

OPALESCENT



— LOS ANGELES GUITAR QUARTET —

1.	Hidden Realm of Light	Andrew York <small>Seven Centers Publishing (BMI)</small>	2:32
2.	Alki Point	Kevin Callahan <small>Yesler Way Music (ASCAP)</small>	3:59
3.	Aerial Boundaries	Michael Hedges (arr. M. Greif) <small>Naked Ear Music (BMI)</small>	5:33
	<i>Opals</i>	Phillip Houghton <small>Moonstone Music Publications (AMCOS)</small>	
4.	Black Opal		2:26
5.	Water Opal		4:34
6.	White Opal		3:05
7.	Chorale	Frederic Hand <small>Handwerks Music (ASCAP)</small>	6:24
8.	Chaconne	Robert Beaser <small>Schott Music (BMI)</small>	12:01
	<i>Suite Transcendent</i>	Tilman Hoppstock <small>(Prim Musikverlag, GEMA)</small>	
9.	Open Landscape		2:24
10.	La Grande Cathedrale		1:43
11.	A Breath of Wind (Fuga)		1:16
12.	La Porte Du Ciel		2:47
13.	Danza Diabolica		2:16
14.	Wave Radiance	Phillip Houghton <small>Moonstone Music Publications (AMCOS)</small>	6:16
	TOTAL TIME:		57:25



LAGQ at Cammilleri Hall, July 31, 2019

Australian composer Phillip Houghton explored the intermingling of light and sound in his synesthetic pieces **Opals** and **Wave Radiance**. LAGQ dedicates this recording to his memory, and surrounds his works with others that explore the luminous nature of music:

We begin with Andrew York's **Hidden Realm of Light**, shimmering with propulsive grooves and bright splashes of color. Kevin Callahan's **Alki Point** captures the undulating currents and jazzy undertones of Seattle's early settlement site. In homage to the visionary fingerstyle legend Michael Hedges, Matt Greif arranged **Aerial Boundaries**, Hedges' ethereal anthem. **Chorale** by Frederic Hand transforms the guitar quartet into an a capella choir, in a lyrical style both profound and uplifting. Robert Beaser's exquisite **Chaconne** reveals aspects of its unfolding harmonic pattern within multifaceted shards of light. And Tilman Hoppstock, through his doppelgänger Alan Willcocks, creates an imagined exhibition of Impressionist paintings in his **Suite Transcendent**.

- Scott, Matt, John and Bill of LAGQ

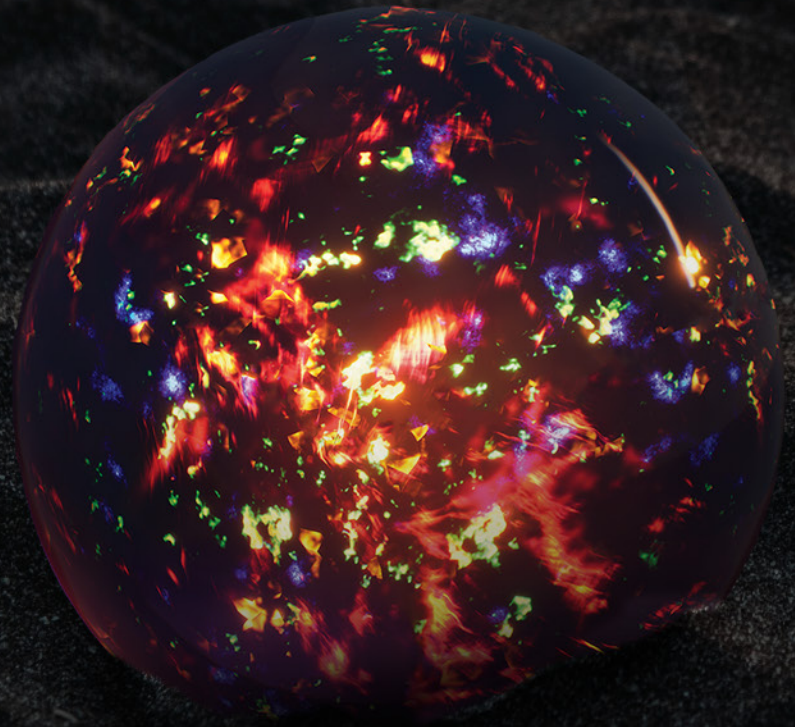
The eight works presented here reflect the unique visions of these gifted composers, each of whom crafted pieces that seek to uplift and illuminate the listener. We hope their music gives you as much solace and joy as it has given us.

Andrew York (*b. 1958*) was an LAGQ bandmate from 1990-2006, and he created a rich repertoire for guitar quartet to go with his vast catalogue of solo guitar works. The scintillating *Hidden Realm of Light* shows his brilliance as a musical colorist, with flashes of bright tones over muted pizzicato accompaniment. Freely playing with the hemiola interplay between 6/8 and 3/4, the piece also features call-and-response textures and African-inspired overtones.

Kevin Callahan (*b. 1958*) is a Seattle-based composer and guitarist who freely informs his classical guitar pieces with rock, jazz and folk elements. **Alki Point** is a wistful portrait of the historic settler's point on the westernmost coast of Seattle, now a home to a vibrant artist colony. Opening with a plaintive

melody over a polyrhythmic ostinato, the piece diverges into an insistent section over a pulsing bass rhythm, loosely quoting a Wes Montgomery tune. This gradually turns back into the opening material, with a distinctly jazzy coda. Originally part of *Seattle Suite* for guitar trio, Callahan re-arranged the piece for LAGQ.

Michael Hedges (*1953-1997*) created a revolution in steel-string guitar playing with his innovative tapping and open-tuning creations. Revered for his virtuosity and sonic brilliance, he was also a composer of great depth. He took the world by storm with his groundbreaking 1984 recording **Aerial Boundaries**, and Matthew Greif's arrangement of the title track presents it faithfully, providing a brief 12/8 excursion before returning to Hedges's original.





Phillip Houghton with the opal that inspired his piece; Sydney 2012. Photo by William Kanengiser

Phillip Houghton (1954-2018) expressed a distinctly Australian aesthetic, reflecting the country's vast landscapes and mystical "dreamtime" Aboriginal legends. He was famously a synesthete, associating specific colors with particular musical tones and timbres. **Opals (1993, rev. 2014)** is a three-

movement work for guitar quartet, capturing the glints and sparkles emanated by Australia's national gemstone. The score includes precise references to the colors reflected in the music, and he wrote this description of the three opals:

"Rather than being pitch-black, the Black Opal is a stone of fantastic

colour. Electric reds, purples, blues and greens predominate, refracting and colliding in fiery splinters of brilliant light against a dark matrix. One could say that the opal is "made" from water, and, in the Water Opal movement, I imagined a kaleidoscope of colour in and against a transparent "water matrix"...

colours floating, bleeding into each other. Against a white matrix, the lighter colours of the White Opal are brilliant and translucent. When the stone is moved, layers of colour ripple abruptly, exhibiting the "pinfire" and "rolling flash" effects, with points of red and green sparkling through the stone."



Frederic Hand (*b. 1947*) freely mixes Baroque, Americana and jazz styles into a lyrical and harmonically rich palette, and his intimate knowledge of the guitar draws out its full sonority. His **Chorale** turns the guitar quartet into a plucked version of a vocal a capella group; the seeming simplicity of the piece belies the difficulty of four guitars moving with the freedom and spaciousness of a chorus. Hand writes of his piece: “Chorale was originally commissioned for the New York City Guitar Orchestra in 2012. It was re-imagined for guitar quartet in this new version for LAGQ. Based on a simple theme of three notes ascending in whole steps, Chorale is inspired by the Renaissance and Baroque choral music that I listened to in my youth, although I’ve integrated some of my favorite jazz harmonies and rhythms as well.”

Robert Beaser (*b. 1954*) is regarded as one of the leading American composers of his generation, having written for the New York Philharmonic, The Chicago Symphony, Chanticleer, Eliot Fisk and many others. The composer had this to say about **Chaconne**: “Built on a

passacaglia bass, itself a trope on Purcell’s iconic “Thy hand, Belinda”, the piece consists of a set of nine variations utilizing harmonic progressions and expressive inflections which alternate in character and transform over time. Marked “Dolce e flessibile; Shards of Light; Brilliant; Supple, pointed; Joyful; Vite; Gently rocking; Appassionato; Presto; and Clave!”, each variation contains the same musical DNA so that listeners can locate themselves in its form at any time, but the larger journey ultimately culminates in a world far removed from where it began. It was commissioned by the Boston Classical Guitar Society and LAGQ in 2017.

Tilman Hoppstock (*b. 1961*) is a virtuoso guitarist, arranger, and noted Bach scholar, and he has developed a career as a composer under the pseudonym of wholly invented English composer Allan Willcocks (*1869-1956*). Composed for LAGQ in 2015, **Suite Transcendent** is a suite of five pieces, inspired by an imaginary exhibition of Impressionist paintings.

Hoppstock writes: “By adopting the persona of Allan Willcocks, it freed me to create music which displayed influences of French and English Impressionism and reflected a completely distinct musical personality from my own. The first movement ‘Open Landscape’ describes a wide physical space, but also hints at additional facets of vastness such as fantasy, dreams and the cosmos. ‘La Grande Cathedrale’ could characterize a massive physical monument, or invoke an ‘edifice of ideas’ which serves as an entrance portal to an intangible world.

The third movement “A Breath of Wind” is a compact fuguetta, floating along like a fleeting breeze. The fourth movement, comprised almost entirely of natural and artificial harmonics, creates a mysterious overtone timbre, appearing as the spectre of an imaginary gate to heaven (“La porte du ciel”). The final movement, ‘Danza diabolica’ begins with strong alternating chords, faintly reminiscent of Claude Debussy’s 12th Étude for piano. Finally, a brief imitative section harkens to Indonesian gamelan music, a style much admired by the Impressionists.



The recording ends with another work by **Phillip Houghton**, his **Wave Radiance** (2002, rev. 2005), carrying the subtitle “Colour: the Skin of Resonance”. Originally written for two guitars, Houghton then expanded it to trio and quartet versions. Wave Radiance opens with an introduction of expansive chords, which

moves to a hypnotic ostinato section. Vibrating with overlapping patterns of repeated notes and arpeggios, it captures the essence of light-wave spectra, phasing with subtle changes of texture and harmony, ultimately drifting away on delicate high harmonics.

LAGQ with Steve Rodby and Rich Breen, Cammilleri Hall, 2019. Photo by Rich Breen



Produced by Steve Rodby
Co-Produced by William Kanengiser
Recorded, mixed and mastered by Rich Breen
Recorded July 30-August 1, 2019 at Cammilleri Hall,
University of Southern California's Brain and Creativity Institute

Suite Transcendent recorded September 28 & 30, 2017 at Cammilleri Hall

Produced by Tilman Hoppstock and Kai Narezo
Recording Engineer: Randall Ayers

CD layout and design by Austere
3D digital opal images by Camille Kanengiser
Photos by Felix Salazar
Program notes by William Kanengiser

Special Thanks to:

Tilman Hoppstock, for writing such a transcendent piece for us. Bob Beaser, for crafting the beautiful Chaconne and dedicating it to us. Fred Hand, for working to adapt your lovely Chorale for our group. To Andy York, for all the cool tunes you've penned for LAGQ over the years. To Kevin Callahan for expanding the trio version of Alki for us. To Phillip Houghton in memoriam for your radiant inspiration.

To Rich Breen, for making us sound so good. To David Srebnik, for your invaluable advice and advocacy. Most of all, to Steve Rodby, for your incredible ears and passionate dedication to this project.

