

# record review

Henry Chilko

Gordon Lightfoot: Endless Wire, Warner Bros. KBS 3149

These ten songs on Lightfoot's latest album have the simple lines characteristic of folk music. But if you haven't listened closely of late, the recordings of the Native Son are growing increasingly richly produced. A few numbers herein have even mounted the stairway to symphonic heaven.

The opener, Daylight Katy, might be a stronger single, if it is released, than the song we are hearing (The Circle is Small). Katy has a pleasant Caribbean hook implanted in a cushioned strings-and-guitar sound. It is significant that Lightfoot's contribution to the album as vocalist and guitarist is listed fourth in the credits. Who's first? A Mr. Riley, for his string orchestrations.

The evolution to Symphonic Folk (SF) includes song sections more like movements than stanzas. Nothing in the set is as punchy as Sundown or as strong as the Edmund Fitzgerald. Even in an uptempo piece like Hangdog Hotel Room, a tearing electric guitar lead has been electronically softened and Gordon's voice is somehow disembodied in all the multi-tracking.

It isn't that SF is necessarily evil; just that it is a tricky business making sure the tail doesn't wag the dog. It works well in one caring and cared-for song, If Children Had Wings, where the exotic instrumentation is controlled instead of controlling.

There is something for everyone. Besides the Caribbean SF touch, there is a Motown SF touch (If There's a Reason), a Stonesesque SF touch (Sometimes I Don't Mind), and one that reminds you of the old balladeer Lightfoot (Sweet Guinevere). For years, Lightfoot was famous as the writer who could make good songs without resorting to the tired Boy Loves Girl theme. Two

songs on this album are in a bitter vein of this theme.

The AM hit provides a good indication of the feel of Endless Wire. Lightfoot is commendably challenging more complex musical forms, but sometimes one wishes for simpler productions and sometimes the challenger gets mauled by the studio.

Raunch Radley: Guitar City,

Redita 103  
For every Atkins, Benson and Hendrix there are many guitarists of talent and ability but no recognition. This journeyman (apt term!) of great versatility (acoustic, electric steel and slide) is only reviewed by a stroke of luck. One forgettable evening in Toronto I had been sent by a friend to see a folkette at a dinghy club. It turned out the folkette was endowed extremely but not in a

vocal sense. Radley, to make a long story short, was backing her with his scruffy band and came on with a scorching after-hours set.

The album, although all studio instrumentals, does justice to that memorable evening. Radley, I should inform you, is a 50's purist stuck inside the 70's. His "Rising Sun" reminds you of a Santo and Johny jam session. The jazzy electric piano of Scott Parker (Charlie's younger brother) provides a strangely beautiful counterpoint. Radley does his own tunes too. "Ratfeather Gumbo" is what happens when a gentle soul from Dixie meets Los Angeles: the pedal steel comes at you like a freight train with a razor blade for a cow-catcher.

There are fourteen tunes, recording the pulse of 7 other cities. They range from "Pineapple

Blues", which is a cross pollination of Nashville and Honolulu much truer than Prssley's "Blue Hawaii", to Fahey-like blues and a rockin' version of the usually depressing standard "Motherless Children". Radley is much more famous in Europe, as often happens with artists too sensitive for North American mass-produced stardom. Still, Raunch somehow persuaded name musicians like L.J. Haggett, Pittman Putnam, Andrew Winston and Hank Davis to join him. The steady slap bass of the latter was more refreshing in his age of omnipresent Fenders.



## THREE MINI-WINNERS

Janny Jung  
Simon Fraser  
University  
Vancouver, B.C.

Mariette Stoop  
George Brown College  
Toronto, Ontario



Debra Evans  
Saint John School of Nursing  
Saint John, N.B.

Congratulations on having won a brand new Mini, the Long Distance economy car. We hope you have many years of enjoyable driving. And thanks to the 48,427 other students who participated.

**Long Distance**  
TransCanada Telephone System

## LONG DISTANCE SWEEPSTAKES