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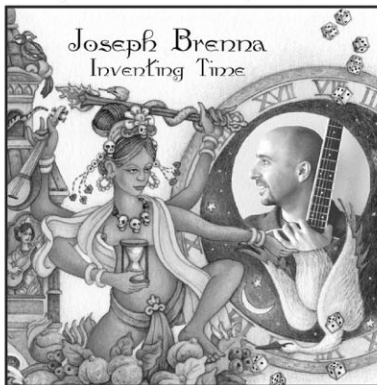
THE INDEPENDENT PRESS FOR CU AND BOULDER

February 7-9, 2003

www.coloradodaily.com

SpinThis

The good, the bad, and the ambient



"INVENTING TIME"

Joseph Brenna
What Are Records?

Joseph Brenna's been on quite a journey.

The self-taught guitarist took formal music training in classical, electronic, and third-stream music at Brown University, and continued his studies at the Berklee College of Music. He went on to form and tour with several bands. Then cancer struck him, and during his recovery he returned to the solo acoustic work that continues to this day, here in the land of Boulderdumb (er, dom).

His new album, "Inventing Time," is a marvelous illustration of

his skills. It consists of quiet, meditative solo pieces (co-written with producer Rob Gordon) that incorporate fragments of Middle Eastern and Spanish musics, jazz, blues, and folk - diverse influences that might pull a lesser musician to pieces, but are molded by a coherent discipline here.

Brenna strolls through each composition, inserting tasty virtuoso flourishes into solid structural patterns.

This is relaxing music, but by no means does it sink into the E-Z listening sonic wallpaper favored by those fond of New Age-y, "Hearts of Space"-type tuneage. Brenna's inventive intelligence gives the listener something to hang onto, an impressive feat in the self-indulgent, happy noodling subgenre his music might

seem on superficial listen to occupy.

The more cynical may be put off by the sincere, spiritually-oriented musings in the liner notes, but lay them aside and let the music happen, mang. It's mighty good.

- Brad Wiesmann