

his band, friends, hangers-on, press agents, and a good sprinkling of adoring female fans. He approached me with his old classical guitar, thrusting it into my arms as he motioned to his friends to gather round. "Liona Boyd is one hell of a classic-guitar player. She'll play for you if you'll all keep quiet!" he yelled. At this point, I realized how totally unprepared I was, as my velvet blouse had terribly tight sleeves. Quickly managing to tune the old strings, I launched into "Una Lágrima," a haunting tremolo piece by Gaspar Sagreras. Halfway through the selection, I felt my right arm start to tingle; the sleeve was cutting off my circulation at the elbow. Only prayers and a fierce determination helped my fingers keep moving to the end. My luck held until Gordon's friends started applauding. Somehow I pulled off a couple more selections, with my arm feeling as if it were in the grip of a blood-pressure cuff. The curly-haired singer seemed immensely pleased by my impromptu performance. "One day, Liona, I'm gonna take you on the road," he said, smiling. Surely it was a courteous compliment rather than a real promise; my simple guitar playing could never be compatible with his folk-pop band.

Several months later, while I was in San Francisco, the phone rang. Gordon was on the line, asking if I could fly to Minneapolis in a couple of days' time; his opening act had just cancelled. Desperate for a quick replacement, he explained that there would be two sold-out shows of five thousand people and absolutely nothing to worry about. Nothing to worry about! I had not even played for an audience of one thousand, never mind ten thousand in the same evening! But I knew this could be the break all aspiring performers dream about. At a loss as to what to say, I breathlessly told him I needed time to think.

In a terrible dilemma I ran to find Cal, beseeching him to help me decide what to do about this fantastic offer, which required a decision within the hour. Surely Gordon's audience would boo me right off the stage, as they would not be expecting a classical guitar performance. Could I be running the risk of ruining my classical reputation by playing for a pop crowd? I agonized over the imagined