

Chet invited me to call by his office at RCA the next day to take a look at his collection of classical guitar music and vintage instruments. A reporter from *The Canadian* magazine, a national weekly that was stuffed into Saturday newspapers across the country, was writing "Scarlati in Nashville," a story on my trip, and tagged along to cover my meeting with Atkins. Chet listened attentively to a few of my pieces, offered compliments, then asked if I could teach him how to get his tremolo to sound more even. The legendary country picker, who could also get his fingers around a number of classical pieces, seemed pleased to share guitar tips and exchange stories about classical players we both knew. It was the beginning of an enduring friendship based on respect for each other's artistry, even though our styles and repertoire were different. *The Canadian* magazine put my photo on their cover and dubbed me "The First Lady of the Guitar," a title that has accompanied me ever since. My star had begun to ascend.

Television appearances on everything from talk shows hosted by Juliette, Elwood Glover, Laurier LaPierre, and Bob McLean, to "Celebrity Cooks" and "Good Morning, Seattle" helped expand my audiences. But Chet Atkins was responsible for my first major U.S. television exposure by recommending me to the "Today" show, where I was interviewed on my career by Gene Shalit. Just as I was about to step in front of the lights, one of the friendly camera operators whispered, "Play well, Liona, twenty million people are watching you." I could have hit him with my fret-board for his poor sense of timing! The CBC gave me a prime-time TV special, on which I played St. Preux's "Concerto pour une Voix" and duets with Hagood Hardy and Chet Atkins, and bantered with the Canadian Brass and David Clayton-Thomas. Television had become a great way for my classical guitar to reach a wider public than even Segovia could have imagined.

Ed Oscapeila, having been offered a position with the Canada Council, disbanded his office. I decided to sign on with Haber Artists, an ambitious new agency formed by the former manager of the