

GORDIE LIGHTFOOT:

I'm not a hawk- well, maybe I am.

What the hell am I? A Canadian, anyway.

by Lynnda McDougall
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Sitting at a desk in the Royal Suite of the Lord Beaverbrook Hotel, eating a light supper before his Wednesday night performance, Gordon Lightfoot seemed a paradoxical mixture of tension and relaxation.

Over a century ago Wordsworth said, "All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotion." Lightfoot said this is essentially the way his poetry is conceived.

Although some marijuana advocates insist their creativity increases when they're high, Lightfoot said it doesn't work for him.

"To appreciate this type of writing, the audience or reader has to be in a state of mind similar to the poet when he was composing. And you can't assume that all your audience is high - only a few of them," he chuckled knowingly.

Lightfoot explained that his controversial song, Black Day in July, wasn't banned in the United States. It was played on FM stations and was received widely there for two weeks after release.

"When Martin Luther King was assassinated, the record was apparently deemed in bad taste by AM radio stations and its airing was discontinued.

"It's not the kind of music people want to wake up to with their happy deejay," he said.

Black Day of July documents the 1967 Detroit riots but offers no solution.

"No one has any solution. The only thing we have at this stage of civilization - from the highest to the lowest person - is hope. It's groovy to be alive as long as everything is going smoothly - as long as no one mugs your wife or beats you over the head.

"People are so vulnerable. We are confronted with the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse - disease, war, famine, death - with virtually no protection.

"Things are not always black. Some people are lucky enough to live out their natural lives, but most people don't get the chance. It's only by luck that we were born here in a relatively secure atmosphere and not in Harlem, for instance.

"If you lived in Harlem, there is a good chance that you

technically wouldn't exist-you wouldn't even be a statistic. 30% of the Harlem population don't even have a legal birth record.

"On the other hand, some of them may be happier than we are-who knows? I wouldn't say it's a vicious circle, but it's a circle."

Lightfoot was once quoted in MacLean's as saying, "I disagree with those who don't realize that under communism they wouldn't be allowed to protest. I think the two systems (democracy and communism) need to melt together.

"There are too many extremes - too much imbalance in democracy, too much uniformity in communism," he said Wednesday.

"We have to find something in between - not a police state, which is what the United States is heading for. Wallace scares me. I wouldn't be that surprised if he made it. I just came back from the south and he has it wrapped up - more than most people realize.

"I think that draft dodgers are justified in their stand, but if someone is going to take away my freedom, I'll fight for it. I'm not a hawk - well, maybe I am - what the hell am I? A Canadian, anyway.

At the end of World War II the U.S. agreed to protect South-East Asia from communist aggression. They feel there is a long-range threat of a communist take-over of their country, but their policy has been wrong for so long. They-

ve botched the whole thing.

"In a rice paddy men should want and get all possible protection. No steps are being taken to insure this.

"There are no answers. There is not enough honesty in the world. So many people are sitting home making money from the war - it's not right.

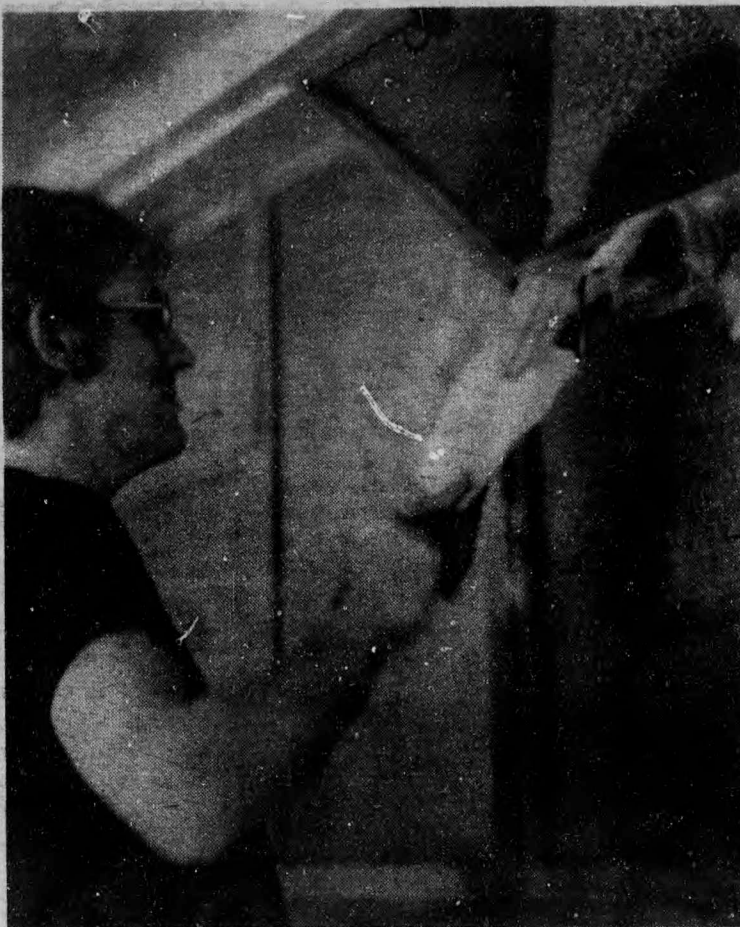
"The people of the U.S. are all sick. I feel sorry for them. They've lost all their manners. There's no such thing as humanity or politeness in New York City. People are becoming increasingly dishonest, because of disillusionment more than anything."

He told of his wife being attacked in Harlem by a group of men with water hoses. They had soaked a man in a convertible ahead of her. Fortunately his wife's cab driver had anticipated trouble and rolled up the windows and locked the doors before any serious damage could be inflicted.

Lightfoot said he would not move to the U.S.

"Why should I? I think I've proved that Canadian entertainers do not have to emigrate to the States to become successful."

Lightfoot's fourth album, Back Here on Earth will be released in mid-November. It will have no orchestration, unlike previous Lightfoot albums. There will be only Lightfoot and his regular accompanist, Red Shea, lead guitar and John Stockfish, bass.



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