

**Hasten Down the Wind**

**Ronstadt's newest is her most diverse yet**

By EVAN LEIBOVITCH  
Talk about success stories. Here's someone who could sell albums by the covers alone, but has a voice that many contend to be the best in the business. So many, in fact, that she won the title of best female singer in last year's Playboy All-Star band.

From a small band called the Stone Ponies, Linda Ronstadt has risen to such fame that at her concert at the Canadian National Exhibition last August, she received star billing above the Band, and proceed to upstage them come showtime.

How did it all happen? Most of Ronstadt's hits (When Will I Be Loved, Heat Wave, and a handful of others) give a good representation of the driving, country-ish, but oh-so-smooth material she is known for. However, in the cases of her



Andrew Gold and Linda Ronstadt playing Toronto at the C.N.E. August 30.

last two albums, Heart Like a Wheel and Prisoner in Disguise, the best vocals were not found in the AM releases. What made them hits

was the instrumentation of the songs, a very underrated part of Ronstadt's presentation. The main force behind that is Andrew Gold.

On Heart Like a Wheel, Gold played countless different instruments, and on Prisoner, he was almost a one man band. Although he also does excellent backup vocals for Linda, his first solo album flopped. He's prominent on Hasten Down the Wind, Ronstadt's newest, singing background, playing guitars, keyboards, bass, and assorted percussion.

Also helping are Kenny Edwards, who contributes vocals along with bass and mandolin. Dan Dugmore plays lead guitar, and Michael Botts is the drummer.

The major weakness with previous albums was the material chosen to bear Ronstadt's rendering. From a potporri of John D. Souther, James Taylor, Hank Williams and many others, it seemed that the only continuity among the songs were the lyrics, of dark

moods and broken hearts. Otherwise the collections were spotty at best and usually haphazard.

In Hasten Down the Wind, even this problem seems to be corrected, if you can resign yourself to the fact that all of Ronstadt's work features a sort of country twang to Gold's guitars. However, the material is fairly stable, while at the same time providing Linda's most diverse collection yet.

Give One Heart is one example of a song that switches unexpectedly between reggae and rock.

Lose Again brings out the best of the Ronstadt-Gold-Edwards harmonies, as does the accapella Rivers of Babylon. The Tattler is a welcome change from the depressing tone of Ronstadt's usual lyrics; if you listen hard, you might even detect some optimism. And of course, That'll Be the Day, a 1957 rehash which has been play-listed to death.

A few competent but mild in between (including two co-written by Ronstadt) are included to round out what might probably be Ronstadt's best, not to mention Andrew Gold's.

**New Music highlights CCMQ concert**

By STUART SHEPHERD

On September 29, the York Music Department presented a concert of free improvised music in Curtis F by the Canadian Creative Music Quartet (CCMQ) as the second installment of its Wednesday afternoon series. The performance could not have differed more from the previous week's excellent presentation of music of the high baroque: The new, unstructured, aleatoric, polyformal, succeeded the old, precise, determinate pre-classical.

Free improvised music (somewhat narrowly styled by some of its originators as creative music) at the time of its realization, attempts to eliminate any specific stylistic or formal prerequisite requirements to enable a musician to create instantaneous music. This can be done individually, or in an ensemble which can draw upon all of his technical, stylistic and intellectual skills.

While such a performance format carries with it the danger of producing sheer eclectic clutter, at its best it can generate the excitement which is often associated with activity on new frontiers. In the worlds of Stockhausen, "Music is always there. The more open you

are, the more you open yourself to this new music by throwing out all the images, all the automatic brain processes — it always wants to manifest itself."

Wednesday's concert honestly presented the best and worst of what can occur in a freely improvised quartet.

The first two of the three pieces did have their moments; the beginnings of both, while drastically different, were strong. The opening quartet of the first number, containing simultaneously a slow guitar solo and a furioso bass-piano duet, became a recapitulating theme throughout; the second began with minimal high frequency sounds — electronic tunnel sounds or asteroid music — featuring bassist Al Mattes playing a theremin.

From time to time during the "development" of both improvisations exciting moments did occur; Casey Sokol, the group's piano virtuoso, affected spontaneous integration and metamorphosis of diverse elements, in part derived from Bartok, Rzewski, Jarrett, Feldman, and Stravinski.

Two notable passages occurred in the second piece: dramatic vortex sounds on guitar and theremin over

elongated piano sounds at the beginning of the number, and an exquisite moment in a Morton Feldman-like space near the conclusion. At this time, the piano appeared to double itself (Sokol playing simultaneously inside and out), accompanied by slow bass and guitar sounds. Unfortunately such moments served to underline the disappointing contexts in which they occurred.

In both pieces the good ideas appeared in isolation; tensions never revolved, textures simply dissolved for lack of inspiration, recapitulations were often relapses in to safe habits, both individually and as an ensemble.

Both numbers ultimately collapsed from starvation for ideas.

The final and by far the briefest improvisation, however, un-categorically redeemed the quartet and its mode of playing. It commenced with a fast bass solo by Mattes which was soon infiltrated by guitarist Peter Anson. Drummer Larry Dubin then joined in suddenly at full volume and velocity as if he'd been going all the while but had suddenly been turned up. Anson then played a slow angular solo over presto bass and drum accompaniment and began to accelerate slowly. After a false

start, Sokol joined the trio, playing his Fender Rhodes at yet a third tempo.

The result was a gripping superimposition of temporal movement. Further initiatives by the Rhodes grew into a full solo: the tonal language of avant garde using the punctuation of commercial jazz. This Sokol brought to a complete stop at one of those "right moments" after which you can feel the whole audience take a breath in unison.

As Leo Smith has said, "the new creative improviser must have the absolute ability to instantaneously organize sound, silence, and rhythm with the whole of his or her creative intelligence"; that's asking a lot. An audience in the situation of a concert of free improvised music must therefore be willing to accept the boring with the very inspired. In those terms one must judge the Music Department's second presentation a great success.

Moreover, on their home ground, The Music Gallery (30 St. Patrick Street), as part of the larger CCMC ensemble, the group maintains a consistently higher ratio of hits to misses.

Check them out any Tuesday or Friday evening.

**CKRY-FM**

CKRY-FM this week (October 7-13)

Today, 2-4; Host John Thomson with his regular guests, James Pukka and Barry Edson will feature readings from Stephen Leacock.

Friday, 12-2; John Medland will be interviewing the actors and producers of the movie, "Far Shore". Music from the film will also be featured.

Friday, 2-4; The concept of musical aesthetics will be discussed on The Tina Clarke Program.

Monday, 4; Editorial comment with Richard Gould.

Tuesday, 2:20; The very first of a series of plays for radio. "Love is a Many Slendered Orange" is featured.

Wednesday, 2-4; Public Affairs of current concern will be discussed on the Bob (Homily) Kasher Show.

**A GOOD HEAD.**

