



## COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

**MARK O'CONNOR**

BORN: August 5, 1961 HOMETOWN: Mountlake Terrace, Washington

ERA/STYLE: Bluegrass/Americana/Contemporary Classical

Mark O'Connor is an American violinist, guitarist, mandolinist, and composer. He began his creative journey at the feet of American fiddling legend Benny Thomasson and the iconic French jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli. Now, at age 55, he has melded these influences into a new American classical music, and is perpetuating his vision of an American School of String Playing. Mr. O'Connor has won three Grammys®, seven CMA awards, as well as several national fiddle, guitar, and mandolin champion titles.

He has represented the United States Information Agency in their cultural diplomacy efforts on six continents and performed in front of several U.S. presidents, including for President Ronald Reagan at the White House as a teen. As a composer and recording artist, Mr. O'Connor has sold over a million albums and gained worldwide recognition as a leading proponent of new American music. His *Fiddle Concerto* has become the most-performed violin concerto composed in the last 50 years. On his own record label, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra recorded his sweeping *Americana Symphony* while his groundbreaking ninth concerto, *The Improvised Violin Concerto*, was recorded in Boston Symphony Hall.

Mr. O'Connor has authored a series of educational books called the *O'Connor Method*, which is now the fastest growing violin method in the country; tens of thousands can credit the O'Connor books for learning how to play stringed instruments. The *O'Connor Method* features American music styles, creativity, cultural diversity, and western classical technical training. Mr. O'Connor tours nationally as the Mark O'Connor Duo with his wife Maggie; the Mark O'Connor Band, formed with his wife, son, and daughter-in-law (whose first album won a Grammy in 2017); and with his perennial show, "An Appalachian Christmas;" and also performs his original concertos with symphony orchestras. He resides in North Carolina with his wife and duo partner, Maggie O'Connor.