

# JOHN LEHMANN-HAUPT, GUITARIST

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**John Lehmann-Haupt** received his first guitar on his fifth birthday. With the help of his father, he was soon picking out songs by ear. The records he heard at home – by Segovia, Leadbelly, Josh White, Merle Travis, and others – gave him a taste for a wide range of music and seeded the variety of his future repertoire. By his early teens, he had developed into an agile fingerstylist of promise and had put out a limited edition album of folk ballads and blues.

Formal training came later, with his intensive study of harmony and analysis under Blanch Moyse at Marlboro College in Vermont and his private study with guitarist Julio Prol in New York City. It was on this foundation that John built his unusually broad repertoire, which balances classics with his fluently voiced arrangements of traditional and popular songs. Master classes under Oscar Ghiglia and Angel Romero and private instruction in Schenker analysis rounded out his musical education.

From 1981 until 1993, John performed nightly at New York's Windows on the World in the acclaimed Cellar in the Sky, atop the World Trade Center; the engagement was cited for musical excellence by *The New York Times* in 1986. John has also performed in the homes of such prominent New Yorkers as Tom Brokaw and Madeleine Albright, and in concerts and clubs throughout the Northeast.

John's 1978 album *Unsung Guitar* showcased his popular arrangements, and his classical performances appeared on the 1986 compilations *Guitar Masters* Volumes I and II. On his 2002 CD *Songs of the Guitar*, John has interwoven classical pieces with his song arrangements for a program that recreates the experience of his concerts. John's arrangement of "Ashokan Farewell," the theme from Ken Burns's *Civil War* series, has been published by Mel Bay Publications.

John was a staff instructor at New York's American Institute of Guitar from 1982 until its closing in 2008, and he continues to teach privately. He has also written extensively on music and the guitar for *The New York Times*, *Family Life*, *Acoustic Guitar*, and several other magazines, and has provided liner notes for recordings including the 2002 Deutsche Grammophon *Segovia Collection* boxed set.

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## CRITICAL RESPONSE TO JOHN LEHMANN-HAUPT'S RECORDINGS

### ***Songs of the Guitar* (JLH Records):**

"...a tantalizing musical mix...rich in many small artistic effects...He makes the guitar sing."

– Craig Schiff, *The Audiophile Voice*

"Lehmann-Haupt is a fantastic guitar player at home in folk, world, jazz, or classical genres."

– Don Jacobson, KVMR FM

### ***Unsung Guitar* (Physical Records):**

"John Lehmann-Haupt's aptitude is beautifully displayed on this disc." – *Guitar Player*

"...sensitive, complex, and frequently very beautiful." – *The Berkshire Eagle*

"John Lehmann-Haupt is a true guitarist. The sweetness and the bite of the guitar are unmistakable in his playing." – Barry Ulanov, former *Downbeat* columnist

### ***Guitar Perspectives* (AIG Records):**

"I admired the fastidiousness and harp-like registration of Lehmann-Haupt's transcription of a Prelude from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*." – Allan Kozinn, *Guitar Review*

**[www.johnlehmannhaupt.com](http://www.johnlehmannhaupt.com)**



# 'A compelling voice'

## John Lehmann-Haupt talks nuances of the acoustic guitar

BY FRANCIS CARR Jr.  
HOUR STAFF WRITER

WILTON — Although his reputation is based mainly on his classical playing and arrangements of popular songs, guitarist John Lehmann-Haupt's first musical incarnation was as a self-taught bluesman and folkie.

"I began to play professionally when I was in my teens," said Lehmann-Haupt, who was given his first guitar at age five. "This was in the Sixties, so we were doing things kind of like what ... Crosby, Stills and Nash were doing. I was singing some, although it was never my primary interest. I was always more interested in the guitar."

Lehmann-Haupt was born in New York City, but moved to Litchfield County at a young age. It was difficult to arrange for musical instruction in his hometown of Washington, Conn.

"We were in a very rural area, and there really was no significant music instruction available anywhere," Lehmann-Haupt said. "So, for a very long time, I really played by ear."

Lehmann-Haupt said his introduction to classical guitar came by way of his father's record collection; specifically, the recordings of legendary guitarist Andrés Segovia.

"Because my father had this very strong and broad interest in the guitar, we also had recordings in the home of great guitarists," said Lehmann-Haupt. "So even though I was playing mostly things that I might've heard on records by people like Leadbelly and ... Josh White, ... Segovia was always in my ear."

Segovia's music was "the ultimate expression of what the guitar could do," Lehmann-Haupt added.

Lehmann-Haupt's classical training began in earnest when he was a student at Marlboro College

### THE DETAILS

GUITARIST JOHN LEHMANN-HAUPT PERFORMS IN WILTON LIBRARY'S CONNECTICUT'S OWN CONCERT ON SUNDAY, JUNE 7, FROM 4 TO 5 P.M. HIS PROGRAM CONSISTS OF CLASSICAL AND TRADITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS. THE CONCERT IS FREE OF CHARGE; REGISTRATION IS SUGGESTED. VISIT [WWW.WILTONLIBRARY.ORG](http://WWW.WILTONLIBRARY.ORG) OR CALL 203-762-3950, EXT. 213 FOR REGISTRATION AND DIRECTIONS.

in southern Vermont. At Marlboro, Lehmann-Haupt had the opportunity to study with Blanche Moyse, a founder of Marlboro's music department as well as of the renowned Marlboro Music Festival, which Moyse emigrated from France to spearhead. She had also studied music with Segovia as a young woman.

"(Moyse) was an extraordinary musician, and had actually known Segovia," Lehmann-Haupt said. "She was primarily a violinist and a fine pianist, but she had actually taken some lessons with Segovia in the 1930s."

"She was a classical musician in the central European tradition of the absolute highest order," Lehmann-Haupt added, saying that until he began to study with Moyse he was a "musically illiterate folkie."

Lehmann-Haupt began to play classical repertoire and compose arrangements of popular songs for the classical guitar.

"I was always ... interested in the guitar's ability to express a song very beautifully," Lehmann-Haupt said. "In its ability to play a melody — with nuance, with tone color, with expression — and support it with harmonies and secondary lines. ... So that's what I've been doing ever since."

It is this love of nuance



Contributed photo

John Lehmann-Haupt will play his classical guitar in Wilton on Sunday.

and detail that has led to Lehmann-Haupt's upcoming performance at Wilton Library's Brubeck Room, named for famed jazz musician and longtime Wiltonite Dave Brubeck.

"It's a perfect place for guitar," Lehmann-Haupt said. "Acoustically, it's really intelligently designed."

The acoustical characteristics of the Brubeck Room are well-suited to the sound of an unamplified acoustic guitar, which is how Lehmann-Haupt said he prefers to play.

"The guitar has a small voice, but a very com-

pelling voice," Lehmann-Haupt said. "Small in terms of volume. But very compelling, in that it has tremendous range of dynamics and tone colors."

For much of his career, Lehmann-Haupt provided background music for parties and hotels, including a twelve-year stint at the Windows on the World restaurant, at the top of the old World Trade Center.

Although he built an auspicious career for himself this way, performing at the homes of New York notables like Tom Brokaw and Madeline Albright,

Lehmann-Haupt said his time playing background music has led to a deepened appreciation of the audience-performer dynamic.

"When you play the guitar, which has these wonderful, expressive abilities, for an audience that is there to hear you," Lehmann-Haupt said, "projecting the instrument's qualities outward and at the same time drawing the attention of the audience in towards it creates a kind of communion that is, I think, quite specific to the unamplified guitar."



*Christine Lavin*  
*www.christinelavin.com*



## John Lehmann-Haupt

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John Lehmann-Haupt is a brilliantly gifted classical guitarist who has made a stunning solo guitar album that weaves together his eclectic musical tastes in "[Songs of the Guitar](#)".



The album opens with one of the most beautiful of contemporary melodies, "Ashokan Farewell" (written by folk fiddler Jay Unger), contains songs by Bach, Haydn, Gershwin, Bernstein, Jobim, and traditional songs, "The Water Is Wide" and "Black Is The Color of My True Love's Hair."

The recording is excellent, capturing John's fluid and graceful guitar playing, his timeless arrangements. If you are looking for a unique gift for someone with sophisticated musical tastes, or an album for a guitarist who needs inspiration, you can't miss with this one by [John Lehmann-Haupt](#).

--CL 31-July-2002

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[Hi, this is Zoe, I have to add my .02 for free <g> -- I'm a lucky webmaster who gets \*perks\* such as copies of a CD, which I use to create sample audio files -- and this was a treat -- it has such a calming, de-stressing effect; it's magically healing! I've selected Jobim's "Wave" for your listening pleasure!]

### Listen To "Wave" Using RealAudio



## Folk N' Review Newsletter

By [Don Jacobson](#)

host of [The Long & Dusty Road](#)  
Mondays, 10:00 AM - 12 Noon

December 2002 - January 2003

The opinions expressed are solely mine and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the KVMR MD, PD, PC, staff, management, underwriters, Board of Directors, hangers-on or passers-by.

### **Your Reviewers:**

DJ = Don Jacobson

Folk 'N Review is not published with any KVMR funds. Constructive criticism, contrary opinions, humor and suggestions welcome for publication.

You can have Folk 'N Review delivered every once in a while to your KVMR mail box or e-mail box. Leave a message in my KVMR mail box or send an e-mail to me at:  
[donj@infostations.net](mailto:donj@infostations.net).

### **Artist:**

*Album*

CLASS

Review notes

### **John Lehmann-Haupt:**

*Songs From the Guitar*

WORLD/CLASSICAL/FOLK/JAZZ/?

WOW! Lehmann-Haupt is a fantastic guitar player at home in folk, world, jazz or classical genres. All of the those are represented on this CD. It works as an anthology (great for radio) or for casual listening from start to finish. He plays an excellent version of Bonfa's "Manha De Carnaval" Consider playing this CD with tracks from the Dale Miller and Luigi Marrassini CDs. Tracks: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13.  
DJ

### **The Pedrick-Hutson Guitar Duo:**

*Mirage*

CLASSICAL

This CD features composers who were born in 1540 to as late as 1956. The material is an interesting mix of the familiar to the obscure. One traditional Irish piece was added to the



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June 30, 2001

# Eminent guitarist performs Sunday

By Sonny Marble  
For FLORIDA TODAY

Critically acclaimed classical guitarist John Lehmann-Haupt will perform a program of varied styles Sunday in Melbourne as a guest of the Florida East Coast Classical Guitar Society.

Lehmann-Haupt received his first guitar on his fifth birthday. With the help of his father, he was soon picking out songs by ear. The recordings he heard at home, including Leadbelly, Segovia, Josh White and Merle Travis, gave him a taste for a wide range of music and seeded the variety of his future repertoire. By his early teens, he had developed into an agile fingerstylist of promise and had put out a limited-edition album of folk ballads and blues.

His engagement at Windows on the World (atop the World Trade Center) from 1981 to 1993 was cited for musical excellence by *The New York Times* in 1986. He also has performed in the homes of Tom Brokaw, Madeleine Albright and Donald Trump.

Lehmann-Haupt has built an unusually broad repertoire, which balances classics with his fluently voiced arrangements of traditional and popular song. He also concentrates on classical selections.

"I try to construct a program that has an interesting shape to it," Lehmann-Haupt said.

The first classical piece on the program is a transcription "Prelude," "Sarabande" and "Courante" from Bach's "Cello Suite III." In these pieces, Lehmann-Haupt must play many independent melodies, which, while recognizable as separate from one another, contribute to one sound for the listener.

"The ideal is to do on a guitar what a keyboardist would do; to play the individual lines," he said.

Other works on the program



## In concert

Guitarist John Lehmann-Haupt will perform at 2 p.m. Sunday at the Henegar Center in Melbourne. Tickets cost \$15 and are available by calling 723-8698. A master class is planned for 6:30 p.m. Admission is \$50 for players; \$15 for observers. Call 725-5181 to register.

are the "Menuet" and "Trio" from the "Miracle" symphony by Josef Haydn, Isaac Albeniz's "Granada" and "Sevilla," Edvard Grieg's "Melodie," drawn from one of Grieg's "Lyric Pieces" and Heitor Villa-Lobos' "Prelude No.1."





## Paramount's Peacock?

**'A**LL I WANT is the best of everything and there's very little of that left," wrote the Herald Tribune's cynic, Lucius Beebe.

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IT'S BEEN a hot rumor before — it's a hot rumor again: We hear from excellent sources that Paramount Communications is closer than this to buying NBC. The rumor itself is nothing new, it's been an open secret that GE, the current owner of NBC, has been dissatisfied and wishes to unload the fabulous peacock. (At one point, Disney was supposed to be the frontrunner in an NBC buyout.)

We are braced for denials all round.

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JAMES MICHENER, the author of such monumental best-sellers as "Tales of the South Pacific," "Sayonara," "The Source," Hawaii," and his current Random House memoir, "The World Is My Home," turns an impressive 85 years young tomorrow. To help celebrate this milestone, his longtime publishers at Random House will honor the author at a black-tie reception at the Pierpont Morgan Library in Manhattan on Wednesday. And later this month, Michener, who has lived and written all over the world, will embark on a journey sponsored by the Book-of-the-Month Club. He will travel to one spot on this earth on which he has never set foot — Antarctica!

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BETTY BUCKLEY just won kudos for her powerful performance on "L.A. Law," playing a battered woman. Soon she'll be seen in the Fox-TV movie, "Bonnie and Clyde: The True Story." But as effective as she can be on screens small or large, Buckley's first love is live performing. So the star of "Cats," "Song and Dance," and "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" returns to her in-the-flesh roots for two nights only at the Bottom Line. "An Evening With Betty Buckley" runs Feb. 4 and 5; performances at 7:30 and 10. Buckley will feature songs from her Broadway appearances as well as tunes by Bonnie Raitt, Joni Mitchell and Paul Simon. She'll even take requests!

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**Betty Buckley**  
Flowers on film, in the flesh

tral Park South. In just the past two weeks, Bette Midler, Bill Cosby, Christopher Plummer, Joan Rivers, Martin Scorsese, country singer Don Black, producer Douglas Cramer and Shirley MacLaine have all been in to sample the "alta cucina." Miss MacLaine was dining with an editor from Bantam Books, so possibly we'll have more past lives to read about soon . . . The Japanization of Broadway: billboards on Broadway of Japanese products now outnumber American 2 to 1 . . . One of New York's hottest Off-Broadway shows, the comedy "Beau Jest" at the Lambs Theater. All about a Jewish mother's concern for her single daughter — very clever, a non-stop belly laugh . . . John Lehmann-Haupt, brother of New York Times literary critic Christopher, has a steady gig strumming guitar way up high at Windows on the World's aerie, Cellar in the Sky. The Times culinary critic, Bryan Miller, has already dubbed John's nimble way with the strings "the best restaurant music in New York."

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1986

# The Old Year, à la Carte

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By BRYAN MILLER

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**Most uplifting new breakfast:** Windows on the World (1 World Trade Center).

**Dining buzzwords of the year:** Grazing, free-range.

**Worst new service practice:** Asking for cash tips with credit card payments, at Carolina (West 46th Street).

**Noisiest Restaurants:** America, Restaurant Florent (69 Gansevoort Street).

**Don't ask:** King Fung in Chinatown serves "Squab with OK sauce."

**Best restaurant music:** Classical guitar at Cellar in the Sky (1 World Trade Center); pianists at Chez Josephine.

**Most jarring restaurant music:** An all-percussion Brazilian combo, play-

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*John Lehmann-Haupt performed nightly at Cellar in the Sky from 1981 until its closing in 1993.*

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For Professional And Amateur Guitarists

# Guitar PLAYER®

**JOHN LEHMANN-HAUPT, "UNSUNG GUITAR."**

John Lehmann-Haupt's aptitude on steel-string acoustic is beautifully displayed on this disc, not as a type of spectacle to awe the listener, but rather as a vehicle to conduct a dozen nicely melodic tunes. And that he does admirably. All but a few songs on the record are played in solo style (only drums and bass guitar appear on the exceptions). His covers of the Rolling Stones' hit, "Let's Spend The Night Together," and James Taylor's "Fire And Rain" are embellished with a number of chord melody techniques and a broad range of dynamics that make the songs toe-tapping, hum-along material without making them sound like humdrum rehashes. The Physical World (Box 125, Cambridge, MA 02140), PR32-011. [TM]

**132** GUITAR PLAYER MAY 1980

**JAS OBRECHT • TOM MULHERN**  
**ALBUM NOTES**  
**JIM SCHWARTZ • TOM WHEELER**

# A sensitive 'Unsung Guitar'

Record review

By Ken Marks

**Y**OU WON'T be going very far out on the old limb when you say that "Unsung Guitar" is the best album ever released by a Pittsfield annuity salesman. But you can go further than that. John Lehmann-Haupt is a highly accomplished musician and this recorded acoustic guitar work is sensitive, complex and frequently very beautiful.

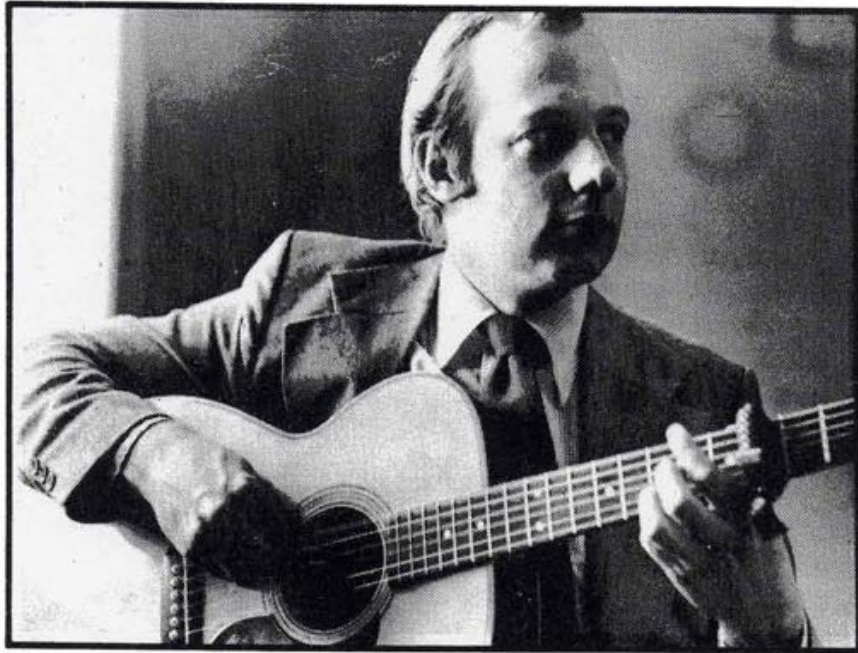
Lehmann-Haupt was playing away in a Cambridge music store — so the Lana Turner-esque story goes — when a representative for a small local label called Physical Records wandered in and was impressed by what he heard. "Unsung Guitar" is the result of that crossing of paths.

The 29-year-old Washington, Conn., native is classically trained, having earned his degree in music from Marlboro College in Vermont. He's now living on Pomeroy Avenue and working for Security First, selling tax shelter annuities.

Taken as a group, most of the selections on his "Unsung Guitar" comprise a virtual anthology of the rock era's prettiest melodies. The choice of material works decidedly in Lehmann-Haupt's favor. The guitar can afford to be "unsung." Because of the familiarity factor, most listeners will have the words and music of these songs deeply imbedded in their hearts and minds. They're already favorites. Any new light Lehmann-Haupt can shed on these compositions will be regarded as yet another link to a friendly old musical companion.

Sometimes Lehmann-Haupt's interpretation of these chestnuts is traditional, sometimes out of the ordinary. He can be effective with either approach. On Jagger-Richard's "As Tears Go By" and on "Amazing Grace," the feeling conveyed is largely what we've come to expect from these tunes. That doesn't mean that they are simply rote re-creations of old arrangements. They're not. But the original, graceful spirit of the songs is lovingly preserved. Particularly engaging on these two tracks is Lehmann-Haupt's method of having the melody flow from different parts of the guitar. One melodic phrase might be composed of notes from the bottom strings, full chords and the customary higher notes.

By way of contrast, we get a slightly different slant on Jagger-Richard's "Let's Spend the Night Together" and the medley of James Taylor's "Fire and Rain" and Gaye and Stevenson's "Dancing in the Streets." These interpretations are more uptempo than the originals. The Stones' own version was pretty fast itself, of course, but its rhythmic kinks are more fully explored here, with Lehmann-Haupt tapping the body of the guitar for percussive emphasis. There's an airier feel to the tune than one might have expected possible.



Vicki Sanders

John Lehmann-Haupt fingers his unsung guitar.

On both tracks, the melody seems to bubble up naturally from the rhythmic ground spring Lehmann-Haupt explores. The medley concentrates on "Fire and Rain" and it seems to be the repeating "thought I'd see you" phrase that forms the melodic link with "Dancing in the Streets." And it's the classic rock chording of the arrangement that leads the guitarist into a brief quote of Petula Clark's "I Know a Place" at the end.

"Let's Spend the Night Together" and the medley exhibit Lehmann-Haupt's technique of finding a chord change he likes, then playing with it, suspending the melody for a time, creating a nice tension before bursting back to the song's own flow.

Occasionally, Lehmann-Haupt augments his solo guitar with drums and/or his own over-dubbed bass. That proves to be a mistake, generally. He has the technical command to give us a fully conceived arrangement with the instrument

unadorned. The melody, the bass line, the harmonies, the syncopation are all there at his 10 fingertips. The plodding addition of other sounds on Carole King's "You've Got A Friend," for instance, tends to de-mystify an otherwise considerable accomplishment.

And on Jagger-Richard's "Lady Jane," Lehmann-Haupt's approach is clearly wrong-headed, sacrificing one of the Stones' tenderest melodies to a mundane bossa-nova beat. On the other hand, Lennon-McCartney's "And I Love Her," done as a solo, is a model of subtlety. The natural tendency toward a Latin rhythm exerts its gentle pull, and some notes of the melody are purposely left unplayed as the tune proceeds seemingly self-propelled.

It's those understated moments, when the listener can add something of his own to Lehmann-Haupt's virtuoso canvas, that give "Unsung Guitar" its greatest measure of success. ■

# JOHN LEHMANN-HAUPT IN CONCERT

## BARD

A College of the Liberal Arts and Sciences

Mr. John Lehmann-Haupt  
306 West 75th Street  
New York, New York 10023

Dear Mr. Lehmann-Haupt:

I am writing to extend a formal thank you on behalf of the entire Bard community for your performance here on February 11th. You provided a wonderful evening of music and an excellent beginning for our Spring Lecture and Performance Series.

Your choice of program for the evening was just right -- a good mix of the traditional repertoire and the new -- and very appropriate to the series. The response your playing, your technique and your performance presence, elicited from the audience was terrific. Many more of our students were present than at most concerts sponsored by the Bard Center, and they clearly were very involved in your performance. There was a very lively spirit present in the hall.

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for a go



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT 05753

AMZ/jh

Dear John:

*Just a quick note to express my appreciation for yesterday's program. I, my colleagues, the students I've talked with, and the visitors there were all impressed with the quality of your playing, your ease with the audience, and the interesting program, which I felt to be especially appropriate for the time and place. Well done!*

WILLIAMS COLLEGE

WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 01267

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Dear John,

What an absolute delight your concert was! While we knew that you were good, I must admit that we were surprised at the top caliber of everything you did. Both your technique and your sensitive musicianship shone through, to the obvious pleasure of the audience.

in work out a return visit some

y truly yours,

Dale Cockrell  
Assistant Professor of Music



## You Gotta Work The Room

The New York Times

By JOHN LEHMANN-HAUPT

I HAVE been playing guitar in New York restaurants for more than a decade. To many of my classical musician friends, performing in a clattering, bibulous dining room is only one notch above strumming in the Union Square subway station.

True, it isn't Carnegie Hall, but it's not like playing to a brick wall, either. Just as customers sometimes use (or abuse) musicians, we, in subliminal ways, manipulate them.

For example, I constantly scan the dining room for signs of customer awareness: drumming fingers, a tapping foot or even a certain tilt of the head. Sometimes I divert myself from the routine of playing the same songs over and over, night after night, by trying to read the crowd and responding to the mood. It is difficult to say exactly how this works, since it is more of an intuition developed over the years than anything else. The soft-featured, demure lady over on the right may strike me as a candidate for "Memory" from the musical "Cats," while the austere academic types off to the left should go for anything crisp and baroque-ish. I'll play my hunch and look for the telltale tap. It works about 70 percent of the time.

One evening, a party of six feisty young men came in with a certain swagger that I thought might lead to a raucous "Stairway to Heaven" request after a few drinks. And then something — it might have been their age, their dress, their expressions — told me that they were more Billy Joel than Robert Plant. I shifted into "Just the Way You Are." Sure enough, halfway through the first chorus, the man at the head of the table looked at me and said, "I can't believe it. That was my wedding song." For the rest of the evening, I had them in my pocket as surely as Bruce Springsteen playing Asbury Park.

Music can do much to set the tone of a dining room. I often collaborate with the service staff on this. For several years I have been playing at Cellar in the Sky (at Windows on the World), which is generally an exceptionally civilized venue. But when I started there in the early 1980's (this was before the "dram shop" law rendered restaurants liable for the actions of patrons who drink too much there), some customers tended to get quite animated, not always to the amusement of their fellow diners. This happened most often on Friday and Saturday nights.

The maître d'hôtel and I found that if I stuck with classical music for the first set on those nights, the cacophony level throughout the evening tended to remain below the red line. Still, if some parties grow obstreperous, the maître d'hôtel signals me to go into what I call the lullaby medley: "Send in the Clowns," "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," "Someone to Watch Over Me" (but not too fast) and so on. The pacifying effect is gradual but unmistakable.

Songs like "New York, New York," on the other hand, can be downright dangerous. The insistent rhythm seems to sound muster for the 101st Fork-and-Spoon Table-Thumping Corps. And the most incendiary song of all, one that I play only when Windows on the World security guards are nearby, is Roy Orbison's "Pretty Woman." I don't know what emotional chord this tune strikes, but countless experiences have demonstrated that if a beast lurks within a man, a surefire way to unleash it is by playing "Dah-dah-dah-dah-DAH..."

Then there are requests. Some people see a guitar and think "folk music" regardless of what they have been hearing me play all night, and more than once I have had to segue from something like "My Funny Valentine" into "Puff the Magic Dragon." This kind of thing is to a musician what the "well-done steak" and "medium-rare sushi" requests are to chefs. Our professional instincts tell us not to comply. Our pocketbooks remind us that the customer is always right.

I usually do learn any song that is requested more than once, but for years I refused to tackle the ever-popular "Malagueña"; some residual snobbism made me shun what seemed to me a guitarist's ultimate cliché. To deal with the inevitable requests, I had concocted a song and dance about how my deep respect for the flamenco tradition forbade the blasphemy of my play-

ing it without having steeped myself in Spanish gypsy culture.

Sometimes, however, we can be shamed into playing songs we do not know or do not care to play. One evening as I was finishing my set, a customer asked for "Malagueña." It was late, I was tired, and rather than go through my usual routine, I just said, "Sorry, I don't know it." As I was putting my guitar away, I heard him say waspishly to his companion, "That's like an accordion player not knowing 'Lady of Spain.'" My bubble was pierced; within two weeks, I was thrumming away at "Malagueña" like an aficionado.

But the best "Malagueña" request story happened to my friend Dennis Koster, a concert classical and flamenco guitarist who in 1968 was playing for \$17.50 a night in the cocktail lounge of a Spanish restaurant in Manhattan. One evening, a large, well-lubricated Texan walked in, herding an entourage into the dining room. He spotted Dennis and, after seating his party, returned and accosted him with "Hey, boy, do you play that 'Malagwainey'?"

"Yes, sir, I do," Dennis said.

"Well, I want you to play it for my wife," the Texan said, directing him into the dining room. He produced the inevitable roll of bills and peeled off a 20. After the finale, as Dennis was returning to the lounge, the man followed and stopped him by a pay phone. He peeled off another 20-dollar bill, dialed the phone and extended the receiver, saying, "Now I want you to play that 'Malagwainey' for my girlfriend."

John Lehmann-Haupt is a professional guitarist and guitar teacher in New York.

**THRUMS UP:** John Lehmann-Haupt used to shun "Malagueña." Now, he's practically an aficionado.

Songs  
like 'New York,  
New York' can be  
dangerous.

