

BRAD RICHTER BIOGRAPHY – 530 words

“a guitarist who, like Paganini, is known for ignoring the generally accepted limits of his instrument.” – Fred Child, NPR’s *Performance Today*

Brad Richter is among the most influential classical guitarists working today. His ability to defy the technical limits of his instrument has earned him comparisons to Franz Liszt and Nicolo Paganini. Equal parts performer, composer and educator he has made nearly one-thousand concert appearances in North America and Europe - more than fifty of which were aired on NPR’s *Performance Today*. Brad’s compositions are performed the world over. He is a sought-after collaborator with artists such as cellist Viktor Uzur with whom he tours as the Richter Uzur Duo, his former mentor from the Royal College of Music, Carlos Bonell, and Broadway star Ben Vereen, as well as Grammy winners David Finckel (Director of Chamber Music at Lincoln Center), The Pacifica String Quartet and The Phoenix Chorale. Brad also enjoys several long-term collaborations as an artist-in-residence, including more than a decade with the Aspen Music Festival and School. ‘Lead Guitar’, a national not-for-profit organization that Brad co-founded and directs, builds free classical guitar programs in low-income schools. Since joining the University of Arizona’s College of Fine Arts, Lead Guitar has provided daily instruction for more than 15,000 students and has earned the support of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Brad Richter’s virtuosity was hard won. Born in Enid, OK in 1969, Brad grew up idolizing rock guitarists and, occasionally, playing air guitar on a tennis racket until, after saving up money he earned mowing lawns, he bought his first guitar at age 12 and began teaching himself to play and compose. Also, an avid runner, it was the same year he ran his first marathon. The dual obsessions of music and athletics were early signs of the drive that led Brad, despite having no formal music training, to earn a scholarship to the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago at age 19. He completed his Bachelor’s degree at the Chicago College of Performing Arts before accepting a scholarship for the master’s program at the Royal College of Music in London. He was the first guitarist in the college’s history to win the coveted Thomas Morherr Prize for voice accompaniment, and went on to win RCM’s guitar composition competition. Upon returning to the US to begin his concert career, he notched several other competition wins, including the International Fingerstyle Guitar Championship.

As a composer, Brad is known for his own brand of genre-mashing chamber music. Winner of the International Composer’s Guild Competition, his major commissions have included *Navigating Lake Bonneville*, a concert-length work for Weber State University; *Duo Concerto for Cello and Guitar*, co-written with Viktor Uzur for the Jackson Symphony Orchestra; *Fragments Transcending*, premiered by David Finckel; *Devil in the Details*, commissioned by the National Music Teachers Association; and the musical score for an episode of the Emmy award-winning PBS series *The Desert Speaks*. Brad’s collections of concert music for solo guitar are published by Mel Bay, Acoustic Music Records, GSP, and Sky Island Music.

Brad resides in Tucson, Arizona with his wife, Kerstin Meyers, and their three young sons where he enjoys playing soccer with his boys and spending time immersed in the landscapes and cultures of the Southwest that have inspired so much of his music.