

# Joseph Brenna

*"Inventing Time succeeds mightily on every level. This is the kind of record that will cause budding guitarists to either practice harder or sell their guitar in frustration. For the rest of us, though, we can enjoy the mastery and musicality of a truly exceptional talent."*  
- Aaron Bragg, *The Local Planet*

*"Brenna combines a spectrum of instrumental guitar styles and arrives with an inventive guitar blend. His compositional gift and love of the guitar is quite obvious on *Inventing Time* and his guitar playing is superb throughout."*  
- Robert Silverstein, *20th Century Guitar*

**Joseph Brenna** is recognized as a virtuoso composer/ guitarist whose unique voice incorporates styles from jazz and blues to classical, folk and world music. ***Inventing Time***, his first solo acoustic release from **What Are Records?**, features an adventurous and diverse collection of songs for the solo steel-string guitar.

This initially self-taught guitarist took his formal musical training at Brown University where he studied classical, electronic and third stream music (a movement that combines jazz vitality with classical formalism). He also played in a Ghanaian drum ensemble led by master dancer and drummer **Freeman Donkor**. Later, he combined private guitar studies with jazz coursework at Berklee College of Music.

An eclectic career, including forays into jazz, blues, world beat, avant-rock, and free improvisation, provided the inspiration for the music on *Inventing Time*. Beginning in 1986, Brenna founded and led the bands Between the Lines, The Electric Jazz Trio and **Flash to Bangtime** into clubs and concert halls across the country. He also explored free improvisation with a variety of artists including members of **New Bohemians**. He released two CDs with Between the Lines, the first on What Are Records?. The producer was label-owner **Rob Gordon**, his current co-writing/ producing partner.

Joseph won critical praise for both his songwriting and mastery of the guitar. But in the midst of such accolades, a bout with cancer would move him in a new direction in both life and music. In concert he had played electric guitar with an arsenal of electronic effects. Now, during treatments and doctor visits, his acoustic guitar became his sole accompaniment.

"As a patient one is fragile, all raw emotion and sensitivity, and the caretakers share this exposed, open hearted world. So, there was a great deal of appreciation and gratitude on the part of patients, nurses, and doctors for even the simplest qualities of live music - rare in these places," he reflects. "That gave me a fresh appreciation of the power of music, and in particular of the immediacy of the acoustic instrument." During his years of recovery Joseph turned to teaching guitar and began to develop his unique approach to writing and arranging for the unadorned acoustic guitar. As part of his healing process he took time out from his performance career to study and practice meditation and Buddhist dharma.



While visiting Colorado in the summer of 1998, he spent five weeks writing new material with Gordon To continue writing together, and inspired by the beauty of the Rocky Mountains, Brenna moved to Boulder in the summer of 2000. The collaboration between Joseph and Rob was rewarding in its challenges.

"During our first sessions he ruthlessly cut my material, leaving only the best parts, and we began rewriting from there," Joseph explained. "Rob would often sing ideas and I would have to figure out how to get them out of the guitar." It was a challenge that would pay off. Brenna's technique became consummate.

The results can be heard on *Inventing time*, which features 16 innovative instrumental compositions. The title track combines and contrasts rapid fire Middle Eastern rhythms and melodies with rubato impressionism evocative of the American plains. "Mississippi John" pays homage to the legendary bluesman's guitar style and vocal sweetness, captured in an instrumental ballad. "Plunkin' Pi" is an upbeat country blues tune and "Plunkin' Replies" is a no-holds barred ragtime romp. "The Epic Journey of a Tiny Particle" combines multiple time signatures and percussive techniques with echoes of Spanish guitar music. Through all of the songs flow lyrical melodies, resonant with emotion. The guitar work is masterful, and comes across with a refreshing ease. There are no obtrusive techniques, but rather accessible, engaging musicianship throughout an elegant body of work.

*Inventing Time* has been received with enthusiastic praise by a wide variety of print and internet publications (see accompanying press briefs). Concurrent with the release of *Inventing time*, Joseph has returned to the performance stage as a solo instrumentalist. With grace and skill he reinvents his music for the reward of his audiences.

### *A Story About Healing*

While recording *Inventing time*, Rob Gordon's future father-in-law suffered head trauma in a near fatal motorcycle accident which left him comatose. For several days his family played music from *Inventing time* to comfort the patient. Within 3 days, the father-in-law became conscious and began an incredible recovery. Upon checking out of the hospital, he left the music for another comatose patient. This younger man also awoke a few days later.

Joseph's musical celebration of his own recovery has created an instrumental life force that resonates within others. Rob's father-in-law recovered in time to dance at his daughter's wedding. Joseph Brenna performed the music for the traditional father/ daughter dance.

*Inventing Time* is available at [JosephBrenna.com](http://JosephBrenna.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and [WhatAreRecords.com](http://WhatAreRecords.com)

What Are Records? 2401 Broadway Boulder, CO 80304 [WhatAreRecords.com](http://WhatAreRecords.com) 303.440.0666



For more info contact:

Publicity: Joseph Brenna 720-564-1767 [joseph@JosephBrenna.com](mailto:joseph@JosephBrenna.com)

Radio: Jillian Reitsma [Jillian@WhatAreRecords.com](mailto:Jillian@WhatAreRecords.com)

Retail: Dan Booth [Dan@WhatAreRecords.com](mailto:Dan@WhatAreRecords.com)

[JosephBrenna.com](http://JosephBrenna.com)

