

limo rides, hotel check-ins, press interviews, and jammed concert venues. I studied my sheet music while sitting beside Gordon on the plane, and he used to glance over at the jumble of notes and numbers, amazed that I could hear the sounds of music from the written page. "Why don't you write your own stuff instead of playing all these tunes by composers who died hundreds of years ago?" he asked. "Classical guitarists don't write their own music, they play the works of the great guitar composers or else transcribe pieces by famous masters like Bach, Scarlatti, and Albéniz," I smugly replied. It was however, Gordon Lightfoot, with that casual remark, who first made me think about trying to write my own music. The seed had been planted.

Gordon and I became good friends, but avoided any romantic entanglements. He was routinely approached by beautiful women with stars in their eyes — from eighteen-year-old groupies and poetry-loving college students to older married women. Our curly-haired Canadian troubadour impressed the ladies with his romantic ballads and blue-jeaned, rugged good looks. Sometimes one of his female conquests would accompany us in the plane, but Gordon did not enjoy being away from home for long stretches of time, and the band appreciated shorter tours, as they had wives and children in Toronto. Pee Wee Charles played steel guitar, Terry Clements acoustic and electric guitars, Barry Keane drums, and Rick Haynes bass: a good-natured group who amused themselves with practical jokes to make life on the road more tolerable. We usually played Thursday, Friday, and twice on Saturday and Sunday, rarely staying away for more than a week. Backstage, Gordon made a habit of popping his head into my dressing room to wish me good luck before the show. That quick hand-squeeze or pat on the shoulder as I waited in the wings to make my entrance meant a great deal. Probably he never realized how appreciated those small gestures of support were. Gordon always invited me to join him in press interviews, and he insisted that my name be up on the marquee with his. "You just can't get Liona off the bottle!" he used to joke as