

POP MUSIC, a fusion of Rock, Folk, and Blues, did not just come up the Mississippi—it also came down the St. Lawrence.

The Canadian influence on Pop is real if not overwhelming and of the gentle rather than the hard rock variety—in the words of critic John McFarlane of *Maclean's Magazine*, most of the contributions have not been "psychedelic."

The first Canadians to move into the upper reaches of the Billboard LP listings were Ian and Sylvia Tyson with a dozen LP hits including "Four Strong Winds," their Golden Record. Their significant departure from straight Country and Western was sometimes called Country and Northwestern. Joni Mitchell hitch-hiked from Saskatchewan to the Mariposa Folk Festival in 1965 carrying her guitar and her tunes with her own particular lilt, a million miles from Acid Rock.

Gordon Lightfoot, who started as a boy soprano in Orilla, north of Toronto, is Canada's most famous composer-entertainer (famous first in Canada, then in the United States), and his songs are folk-rooted. They went over the border first, as recorded by Peter, Paul and Mary, Harry Belafonte, Judy Collins and others. He was enormously popular in Canada as a singer as well, and in the past year or two his voice has become as familiar in the States as his songs—a rapid blooming, attributable in part perhaps to the law requiring Canadian broadcasting stations to present a definite per cent of Canadian-oriented programming. Station CKLW in Windsor, the heaviest rock station in the Detroit area, featured Gordon. His Warner Bros. album, "If You Could Read My Mind," started at a moderate clip, then took off.

Leonard Cohen, who is a poet first and a composer next, has contributed to the quality of folk rock with such songs as "Suzanne," and Galt MacDermot has scored the ultimate triumph of the age of Aquarius with his music for *HAIR*. Bruce Cockburn contributed the memorable sound track for the film, "Goin' Down the Road."

Neil Young, who works sometimes alone and sometimes with three other independents as part of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, balances, in the words of one critic, "the almost overbearing optimism of Crosby, Stills and Nash. He is the poet in the group. His songs have an eerie depth.

He is the one element that keeps the smooth sound from being slick."

The Canadian group which may have made the most distinct contribution to contemporary music is The Band, which began as The Hawks, backing up Romping Ronnie Hawkins, became the back-up group for Bob Dylan, and then in "Big Pink" simply The Band.

Levon Helm, out of Marvell, Arkansas, the single non-Canadian member, started gathering them together: Rick Danko, who'd been an apprentice butcher in Simcoe; Jaime Robbie Robertson, of Toronto; Richard Manuel from Stratford; and Garth Hudson, from London, Ontario.

"We were playing Atlantic City and Dylan heard about us," Robbie Robertson told an interviewer last year, "and we'd heard about him, of course, but weren't really into that kind of music. Dylan brought us into a whole new thing and I guess he got something from us."

The Band has its own distinctions—the members are gentle, unobtrusive people, not remarkable in dress and antics, and inclined to be low key and appreciative of attention. When they were playing Brooklyn College an enthusiast in the audience shouted "Play all night," and Robbie Robertson replied, seriously, "Send out for sandwiches."

Robertson suggests something of the rural, loose, nonplastic quality which most of the Canadians share.

Talking about The Band's second album, he has been quoted as saying, "There is a theme somehow. It just kind of developed. I don't know how. But it has to do with the idea of harvest. Not about it, but just a feeling. Where we're from in Canada and in Arkansas it means a particular thing. It is a time of year most people feel the best. The moon gets in a certain position. It's Carnival time, school starts, the leaves change, the breeze is different. Everyone gets paid for harvesting the crop. It's a feeling—I mean we didn't do it deliberately."

The Band members, in John MacFarlane's opinion, have changed the life style of a great many Pop performers by being "less like movie stars, more like artists." Others like Neil Young have insisted on remaining private people and independent from the grind of endless one-night stands.

What may be the most famous band out of Canada, Steppenwolf, is an exception to the gen-

