

I warmed my hands on a hot-water bottle, one of my standard pre-concert routines.

But Gordon was a temperamental man. I witnessed frequent altercations between him and various road managers, light and sound technicians, and promoters. Even his band members occasionally came under fire. I was sure that my turn would come; it was only a matter of time. Amazingly, however, during the two years we toured together, Gordon never uttered a harsh word in my direction, always treating me with utmost consideration. One night, as we wearily flew home in the Air Canada first-class section on the "red-eye" from Edmonton, after playing for the Klondike Days festival at the Coliseum, Gordon saw me trying to sleep curled up in two adjoining seats and came over to tuck me in with a couple of extra pillows and a warm blanket. It was those small thoughtful gestures I will never forget. Lightfoot found himself under considerable pressure in 1977, signing, then unsigning, with superstar manager Jerry Weintraub and disputing with Warner Records. Here was a taste of the tough side of the music business that Pastore had warned me about.

We were booked in all the major summer festivals and outdoor venues from Tanglewood and the Merriweather Post Pavilion to Pine Knob, Michigan, and the Garden State Arts Center. Playing before these massive audiences gradually became routine, until I felt quite at home in front of the ten thousand to twenty thousand people that Gordon drew each night. The most difficult concerts to endure had been those early student recitals with friends, family, and teachers sitting in the front row; twenty thousand people dissolve into a massive sea of blackness from which I could detach and concentrate solely on the music. After some Spanish selections, I used to announce, tongue-in-cheek, "Now for something completely different. I'd like to play for you two pieces from the top ten in Europe — in 1780." The crowd invariably laughed before I launched into Bach's "Prelude and Gavotte." It was astonishing how receptive and attentive Gordon's audiences were to my rather specialized music. The people who came to hear "Sundown" or "In the Early