

the main event

Emily Dickinson ROCKS

Endicott College concert features famed poet's lyrics set to music

By IAN MARCUS CORBIN
Correspondent

BEVERLY — Sebastian Lockwood is 53 years old, which, he pointed out, makes him six years younger than Mick Jagger. Point taken.

The Endicott College adjunct professor of art and learning aims to prove that he still has some rock 'n' roll left in his blood, and that despite her passing in 1886, so does Emily Dickinson.

On Sunday afternoon, Lockwood will perform as one of two vocalists in a six-piece rock band. Together they will present an hour-long set of original rock songs whose lyrics have been painstakingly culled from the library of Ms. Dickinson's poetry.

"She's thought of as the 'Belle of Amherst,'" said Lockwood, "but in her poetry she's wild. She's revolutionary and incendiary."

He even said that if she were alive today, Dickinson, in all her delicate glory, "would be a rocker."

Lockwood said he has received no sharp criticism thus far, but he expects some.

"I just wrote an article for the Emily Dickinson International Society Bulletin about the project," he said. "The editor expects a strong reaction."

Lockwood's primary responsibility in the project was to take Dickinson's poetry and convert it into a format that would fit rock 'n' roll. This, he said, was not all that hard.

She wrote in "4/4," also known as common time, which is the rhythm pattern used in almost all rock songs, he explained.

Lockwood praised the "surprising power of the lines" and said that Dickinson's "sharp" verse translated very well into meaningful lyrics.

The music for the concert was written by jazz singer Nanette Perrotte, who will sing most of the lead vocals.

Lockwood regards Dickinson as a "supreme genius," and admitted feeling humbled in his attempts to reformat her work. But, he said, not to worry — her genius shines through.

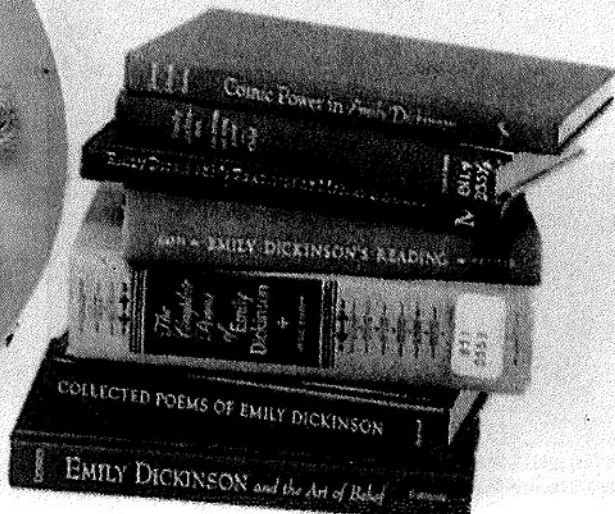
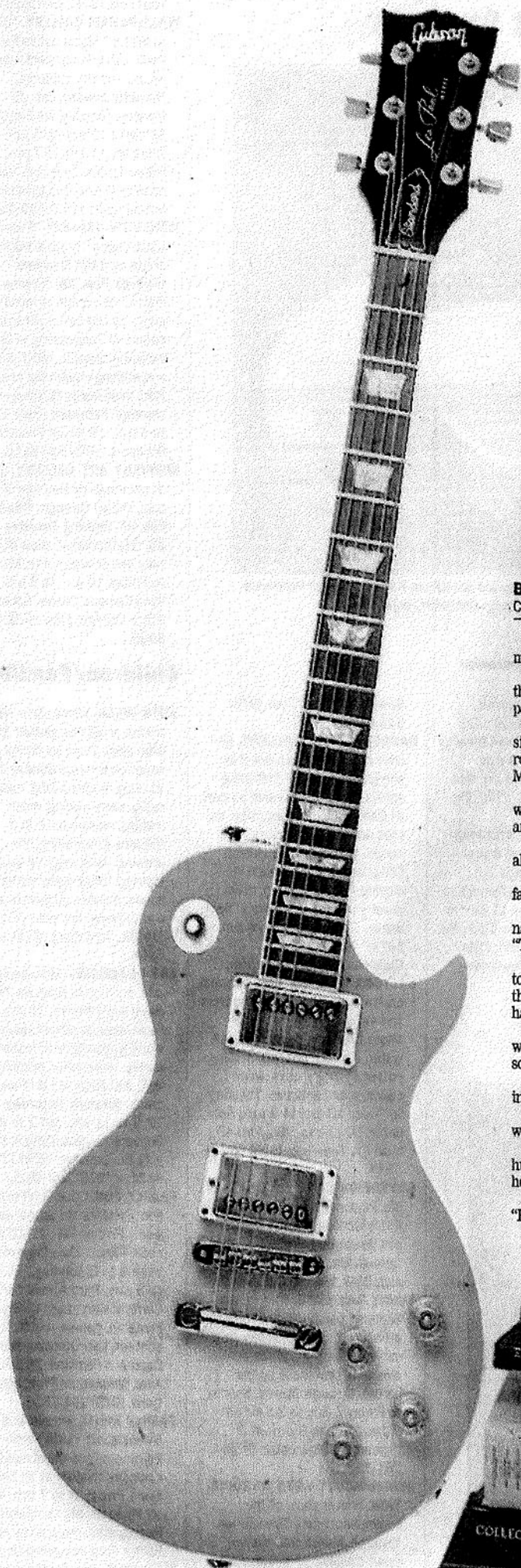
"She's too powerful for someone like me to do her any damage," he said. "Her work could resist the best efforts of anyone."

■ **WHAT:** "Emily Dickinson Rock: Zero at the Bone," concert of original songs featuring lyrics of famed poet.

■ **WHEN:** Sunday, Feb. 23, at 2 p.m.

■ **WHERE:** Endicott College Auditorium, 376 Hale St. (Route 127) in Beverly.

■ **COST:** Free.



Staff photo/Amey Sweeney