

soon as my Boot contract expired I signed a five-album deal with CBS Masterworks in New York, which released *The First Lady of the Guitar* and *Spanish Fantasy*. At last I had a strong label with better international distribution.

Gordon and I flew off to Texas to woo sell-out crowds in large venues, including Fort Worth's Tarrant County Convention Center. The Texans, our most ebullient and enthusiastic audiences, loved us both. In the border town of El Paso, Mexicans whistled and shouted loud bravos after my Spanish pieces. Two fierce Dobermans had been released into Gordon's Lear jet to sniff out any drugs, but luckily no illicit substances were detected. In Cincinnati I asked one of the backstage organizers for a Coke; he returned twenty minutes later and whispered that the supply would be arriving with the promoter within the hour. I gave him a puzzled look, explaining that all I wanted was a Coca-Cola! Somehow I always felt too ingenuous for the tough world of rock and roll with its leather-jacketed promoters and macho crews.

Gordon was honoured in October 1976 by the city of Duluth, Minnesota, home to many of the sailors who had drowned on the *Edmund Fitzgerald* when it sank in Lake Superior. The ship's tragedy had been chronicled by Gordon in his epic ballad "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," which was then number one on all the charts. In every city we played, arenas and hockey stadiums were jammed to capacity. I was becoming accustomed to large crowds and stages on centre ice. Vivien, studying dentistry in Chicago, came to see us in Kalamazoo, Michigan, incredulous that her sister was about to pluck her guitar pieces before twelve thousand people.

It was an exciting time in my career, offering me a taste of the lifestyle shared by major performing stars — backstage introductions to John Denver and Kris Kristofferson, private jets, limos, post-concert parties, and wild applause. In between my Lightfoot tours, I continued to play smaller recitals — Powell River, British Columbia; Wolfville, Nova Scotia; Cape Breton; Lennoxville, Quebec. I played *Fantasia para un Gentilbombre* with the National Arts Centre Orchestra under