



# Gems from Canadian pop:

BY ALAN NIESTER

The scene unfolds with a spirited round of "oo bop oo bop baa-by." The ooboppers are two portly, balding, and bespectacled gentlemen in business suits, being interviewed in a trendy outdoor garden restaurant. They obviously enjoy reminiscing for the camera after so many years away from the spotlight.

Cut to the late fifties — an old segment from the original Steve Allen Tonight Show. The same pair, virtually unrecognizable without their specs and middle-aged girth, are seen with the rest of their vocal group, The Diamonds, wowing the teens with Little Darlin', their number one hit.

Vintage film footage and revealing, up-to-date glimpses like this typify a three-hour retrospective of the Cana-

dian pop music industry called Heart of Gold (Part 1 airs on CBC Sunday night at 7:30, Part 2 on Monday night at 8, and the conclusion Tuesday night at 8). It is an extensive and compelling documentary.

Executive producer John Brunton has scoured film archives from Los Angeles to Ottawa to London and back again to put together the exhaustive documentary, and the results are a pop musicologist's dream. We see clips of a young Paul Anka singing Diana for a crowd of swooning high-schoolers; a youthful Neil Young doing Heart of Gold for a BBC special; an old promo shot of the young Guess Who miming These Eyes while standing in a wheat field; Gordon Lightfoot, one-half of The Two Timers, performs Marianne on an amateur hour-type show; and a wonderfully naive-looking **Joni Mitchell**, all buck-toothed innocence, performs The Circle Game. And there is much, much more.

It makes for a highly interesting trip down memory lane, but piecing the bits together was no picnic. "Getting all this archival footage together wasn't easy," relates Brunton. "In the pioneer days of television, they didn't save very much of the videotape. Trying to find certain segments became something of a disaster. Footage of the Crewcuts, for example, turned out to have been stolen from The Ed Sullivan Show files. The Diamonds piece was found under a



Clockwise from left are: Loverboy; Paul Anka; Carole Pope and Kevan Staples of Rough Trade; Neil Young; The Diamonds; **Joni Mitchell**; Lovin' Spoonful: no picnic finding footage.



## Heart of Gold mines magic

pile of dust in a corner of Steve Allen's office. And the footage of Neil Young singing Heart of Gold cost me a small fortune, but I had to have it. Its theme is the whole heart of the show."

Besides vintage film fragments, Brunton, producer Iain Paterson and director Peter Shatalow brought together a few of the performers for musical reunions. They create moments almost as interesting as the archival footage. There's a wonderful segment of a still goofy but rounder Zal Yanovsky, with the ever studious-looking John Sebastian, grinning and picking through an updated version of Did You Ever Have To Make Up Your Mind? (They also explain how that song came into being.) Former husband and wife Ian and Sylvia come together for a new version of Four Strong Winds. "Although they couldn't know it at the time, that song was very predictive of how their lives would be," explained Brunton. "It turned out to be a very dramatic moment. Some of our crew were in tears before it was over."

The documentary takes in all that time limitations allow. Brunton conceded that a major problem in putting the show together was not so much what to put in as what to leave out. (My own best-remembered piece of footage, however — a segment on The Paupers that appeared on the old CBC after-school show After Four — didn't make

it. The After Four tapes were erased long ago. "They didn't keep any of that footage," Brunton complained.)

Even so, there is lots to marvel at — from the early days of The Diamonds, Crewcuts and Four Lads all the way through to Loverboy, Rush, Saga and Rough Trade.

"It's more than just a television show, after all," explained Brunton. "For many of us, it's a document of our own lives."



On the cover painting, Neil Young is at top, immediately below him are **Joni Mitchell** and Gordon Lightfoot, with (left to right) Geddy Lee of Rush, Carole Pope and Burton Cummings.