

studies are finished, we are on our own. Although Pavarotti would not dream of tackling a new opera without the assistance of a coach, we guitarists would not think of asking for help. In a sold-out hall, intimidated by the CBC's array of microphones, I ploughed through the concerto, only just grabbing some of the notes and missing certain chords and runs altogether. Backstage, I wanted to melt into the carpet on my dressing-room floor. A jovial representative from the Calgary Guitar Society bearing a large bouquet of red roses made me feel even worse! I phoned Cal from my hotel room and sobbed that I intended to quit giving concerts; this would be my last ever orchestral performance. I prayed I would never run into the poor conductor and decided I would succumb to amnesia.

Since that first embarrassing performance, I have often played the Rodrigo concerto and realize just how unprepared I had been for that ill-fated première. It is wonderfully exhilarating to feel the power of an entire symphony backing you up, but for many years, given a choice between solo or orchestral performances, I would opt for the former. During solo concerts, I become more completely immersed in my musical interpretations; with a symphony, one has to think about the balance between the guitar and the other instruments, making sure to follow the conductor's movements out of the corner of one's eye. As a soloist, I am responsible for the entire concert and can shape the mood and quality of the performance, whereas in an orchestral setting, the total statement is beyond my control.

A six-week classical tour of northern British Columbia and the Yukon was arranged, starting in late November 1975. The program included solos as well as ensembles with flutist Robert Aitken and David Grimes, a performer on the synthesizer, a novel instrument in those days. Our trio gave about fifty concerts and numerous workshops, often playing to three audiences each day after driving hundreds of miles between the towns. We performed in high schools, churches, and hotel dining rooms, presenting classical music to the folks in Kitimat, Terrace, Williams Lake, 100 Mile House, Prince Rupert, and Whitehorse, to name a few. Cal called from San Francisco every