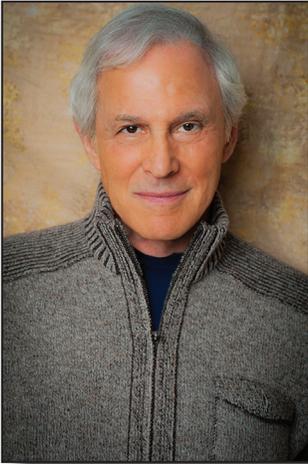


# Theater Pizzaz

Author: Myra Chanin

## John Gabriel



**John Gabriel** is not only slim, handsome and personable, he wears clothes as if they were custom sewn for him that very morning, he has an irresistible sense of humor, he excels at selecting exemplary samples from the Great American Songbook which are perfect for his soothing baritone and he wows a crowd as though he was born to be on stage. His show was a singing biography which traced his life via video clips from his first film role in *Sex and the College Girl*, and his meeting with Charles Grodin, to his early days in LA, to his Hollywood professorship on *Gilligan's Island* to Broadway where he played Bill Sampson, the boyfriend of Margo Channing in *Applause*, to the roll for which he is best known — Dr. Seneca Beaulac on *Ryan's Hope* for 10 years, admitting "I never saved a patient, The actors knew when they were scheduled to see me, it was time to look for work." *Ryan's Hope*, however, got Gabriel an Emmy and 20 million faithful fans, many of whom packed the Metropolitan Room. Proof of his fearless frivolity was his actually performing the title song from a film in which he played Pedro the Mexican Bandito — Howard Hawks' *El Dorado*. Gabriel only wrote the lyrics. Nelson Riddle actually composed the banal tune. Pictures of his family brought everyone back to earth in the most loving way.

Gabriel's voice glides smoothly between key changes and delivers lyrics flawlessly. His arrangements and his charts were A+, actually A double + when performed by Rolf Barnes on piano and Boots Maleson on bass. After an upbeat medley of *Nice Work if You Can Get It*, *Great Day*; *Blow, Gabriel, Blow*; and *Hurray for Love*, he turned romantic with a lush, inviting *There Will Never Be Another You*. His Frank Sinatra selection included the best songs Old Blue Eyes ever warbled: *All or Nothing at All*, *I Fall in Love Too Easily*, *When Sunny Gets Blue* and the incredible *What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life*. The show closed with two songs written by another close friend, Ervin Drake, God Bless him, who's still riding the stationery bike at age 95 — *Good Morning Heartache* and *I Believe*, and a most appropriate encore: *You Make Me Feel So Young*. He certainly did.

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