

Mark O'Connor

From Camps to Concertos: Doing it All

By Jack Tuttle

Over twenty years have passed now since the child prodigy fiddler from Washington State first walked onto the contest stage, and the fiddling world has never been the same since. As a young teen, Mark O'Connor became the most celebrated contest fiddler ever, forever changing the standards by which fiddlers are judged. One can still hear the echoes of his playing in virtually every young Texas-style contest fiddler in competitions throughout the U.S.

Contest fiddling was merely a springboard for the young fiddler in the late seventies and early eighties. Due to his technical mastery and prodigious improvising skills, Mark's forays into bluegrass, western swing, jazz and new acoustic music left fiddle observers everywhere shaking their heads in disbelief. By the age of twenty, he was already generally regarded as the greatest all-around fiddler ever.

After stints in the early '80s with the David Grisman Quintet (primarily as a guitarist) and the rock-fusion based Dregs, Mark moved to Nashville and quickly became the leading studio session fiddler, picking up numerous Country Music Association Instrumentalist Of The Year awards. He also became the musical director of the weekly television program *American Music Shop* on TNN, recorded several solo albums for Warner Brothers, and still managed to perform around the world.

Several years have passed since Mark decided to cut back on his session work in order to tour more and promote his solo career. Now at the age of thirty-four, he is without doubt the most influential fiddler of our day. Only has the classical violin world seen technical virtuosity at the level displayed these days by Mark O'Connor, and probably never has this been combined with such stunning improvisational skills.

The following interview took place at the Strawberry Music Festival just outside of Yosemite, California, in September, 1995.

Why don't we start with what you've been doing lately — you're balancing recording, solo performances, even some classical concerts.

This has been my most enjoyable year in my music career, I believe, because of the broad range of possibilities that are out



Photo: Courtesy Warner Brothers Records

there for me at this point. I started out my career with a variety of music tastes... I've actually successfully made a career out of having no particular direction. That's really satisfying. It must be obvious to most people that have followed me along the way that I kept mixing it up, and just following my heart wherever it leads me musically and not ever trying to force anything to be different, but just being different naturally. And addressing it, you know. I feel I really need to do a blues album now. I want to try to be in a position where I can pull that off. I think I've got a record company — Warner Brothers — that has seen me through some of these changes, and the latest one, of course, in a classical setting, was a fiddle concerto for violin and orchestra, and my string quartet for violin, viola, cello and double bass.

And you're performing with symphonies? I know you did the San Francisco Symphony on the 4th of July...

Yes. That particular event on the 4th of July, I was one of many guests, so we didn't have time to do the Fiddle Concerto, but they have requested me to come back for my own evening. But this summer I played the Fiddle Concerto with the Utah Symphony, the Eugene Symphony, The Minnesota Orchestra, Connecticut, Ft. Worth, Lubbock, Jacksonville, Florida. Performances coming up this fall — the Des Moines Symphony, Kansas City Symphony,



Photo: Jack Tuttle

At the 1995 Strawberry Music Festival in California.

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San Antonio. So I’m actually getting as much work from symphonies interested in this new music that I’ve been doing, composing, as much as my solo shows. It’s about fifty-fifty right now.

How many days are you on the road in the year?

Well, I have scaled way back. I peaked out in 1992, with about 200 days. Now I’ve got it down to under a hundred, and that’s where I want to stay if I can, because I want to have time to compose. I’m getting commissions now because of the first Fiddle Concerto. I’m commissioned by the “Meet the Composer” that judged the score that I prepared, and they’ve given me a commission to do a second violin concerto, which will be my second Fiddle Concerto. We’re really excited about that. It will have a consortium of three orchestras to premier it. It will be at Lincoln Center — I also played the Fiddle Concerto at Lincoln Center this summer. It will be Lincoln Center again, Nashville, where I live, and the New Mexico Symphony — that state has really meant a lot for me and my music these last ten years by premiering the first Fiddle Concerto and my string quartet at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. I’ve just had many great shows there, and I’m glad to do this with them again. I’ve received another commission from Sharon Isbin, the virtuoso classical guitarist — one of the most famous classical players on the instrument these days. She commissioned me to write some duets for us, so I’m going to do that, too, as soon as I get done with this second Fiddle Concerto, which I’m about three quarters of the way through. As a matter of fact, I was working on it some this morning. It’s taking me forever, it’s going to be a long one — about fifty minutes long.

In your performances now, are you rehearsing with orchestras?

Yeah, so each time a symphony orchestra books us, there are at least two rehearsals before the concert. I usually end up coming in a day or two before, and we usually have at least a couple of nights with it. Down in Ft. Worth, we had three nights, and we broke a record for attendance for the year, which is really exciting, for the three performances. And we’re seeing that happen a lot. We have

an attendance record in Eugene as well. I don’t know if I have that big a name or what, or maybe the curiosity is way up by hearing about a fiddle concerto being performed with a symphony.

You’re hanging out with a lot of classical musicians now in doing all this. What kind of reaction are you getting from classical musicians, who are probably not exposed to very much fiddling?

Each time I walk into the rehearsal for the first time, I sort of have to hold my breath and realize that there’s going to be about fifty string players checking me out, and I’ve got to get my composure so I can make a good first impression. It’s like an audition in a way, but I know I’m going to get to do the gig! I want to deserve to be there.

There is just no access created for a fiddler in this setting. So it’s really an introduction in a way for many of them. But the more I do this — this last couple of years has really made a difference — the more I come into the rehearsal for the first time with a new orchestra, there’s more and more people who have my album now, or have heard about me. So it’s been kind of a buzz. Now some of the real great classical violinists and string players are hearing more about what I’m doing with fiddling. And that’s really created yet another outlet for me to play and compose in a professional chamber group, which we started — a trio with Yo Yo Ma on cello and Edgar Meyer on bass. We’re going to be recording for Sony Records.

Let’s talk about how you’ve risen to the level of technical ability that you have, and a little about your practice history, and what got you to this level. Because other fiddle players have never gotten to the technical level that you’ve risen to, and I’m wondering if you know why that is. Can we look historically at how you’ve practiced, since you were a kid and on...

Well, you know, to be frank and honest, I don’t practice. And I haven’t practiced at great lengths since I was thirteen.

You began at about age eleven...

Well, I actually began playing the guitar when I was five or six, and I started playing the fiddle at age eleven. And I really practiced and played like crazy for two years. I must have learned two hundred fiddle tunes.

Would you say you were putting in four or five hours a day?

More. And I was doing it because I wanted to, but sometimes I

practiced all day, maybe seven or eight hours, learning these fiddle tunes. And I learned two hundred fiddle tunes in two years. And I learned most of them from Benny Thomasson.

So they were mostly Texas style.

Yeah. And I think when I was fourteen, I said, "I've done enough of that. I've got enough fiddle tunes now." I wanted to try other things. And then I went into a slump, because my teacher, Benny Thomasson, left and I couldn't find a replacement that was inspiring to me up in the Northwest at that time. This was at age fourteen. And everything just went downhill as far as playing outlets, practicing...

Still, you were doing contests on a regular basis...

In the summer. Once in a while in the winter. But I wouldn't even prepare for the fiddle contests. I wouldn't even go over, even run through any tunes until I arrived. And the same way with Weiser. For some reason, it was a mixture of losing my teacher, I think it was mid-teenage blues, it was feeling like I had more talent than I had an outlet for, and I was sort of misunderstood, and people didn't know where to put me... I didn't understand all that at the time... As a matter of fact, Rounder Records — I made two albums for them when I was twelve and thirteen — and age fourteen went by, age fifteen went by... All this time they were calling, saying "We'd like another record from Mark," and I said, "No, I don't want to." When I was sixteen, they kept calling every couple of months, and my mom would say, "Well, he says he doesn't want to." I look back at this and say, "here's a record company begging a musician to record an album — they weren't begging, but they were asking many, many times. I can't believe it.

You just weren't inspired to do it.

I didn't want to do it. I remember when I was sixteen they said, "Well, what about a guitar album?" They were trying to use a different line with me, and I said, "I don't wanna." And they'd call in a few months again, and said, "Tell Mark if we could get him anybody he wanted, would he do one?" And I said, "Well, what about David Grisman and Tony Rice?" Just to dare them — all my heroes, right? And they called back and said, "We can get them." I said, "Yeah, right. Well, I still don't want to do it." And then my mom put her foot down and said, "You know, we've given you guitar lessons for all those years. The least you could do is think about music for fifteen minutes a day. I'm not even asking you to play guitar — just think about it. Think about what you would do if you had a chance to make an album of guitar music." So that was how out of it I was, as far as practice. But what was weird about this was, all of a sudden, after a couple of days, I started getting ideas. And then when I picked up the guitar, I was better. I was way better than I ever was before. And the *Markology* album came out and is still available.

At this point, you still hadn't won Weiser, the National championship. Were you not practicing? Didn't you have that as a goal, to win Weiser? I would have thought you were putting massive hours in for Weiser...

No, it was *anti*. Everybody was telling me, "Mark, if you could just play like you were thirteen, you would win."

Is it because your note selection was too progressive?

Yeah, and it was just too wild sounding. It wasn't old-timey enough. It impressed some people, but it scared other people. When you're playing for old time music judges, some of them are going to be impressed, some of them are going to mark you down. So everybody was saying, "Regress, regress." So there was no need to practice. I had to strip it down. And so when I showed up, the first time I was actually trying to play to the judges, was when I was seventeen, when I won the national contest. Every other time I was just trying to do what I do, the best I could.

But it was a great lesson for me, because I realized that there is a place, as a professional musician, to try to cater your style or your direction. And it prepared me perfectly for the Nashville sessions. The correlation I draw from the Weiser national fiddle contest to the session scene is a close one, the way I see it. Even though I learned a lot when I was in the David Grisman band and the Dixie Dregs, that really helped me, too, but we were still playing for ourselves — we weren't catering for the commercial world, or some supposed judge out there who could be, in the national scene, a radio programmer, or a fiddle contest judge. They both determine what your fate will be that day on that performance. Whether you like it or not, whether you feel good about what you've done or not. So that really gave me a boost, and I found how to do it without feeling like I compromised. I put enough of myself in

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“...he didn't understand how I could not practice the violin... I finally said, 'Edgar, there is not a minute of my day that goes by where I'm not thinking about music.' And he said, 'That's it. You're practicing in your mind.'”

there to put my stamp on it. So I didn't prepare for those Weiser contests, until I showed up that week.

Let's carry this forward to after that scene, developing your technical abilities... How would you deal with technical obstacles, things you knew you wanted to do that your fingers weren't ready to do? Most people spend their hours practicing passages that are difficult, and yet you seem to have skipped that somehow.

Well, when I first met Edgar [Meyer], he didn't understand how I could not practice the violin. And after a while, after me wondering about it too, and being in several situations where that came up, I finally said, “Edgar, there is not a minute of my day that goes by where I'm not thinking about music.” And he said, “That's it. You're practicing in your mind.” And that's half of it. I just have to have the physical tools to be able to answer it on the other end. But up here, going through a passage of music that all of the sudden would come to me, and I imagine doing it.

Do you get to the point where there's a passage that your mind wants to play that your bow or your fingers say, “We can't accomplish this”?

Yeah. A lot. [Laughter]

That's good to hear! There are people who suspect this never happens to you!

Oh yeah, my whole solo show is full of struggles. That's what's so nice about my solo concert for me — I'm at a place where I can push myself as far as I can, and I'm never hanging back watching out for someone else. I'm a good team player — I can feel when it's appropriate to lay back, lay out, come in, complement another person playing a nice line, on and on, which is really nice to do, and it's very rewarding.

So you feel, playing solo, you can push yourself in ways... If you're up there and you feel like you're pushing yourself and that you're essentially almost getting in trouble, how do you disguise it so well to the listener, who always feels like it's flawless?

Well, there are times when I make blatant mistakes, that are so obvious that I laugh. But it feels good to have humility, knowing that I'm going for my personal best. You know, I might not make it that night, but I want to make the effort really entertaining. And I hope I can do that for a long time. I've been doing my solo show now for four years, and people seem to be enjoying it more and more.

Speaking of techniques that I can't do, I'm writing these Caprices that are the hardest, most ridiculous things I could hope to do.

To my knowledge, outside the classical field, I don't know that any other fiddle player has been able to deal with that kind of technical virtuosity. That's part of why I'm asking these questions pertaining to it. Normally, you would have to drill yourself, and push yourself in a practice setting to get to that level, but...

Well, I don't...

You seem very comfortable with the fact that you don't, but do you ever think, “What if I did?”

It's so weird, like these Caprices, if you could have heard them when I first wrote them, I played them perfectly. [Laughter] And they've gone downhill. It's like the more I repeat something, the worse it gets. The more takes I take on a tune, the worse it gets. As a matter of fact, it became known around Nashville to all the producers and engineers, “If O'Connor's coming in for an overdub, as soon as you get the sound, press record, because he'll probably play something we want to keep.” The two pieces that really hit the radio when I came into the session scene, a song called “High Horse” by the Dirt Band and a Michael Martin Murphy song called “Fiddling Man” — those solos were big, long fiddle features, and both of those were first takes. And so I got really used to that feeling. Although I'd like that I could take many takes before I start going downhill. But honestly, I would say, that if I have to take it over six times, I'm going to start losing something. And so, with repetition, it often doesn't help someone like me. Matter of fact, I've actually got this down to an art.

We're talking about how you prepare, and what do you do with all these techniques you're coming upon. Well, when I need to get stronger on the fiddle, I play more guitar. That's been my latest. And the guitar helps me keep my muscle tone in my hand. That's the one thing that I fear now. But I'm only concerned with it because I had it to such an incredible point in the session scene where I was playing like twelve hours a day in the sessions, that I could play that long and not get tired. So it keeps those muscles toned up. But it also goes towards my philosophy about understanding different music styles. It just seemed like if I really wanted to be inspired about a certain kind of music, I would play another one a little more, and then come back to the first. And maybe it's this concept of coming in fresh, with a fresh mind. Grappelli, who is one of my violin heroes, who I didn't hear say this until I was already grown, he said, “Practice is okay for the fingers, but terrible for the mind.” Of course, he's an improvisational musician. Now, by nature, I think of myself as an improvisational musician. So when I think of technique, it's actually not coming into the musical picture for me. Outside of the Caprices, I'm just kind of feeling my way through the music. So it's interesting to me that some people find the technique that I have so overwhelming beyond other things, when I don't really approach it from a technical standpoint. I don't even practice. I never practice the violin. If I were just concerned with technique, then I would be practicing for hours and hours doing scales and passages... Probably the last time I played a scale might have been when I tried to learn how to play piano when I was a mid-teenager. I don't like doing that. It's not a musical experience for me. So my everyday situation is not about technique.

But having said that, I'm really enjoying the fact that I feel like I'm getting better these last two years, and I think I know why. Going back to when I was a teenager, as good as I might have gotten by the time I got into the David Grisman Quintet when I was seventeen, I should have been better than that, because I did not reach my full potential. I almost quit music for three years. And three years in a teenager's life is many, many years in an adult life. It's almost a little scary to think about, where I would have been. The reason I've become aware of that is Edgar told me that most classical players reach their technical limit when they're eighteen or nineteen. And at that point I was just starting to discover mine.

So that's why I think I still have some ground to gain. But when I first played the Fiddle Concerto, I wrote that just above my technical reach, because I didn't write it for myself. I wrote it for a violin player in the future to do it, maybe even after I'm gone. I romanticized about the possibility of leaving this concerto in a vault, and after I'm gone, somebody picking it up and finding it, and playing it. So the whole compositional process was nothing to do with me being on stage. I wrote it very technically difficult in order to be interestingly challenging to a classical violin player that thought fiddling was easy. And then when I got near the end of the process, my agent detected some enthusiasm in my voice about my secret project, and I finally told her what it was — I was working on an orchestral piece.

She went out and started shopping for a commission, and that's when the Santa Fe Symphony came in, in 1993. And they wanted to commission me to premier it with me as soloist. I was both flabbergasted and upset at the same time when I found out, because I wasn't prepared — I didn't know if I could do it. I didn't know how to follow a conductor, basically. I mean, yes, I was writing this orchestral piece, but I didn't want to do it. And she said, "Well, you've got a nice fee here, and it's yours... You want to have a solo career..." And I said, "Okay, just let me think about it for awhile." So I started thinking about it, "What is it going to take for me to learn how to do this?" And by the first premier, I didn't know what to do. I didn't know if I should take conducting lessons. No experience. I'd never soloed in front of the orchestra before, ever.

Then this Boston Pops offer came in, and it was just on national TV again, about a month ago. They wanted me to prepare two pieces, pops-type pieces, for the Bonnie Raitt-John Raitt special. So I did my "Orange Blossom Special" off my *New Nashville Cats* and "Amazing Grace." The reason I picked those two is that they had metronomic time — well, one of them did and one didn't. "The Orange Blossom Special" had drums and bass — I'm not going to get lost as long as that drum is going. So I don't have to follow the conductor there. Then "Amazing Grace," the melody was completely up to my interpretation and the conductor would have to follow me. So I was all over the place — speeding up, slowing down, speeding up, slowing down — because I was improvising the melody. And *it worked*. I listened back to it, I watched it, and I

went, "That's it! I'll make them follow me!" So I said, "I do not know if I'll be able to get through this piece with the orchestra. I'm just going to pray that somehow he'll be able to follow me." So I just plowed. And it worked. It was a resounding success. And since, I've learned more about interaction with the conductors.

Let's talk a little about more traditional fiddling. Do you still feel like you're in touch with that world? Do you ever buy CDs from contemporary players? How involved do you feel with the traditional world?

Well, I grew up in it, and I went very far by the time I retired from entering fiddle contests at age twenty-two. Obviously when you retire from something you are burned out, you're ready to look to another direction. And I didn't want to go to anymore fiddle contests. I thought I had done enough. I didn't have anything new to offer at that point, and I don't like to spin my wheels. The only thing that I could have done was to continue to help preserve old-time fiddling, and I felt like I could do more about that by exploring other avenues. The interesting thing is that's exactly my philosophy about practice and everything. If I want to improve something, I'll do something else completely different for a while and come back to a fresh attitude. So I did go off, I went off to the Nashville commercial session scene. I did that for a while until I was burned out, and then at that point I was asking myself, "What do I really want to do now, with my fiddling roots?" Because I realized that I was missing them. Even though I was on records that were heard by millions of people, I still felt a little removed.

So I established my dream camp. I figured if I could use my name to get this together, to get it going, to have the very best teachers and performers of the instrument gather in a setting that supported all different types of folk fiddling, that would have been the dream camp that I would have wanted to go to. Weiser was the closest thing to it, and I wanted to establish something like that, but without the competition. My dream camp is to have all the players that I want to learn from. I still have a lot of things to learn, and if I get a spare minute, I contact the people that I think can show me a



Photo: Jeff Loen

bunch of stuff on the fiddle. I figure if they can show me some stuff, chances are that other people are going to really enjoy it. So I started calling Darol Anger, and the great classical violinist Ida Levin... At nineteen, we both played for President Reagan at the Young Artists at the White House. And all these years later, [Ida]'s coming to my fiddle camp. She's fabulous. But I'm mixing classical violin — one teacher — with the mix of fiddlers. I've got the professor of violin from the San Francisco Conservatory coming next month, October, and he's a wonderful guy, a good friend. He said, "But I don't know anything about fiddling." I said it's okay... I'm going to have a jazz teacher who might not know anything about Celtic fiddling. I'm going to have Natalie MacMaster there from Cape Breton, who might not know anything about jazz, but she will by the time the week's over, because everybody's going to be bubbling with excitement for fiddling. And the obvious things I would tell the classical violinist dealing with a bunch of fiddlers, would be to work on their tone, their tone production, vibrato control, beauty of sound, projection, posture — we all need that stuff. There's plenty to do, and people are going to benefit from it.

I'm seeing a lot of the little violin, fiddle prodigies coming to the camp — it's a scream. You should come — especially in June when all the kids are there. We had this one, he was eight years old, came from Czechoslovakia, he could play everything off my *New Nashville Cats* album.

We've added another [camp] for the fall, in October, because we were sold out. I feel like a lot of people who do want to come can't come, so I talked to everybody and we thought we'd put on a fall camp. It will be a smaller one, because the kids will be in school. It will be mostly adults who didn't have a chance to come, and whatever kids want to come. And so, in that way, it's going to keep me in touch. We work year-round, hearing from fiddlers, getting lots of letters. And then I've started my fiddle program at Vanderbilt University, where I'm the adjunct associate professor of fiddling. This was not a title that I sought out. The new dean of music at Vanderbilt, Blair School of Music, came and saw me play for the first time, and he approached me about joining the faculty. The official title of my class is "Traditional and Progressive Fiddling." [For my assistant] I picked out the National Canadian fiddle champion, Crystal Plohman. She got second at Shelbourne this year. She has really helped me spearhead this fiddle campaign amongst a very conservative classical music scene. She's teaching beginners and private lessons, and I do two group classes on Tuesday nights. She teaches all during the week. So we can take all comers.

The thing that I see right now that has made the biggest difference is that a lot of little kids that wouldn't have normally been fiddlers, that would have gone on to study in a conservatory, are looking at fiddling as an option, because their parents are getting into it. Most of the time, I was really unique, in my situation. People couldn't believe that my mom or dad didn't play the fiddle. "Then what are you doing playing the fiddle?" Obviously you do it because your



Mark O'Connor with students at the 1994 Mark O'Connor Fiddle Camp

Photo: Jeff Loen

"...We have a lot of very talented kids, and they're coming to the fiddle camp... a bunch of little geniuses. So in about ten, fifteen years, fiddling is going to be exploding with talent."

parents do it. "Well, did you learn from your grandfather?" "No, my grandfather didn't play the fiddle." So I was really odd in that way, and it's true, most folk musicians pass it down to their kids and that's why they play. Obviously, not every folk musician's kids are going to be as good, but there are talented kids out there, and if they don't have an automatic place to go, they'll go right to the conservatory, and not even consider fiddling. But now we have a lot of very talented kids, and they're coming to the fiddle camp... a bunch of little geniuses. So in about ten, fifteen years, fiddling is going to be exploding with talent. I've got a student — an advanced student — it's hard to say student because they're so good — I showed him every hard lick in my fiddle caprice, and he'd play them back to me like he was my mirror. He's just twenty, twenty-one. There are other people like him, and now there's a younger set that's starting at that level even sooner. So I think fiddling is going to really thrive. From the looks of it, there are probably more working fiddlers today in America than since the sixties probably, at least, maybe more, that are making their living at the fiddle.

Do you ever look over your shoulder and keep track of what's going on? Do you feel a sense of competitiveness?

Oh, no. Just pride, if I've done something to spur this on... When I moved to Nashville in '83, I turned on the country radio, and for two days I heard only four songs with fiddle on them. If I was going to work, I was going to have to try to create a demand for it. So nobody was hiring any fiddlers. I called Buddy Spicher, and he said, "You probably shouldn't have come. There's no work here — it's dried up." That's how scary it was for fiddle in country music. The DX7 had just come in in 1982, it was everywhere — rock guitars — no steel guitar either. As a matter of fact, Glen Worf, who's the bass player in the American Music Shop band, came to Nashville the same year I did, but he came as a steel guitar

player. He said he did the exact same thing — he got to town, turned on the radio, and didn't hear any steel guitar. He said, "If I'm going to make a living, I've got to pick a different instrument." So he learned how to play bass as an adult. And now he is the most recorded bass player. But that's the state it was in. Now Nashville is thriving with young fiddlers like you never would believe. It's a really exciting time to be in Nashville as a fiddler.

I help young fiddlers when I can — I want them to come to my fiddle camp, I want to have them have that experience, communicating easily with every walk of musician. I think it's really important for someone to know how to rap with a rocker, rap with a country person, rap with a classical person, and rap with a jazz person, to be a part of the world music scene. I feel like the fiddle is one of the most versatile instruments, the most expression-filled... When I set out as a young musician, I don't ever remember sitting around going, "Yes, I want to be playing with symphony orchestras"... What I wanted to do was the next tune. So all this stuff is a bonus. I was this close to leaving Nashville in frustration. It was a pretty tough wall to climb... My first job in Nashville — I'm talking like an old-timer here, but I'm not! — but my first job in Nashville after a couple of months was for twenty bucks, backing up, playing in some band in a little club that nothing ever came of.

Some things I've been doing have really featured my technique a lot on the fiddle; but that's also a juxtaposition to the six years of session playing where I couldn't feature my technique — very toned down, real tasteful type of emotional things was what I did, mostly. Of course I played on ballad after ballad after ballad. And a strong essence of my playing is the emotional content. But what I'm doing now with the technique is discovering the emotional aspect, the intensity — with the Caprices, for instance. Intensity to me is emotional. Happiness is an emotion. The *New Nashville Cats* is so happy. I think a lot of times people forget that emotion on the violin does not mean only romantic passion and ballads, but happy hoedowns and up things, and real intense feelings through mad technical pursuits. So I'm discovering all this, hopefully in a way that the listener will feel something from the music.


Do you find getting the proper emotion in your playing to be a difficult thing to achieve?

No, not at all. Because I play out of my heart, out of my soul — that's where my music comes from. I don't learn it from a written page, or from another person, or from a record. All the things that I do, everything I play, has come from inside. Sometimes I think what I'm trying to say with the technique aspect is to go for a thrill, a ride, an intense pursuit. ♪

[For information on the Mark O'Connor Fiddle Camp, held in late June and early October, write to Mark O'Connor Fiddle Camp L.C.C., P.O. Box 150802, Nashville, TN 37215, or call (615) 377-6064.

Mark has an instructional video available from Homespun Tapes; please see page 51 for a review.]

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Mark O'Connor Discography

<u>Title</u>	<u>Label/#</u>	<u>Cass./CD</u>
The Championship Years, 1975-1984	CMF 015	CS, CD
Elysian Forest	WB 9-25736-1	CS, CD
False Dawn	RD 0165	CS, CD
The Fiddle Concerto	WB 9-45846-4	CS, CD
Heroes	WB 9-45257-4	CS, CD
Johnny Appleseed (Video/Soundtrack)	RE 74041-70742-2	CD
Markology (Solo guitar, 1978)		CS, CD
Meaning Of	WB 9-25353-1	CS, CD
New Nashville Cats	WB 9-26509-4	CS, CD
Night Before Christmas (Narr. by Meryl Streep)	RE 74041/70216-4	CS, CD
On the Mark	WB 9-25970-4	CS, CD
On the Rampage	RD 0188	CS, CD
Pickin' the Wind	RD 0068	CS, CD
Retrospective		CD
Soppin' the Gravy	RD 0137	CS, CD
Stone From Which the Arch Was Made	WB 9-25539-2	CS, CD

CMF: Country Music Foundation, Inc., 4 Music Square East, Nashville, TN 37203

RD: Rounder Records, One Camp St., Cambridge, MA 02140, (800) 443-4727

WB: Warner Brothers, 3300 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91510

RE: Rabbit Ears Children's Productions, PR, Ken (203) 857-3760.

If not available locally, the above recordings can be ordered from Mark O'Connor Musik, P.O. Box 150802, Nashville, TN 37215. \$15/CD or \$10/Cass. plus \$3 s/h for the first item and \$1.50 for each additional.

Fair Dancer Reel

Composed by Mark O'Connor

♩ = 300

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