

Interview

Harold Kuckertz

Gordon Lightfoot was tired but pleased after his two-hour concert at the Jubilee Auditorium Tuesday night.

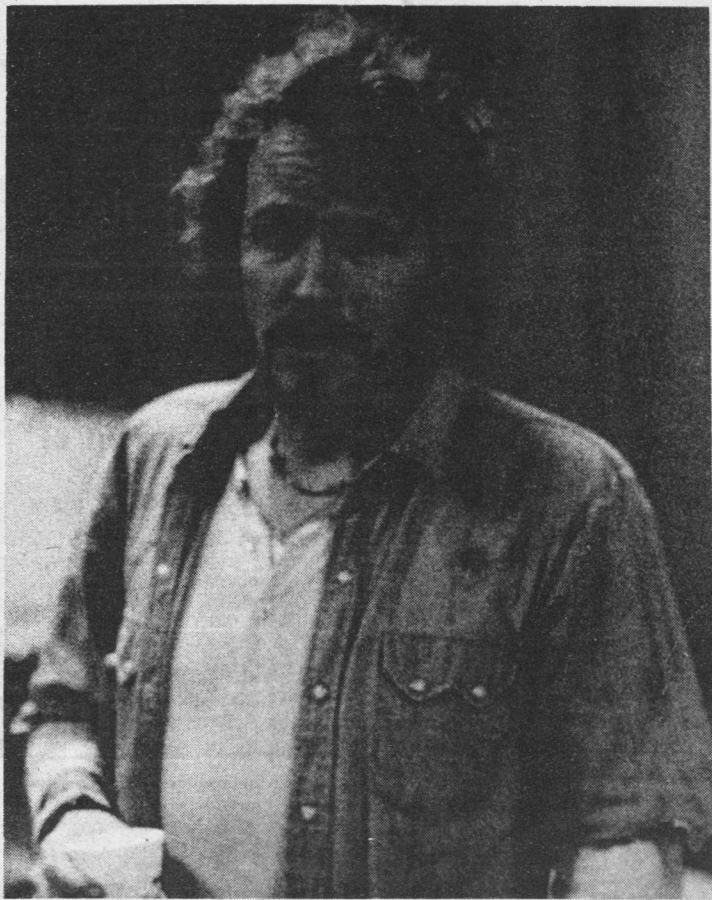
"Tonight was one of the best nights we've had so far. We had a little trouble with tuning on this tour but tonight seemed to be in a little better shape."

Lightfoot especially appreciated the receptive audience reaction which has become some kind of tradition for him in the west.

Canada's folk institution is currently "a hot property" internationally after his huge success of both his *Sundown* single and album. Lightfoot attributes the particular success of *Sundown* to the fact that the song was "a little more suited to the market because it is actually a rock song."

"When you get a hit single is just looks after itself. You just sit back and watch it go. It's something everybody wishes for and hopes that will happen. A hit record is like a bonus really. Nobody knows when it's gonna happen and when it does you feel lucky. After you've done all that work, you made about ten albums, and get a hit single, a real big one like a Number One hit single - It's like a shot in the arm."

Lightfoot; A CANADIAN FOLK INSTITUTION



No one went home disappointed



Relaxed Lightfoot after show

Gordon feels that the success of *Sundown* has broadened his audience. "You get a lot more people interested in what you're doing and that's what you're basically attempting to do. I've always had a good following down in the States and in Canada and *Sundown* is extending it to South Africa, Australia and various other markets. I probably will be able to play in Europe next year."

Lightfoot still enjoys performing some of his earlier material like the "Canadian Railroad Trilogy" and does not find it too difficult to keep them "fresh".

"Good songs stand up no matter how many times you do them. You don't get tired of singing a good song."

For his concerts, Lightfoot picks 27 or 28 songs an evening out of a tour repertoire of about 50 tunes. "I sing them really fast, I like the whole show done in about two hours."

He usually has three or four new songs under way at a time.

"Good ideas come from anywhere but most of it is just plain hard work. For writing songs you sit down, develop your ideas like writing a book. It sometimes does not take as much time writing a song like writing a book but you have to get it together with a basic concept in mind and then sit down to develop the concept."

Tuesday night's concert presented a Lightfoot which was much more open and talkative than usually, a change much appreciated by the audience. Lightfoot attributes his more out-going manner that evening to his particular mood and not a change in image.

"It varies. Some nights I'm really talkative, another night I'm not. Depends on how you feel."

Another change apparent during Tuesday's performance was Lightfoot's use of the piano to accompany two songs. He intends to use the piano more often in the future.

"It seems to be working out pretty well. I have a little trouble playing the piano and trying to remember the words all at the same time. It's like trying to pat your head and rub your stomach at the same time. There are going to be the two piano songs on my next album; the one I played in the first half, 'Bells of the Evening' and the one I wrote for my daughter which was the last song I did."

Gordon's next album will be released in February. "I think it's going to be called 'Cold on the Shoulder' which is another song I didn't sing tonight which I wished I had had time to do."

The zigzagging, hectic schedule of his current tour obviously takes a toll on Lightfoot. After playing in Calgary, Regina and Edmonton, he'll head for Saskatoon on Thursday. His Western tour will be completed by four shows in two days in Vancouver and he's expected to be back in Toronto on the weekend. Despite this strenuous program Lightfoot enjoys the current tour and promises to come back to the west.

"It's a good tour. It's something we do every couple of years and we always get a good response. It's usually sold out."

Judging by his performance on Tuesday, good audience responses seem to be guaranteed for Gordon Lightfoot in the future.

Review:

Excellent artist and performer

For those of you who filled the Jubilee Auditorium to capacity last night and Tuesday evening or those who found out too late to get tickets, I suppose there is no need to say that Gordon Lightfoot was in town. Lightfoot always has a sellout when he comes here. Why? If you saw either show, you'll know.

Gordon Lightfoot is an excellent artist and performer. Tuesday's concert was ample proof of that. The man who is regarded as an institution in Canadian music put on a light, well-balanced show.

The program consisted of a few cuts from his latest albums including the popular "Carefree Highway" and "Sundown". The audience was also treated to a preview of new material from Lightfoot's soon to be released album which is tentatively called "Cold On The Shoulder". And as always, the master played a number of his classics (which he sometimes refers to as "some of the old shit") such as "The Canadian Railroad Trilogy", "Did She Mention My Name," "If You Could Read My Mind," and Kris Kirstofferson's "Me and Bobby McGee".

Drawing from old favorites such as "The Auctioneer", "Alberta Bound," "The Pony Man," and "Divorce - Country Style", he achieved a variety to please any fan. Manipulation of moods throughout the evening allowed Lightfoot to capture the audience in total silence or provide a hand-clapping, foot-tapping involvement.

Despite some sound problems (which, in Calgary, caused a bad press), the opening night press jinx, and a very cold stage temperature (which caused Lightfoot to reappear in the second half with longjohns on), the show was fast paced and professionally performed. Richard Haynes and Terry Clements were very good on the backup guitars.

Lightfoot was also more than creditable on six and twelve string guitars and had a surprise for his followers: After ten albums of playing guitar, Gord had added a piano to his repertoire. Although he says that he still has trouble singing while playing the piano, the indication is that it will be a valuable addition to further enhance Lightfoot's material.

What really made the concert entertaining as a live performance was the easygoing talk and humour Lightfoot employed to keep the audience loose. He made an effort to relate to the local audience ("Is the home team still on fire? - I guess they are - Do they still win all their games") while singing and talking. The facial expressions he used to highlight some of the songs were a delight. This rapport was a treat to the Edmonton audience as he had never before presented a program in such an outgoing manner.

Overall, Tuesday evening's concert was one of a continuing series that Edmonton audiences have come to expect and enjoy when Gordon Lightfoot comes to town. There is little doubt that there were very few, if any, people who went home disappointed.

Jack Cantrell
Timothy A.

Open musical Coliseum on Nov 30

brought to Motown the company changed Steveland Morris' name to Little Stevie Wonder. Stevie joined Motown just as it was burgeoning and the two matured together.

Stevie was ten yours old at that point. Born in Saginaw, Michigan, his family moved to Detroit in his early years. He had all the typical experiences of an "upper lower class" youth. The fact that he was born blind didn't matter, Stevie saw through it better than most men.

Like Ray Charles and Jose Feliciano, Wonder has overcome any disadvantages in his chosen art by negating the fact that his blindness exists.

"I never knew what it was to see, so it's just like seeing. The sensation of seeing is not

one that I have an; not one that I worry about."

Asked what one thing he would desire to see if he had the power to, Wonder exclaimed, "The earth, because it's beautiful and I've already seen it because I feel it."

"The biggest drawback is that I cannot understand how people can be so blind themselves, spiritually blind. How people can be continuously mistreated and still accept it and deal with it and how the mistreaters can continuously get away with it."

The incredible "Fingertips", recorded live, and an album entitled fittingly THE 12 YEAR-OLD GENIUS, made Little Stevie the phenomenon of the year. He never ceased being a

phenomenon (although he shed the "Little" somewhere along the way). Hits kept coming and endless tours began.

"When you are travelling on the road," he reflects, "you have to learn to get to know yourself, always know where you are as a person, what you likes are. I had to learn this at a very young age, and fast."

It is Wonder's interpretive talent that makes every song sound like a personal experience.

"It's real important to the songwriter that you deliver it the way he wrote it," he contends, "that you feel it, that the words mean something, that it is significant of something that he experience; and that's how I write. I write about things that deal with me... things that have

happened... things that are surrounding me."

At 21 (1971), Stevie legally received all of his childhood earnings that had been held by a state-appointed guardian. He also moved out of his family's home to a New York City hotel, got married and did some heavy thinking.

"It was time for a change musically.... Spiritually I had gone as far as I could have gone..." Stevie's total environment transformed.

"I then asked the question again of where am I going, what am I going to do. I had to see and feel what I wanted to do and feel what my destiny was; the direction of destiny anyway. and we got into MUSIC OF MY

continued on page 8