law, and it was he who suggested I create a guitar version of **Alexis Ffrench's** piano piece **Guiding Light**. I was eager to see how it might work on the guitar. The bluesy inflections in the music felt naturally suited to the instrument, and I hope I've created a version that sounds as if it were originally written for it. It's not easy to play, but I feel it makes for a powerful solo with an uplifting message.

Le Départ and **Loin dans le Noir** by Marco Smaili, are from a gorgeous suite titled **Quatre Bagatelles en Forme de Suite Cosmique**. These are some of the composer's earliest published works and are full of joy. I find their slight naivety so endearing, recognising in them the spirit of adventure in a young composer's mind.



I've worked with Welsh composer **David Braid** for many years. He is a prolific creator, primarily of music for large ensembles and chamber groups, so it is a rare joy to encounter solo guitar pieces from him. These two are among my favourites, taken from a suite he recently composed intriguingly titled ***Four States of Being***. A guitarist himself, David balances idiomatic guitar writing with uncompromising compositional rigour.

David John Roche is another young Welsh composer whose music I deeply admire. His direct approach produces exquisitely crafted works that manage that often elusive balance of being both meaningful and immediately enjoyable. His tremolo piece ***The Only Marriage*** breathes new life into a technique often steeped in cliché, and I was honoured to be the dedicatee of ***Always Meant*** — a piece I recorded soon after the ink dried on the score. It uses a capo at the seventh fret and a novel retuning to create a delicate ambience before an unpredictable rhythmic drive takes over. I look forward to performing it again and again.

Sometimes, while writing music, my cat Luna jumps on the table and stretches out over my papers — hence the title ***With the Moon at My Desk***.

I often use alternate tunings to discover novel chords and uncommon note combinations. ***One Step Closer*** uses the same tuning as ***One Step Away*** (featured on my previous album ***Stay by My Side***) and is a sister piece, exploring similar core ideas.



The music of **Bill Lovelady** is relatively new to me, and over the past few years he has inspired me every time we've met. He has written many beautiful works for the guitar, from large-scale compositions to tiny “micropieces,” one of which is ***After the Rain***.

In 2024, I was commissioned to write and perform a guitar concerto for a full symphony orchestra. ***In Silver Light*** is based on one of my favourite themes from that concerto, now distilled into a short solo piece. The title comes from John Keats's poem *Song of Spring*, which echoes the music's ebullient nature.

Leo Brouwer is a Cuban composer whose music has captivated me since my earliest days with the guitar. His vast output draws from a wide range of influences, from Afro-Cuban rhythms to the avant-garde. ***Preludios Epigramáticos No. 4*** was one of my favourite pieces to play as a teenager with its almost funky groove, while ***Un Día de Noviembre*** is among the finest examples of Brouwer's lyrical side.

Francis Poulenc wrote just one piece for the guitar — a simple ***Sarabande***, dedicated to the French guitarist Ida Presti. This piece was the seed from which the rest of this album grew: a work of simplicity and stark beauty, marked by the instruction *molto calmo e melanconico*.



The title track, ***Simple Truths***, is by Australian composer **Christopher Sainsbury**, whose music I discovered through a recent release of his chamber works. I was instantly captured by 'Simple Truths' - was it that the opening chords reminded me of the wonderful Beatles tune *You Never Give Me Your Money* - no matter, the piece is very much an original work which the composer describes as a chordal-based piece for meditation or reflection.

Stephen Goss describes his piece ***Serenity*** in similar terms: "meditative and reflective." It comes from a set of twelve ***Winterbourne Preludes***, and immediately stood out to me as a piece that matched my temperament. Another Welsh-born guitarist-composer (a common thread throughout this album), Stephen creates beautiful resonances that allows the guitar to truly sing.

From an Old Idea: while going through some old manuscript papers, I came across a few bars I had sketched long ago. I had no strong memory of writing them, but when I played them again, a whole new piece emerged — proof that sometimes ideas lie dormant, just waiting for their right moment....

Finally, ***An Improvisation to Wish You Farewell*** was just that. I sat alone in my little studio, in the dark, headphones on, isolated from everything, and simply allowed myself to follow the music. There was no pressure to create anything—just a quiet urge to explore the ebb and flow of a few melodic fragments that surfaced in the moment.

GERARD COUSINS

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 works to his transcriptions of choral composer Eric Whitacre, Gerard's recordings have garnered tens of millions of streams and earned him a front-page feature on Apple Music.

But Gerard's music is far from confined to the studio. His live performances are immersive experiences, blending imaginative arrangements with original compositions. Known for his improvisational flair and connection with audiences, each concert becomes a unique and personal event.

Gerard's passion for music began early, shaped by the recordings of guitar legends John Williams and Julian Bream, and fueled by explorations into jazz, rock, electronic, Indian classical, flamenco, and minimalist music. A pivotal moment came when he attended a concert by the great Joe Pass—an experience that convinced him of the power of a single guitar to captivate an audience.



His musical journey has been one of exploration and perseverance, evolving from traditional Spanish repertoire to a deeply personal voice that fuses diverse influences. With his 2014 album *The First Beat is the Last Sound*, Gerard firmly established his identity as a composer, blending his wide-ranging inspirations into a distinctive and original sound.

In 2024, he achieved a significant milestone by writing and performing his first guitar concerto for full symphony orchestra—further demonstrating his creative ambition and versatility.

Gerard's music is broadcast worldwide, with dedicated radio programmes on BBC Radio Wales and France Musique. In 2015, he appeared as a finalist on the UK television series *Guitar Star* on Sky Arts. A graduate of the University of Leeds and Enschede Conservatorium (Netherlands), he has performed in festivals and concert halls across Europe, South America, and the Middle East—including the Purcell Room on London's South Bank.

He has released eight solo albums, each one exploring a different musical realm—from traditional Spanish works to original compositions and unique reimaginings of Welsh folk music. *Simple Truths* is Gerard's fourth release with Prima Classic, following *Charme de la Nuit*, *The Poet Acts*, and *Stay by My Side*.





CREDITS

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