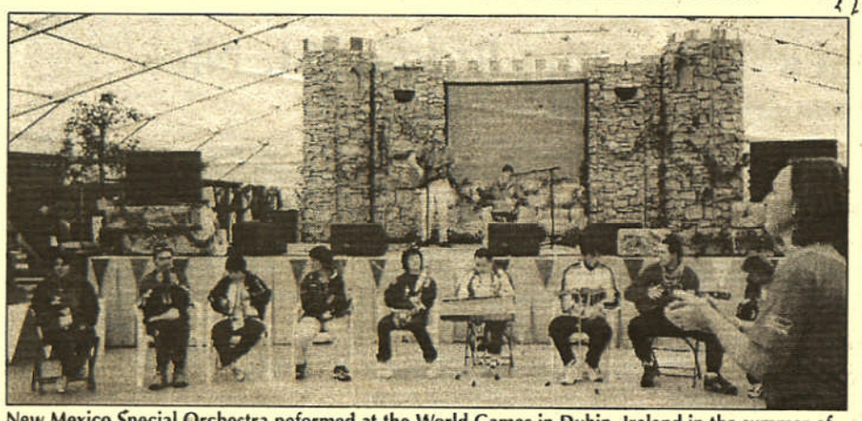

New Mexico Special Orchestra peformed at the World Games in Dubin, Ireland in the summer of 2003. At right, director Gair Linhart is shown with one of the members. File photos courtesy Gair Linhart.

Treat yourself to an evening of music and help benefit a great program

Albuquerque – Music lovers are in for a real treat on Saturday, Dec. 17, so make sure to carve out enough time in your busy schedule to attend the Special Orchestra Music Festival beginning at 6: 30 Saturday evening at the Lobo Theatre, 3013 Central.

Internationally renowned guitar virtuoso *Hector Pimentel* will headliine the event, a benefit for the New Mexico Special Orchestra.

Pimentel is New Mexico's foremost classical guitarist, who is donating his performance to this worthy cause.

Special Orchestra members will begin the evening playing some of their favorite songs and some Christmas favorites. Special Orchestra Inc., a non-profit organization, is the brainchild of Gair Linhart who has developed a unique system to help and encourage people of all abilities to enjoy making music. Special Orchestra traveled from Albuqueruqe to Dublin, Ireland, and was the featured entertainment at the World Special Olympics. The organization formed in 1999 and holds weekly music sessions in Albuquerque, at the Adelante, El Centro, 3900 Osuna N.E. and the Los Lunas Community Program, 1000 Main St, Los Lunas. To learn more about Special Orchestra you my visit their webiste: SpecialOrchestra.org.

For the Festival, organizers also are bringing the winners of the 2005 Santa Fe Traditional and Bluegrass festival, *Hands Five*; and *The Roustabouts*, the rockabilly sensations of the downtown Albuquerque night club scene.

A requested donation of $5 will get you into the door. But it's sure to be worth much more than that!

Just hearing the Special Orchestra sing "This is Not A Perfect World" (for example) is enough to warm your heart during this most special of all seasons of the year.

For more information, call Special Orchestra at 505.864.3749 or visit www.specialorchestra.org

The Festival is being held in the former Lobo Theatre, now owned by City on a Hill and is part of the Christmas in the City Series. The Festival is funded in part by New Mexico Arts, a division of the Office of Cultural Affairs and the Natioanl Endowment for the Arts. Other sponsors incude Hector Pimentel, Albuquerque Folk Festival, Steppin'Out, and Adelante Inc.

Pimentel

Hector Pimentel comes from a long, rich cultural and artistic heritage. A lifelong resident of New Mexico, Hector Pimentel is of Portuguese and Mexican descent. His endless study and thrive for perfection range from the time he held his first guitar at age 8 to his first recital at age 12 to his daily performances. The eldest of 12 children, Hector was born into a family renowned for its hand-crafted guitars. "From as far back as I can remember, I was surrounded by the wonder of guitars and guitar music and before long I had made a commitment to learn everything about being a guitarist, a virtuoso guitarist," says Hector.

Hector says his style combines the famed Andres Segovia's strength and love with the smooth flowing style of Chet Atkins. "Actually, I combined their techniques with my own, as I kept striving for perfection and more perfection."

Along with standing out as a legendary solo performer, Hector is lead guitarist in his band Leyenda. The ensemble produces a hot sound mix of nuevo flamenco rhythms and sharply stenciled bass, a combination with undeniable audience appeal.

The numerous awards Hector has received don't compare to his love of performing.

For Hector Pimentel, the guitar has been central to his very existence for as long as he can remember. One could say he was born to the instrument. He is of the same Pimentel clan whose name is associated with some of the finest hand-crafted classical guitars in the world.

The eldest of 12 children, Hector Pimentel cradled his first guitar at eight and performed his first recital four years later, at the ripe old age of 12. "From as far back as I can remember, I was surrounded by the wonder of guitar and guitar music," he says. "And before long, I had made a commitment to learn everything about being a guitarist. A virtuoso guitarist." And the success of his grand endeavor can be measured by the international audience acclaim that follows him wherever he goes. In New Mexico, Pimentel is known simply as "Mr. Guitar."

Both as a solo artist and bandleader, Pimentel preserves the rich flamenco tradition while coloring his compositions by drawing on contemporary influences. And he plays classical, flamenco and modern variations with equal passion and precision. With his band, Leyenda, Pimentel is able to reach higher musical ground, accentuating his arrangements with carefully placed percussion, electric bass and a second classical guitar. On their latest record, Masterpiece Alma Latina, as with their previous albums, Pimentel fuses classical and flamenco roots to a decidedly Southwestern aesthetic, affording the music a timeless, enchanting quality reserved only for music created by artists whose lives are committed wholly to their craft.

Hands Five

Hands Five combines some old time Southern style, Celtic and "Newtime" music for their award winning and crowd pleasing tunes. "As both dancers and musicians," says their website (www.folkmads.org/hands_five.html) we thrive on the energy that flows from the band to the dancers on a good medley (and back to the band when it all comes together!). Not wed to a particular style, you'll hear everything from the lilt of Scottish fiddling to the syncopated percussion of the hammer dulcimer. Inspired by bands like Air Dance and mentored by the Albuquerque Megaband, Hands Five combines some old-time southern style, New England, Celtic, and "Newtime" music. With some of the band members from Santa Fe and others from Albuquerque, finding time to practice is always an interesting process. We all know "Hands Four" as the call to dancers to get organized at the start of a dance, so Hands Five seemed an appropriate name for a band of five in a perpetual state of reorganization.