

something that most Canadian bands did not have.

However, by the end of the decade, Rough Trade's eccentricities were eclipsed by the antics of a younger generation of punks, and the band had yet to record on a major label. In 1980, when Pope and Staples signed with an independent record company, True North Records, it was not a deal that excited a lot of expectations.

Remarkably, with *Avoid Freud*, their first True North album, Pope and Staples managed to sell their distinctly Toronto-bred sensibility across Canada. Pope's outlandishness packed a wallop among teenage record buyers in the suburbs but was regarded by some former fans as passé. Marcia Cannon, a 22-year-old Toronto performance artist, was 17 and entranced by Pope when she first saw her sing in an Ottawa bar. Today Cannon performs a scathing satire of Pope in Toronto art galleries and bars. As "Carole Toronto," Pope is portrayed as a charlatan obsessed with fashion. After reading about toxic chemicals in local drinking water, Carole Toronto exclaims, "I just shuddered to think of what it could be doing to my hair." Pope was chosen as a target, Cannon explains, because "people take her persona much too seriously."

By 1981 Pope was taken seriously enough to be awarded a Juno as Most Promising Female Vocalist in Canada. And, last April, although she lost in the

Female Vocalist of the Year category, she did accept the award on behalf of Anne Murray. Says Murray of her surprise stand-in: "I just thought it was a neat idea. I think she's outrageously talented, and she was exactly the person most people would not expect to see."

Indeed, nothing could be further from the image of Anne Murray, clean-living homebody, than that of Carole Pope, who has been more sexually explicit on-stage than many people have been in the boudoir. But offstage she is shy and discreet. Her private nature is concealed behind exaggerated ironies and accents, one minute imitating Mae West, the next a drawling cowpoke. Animator Tim Blanks, one of a small circle of confidants, says: "Some perceive her as standoffish and aloof. It's just that she warms to you very slowly. When she does, she is a very, very true friend. In that respect, she's a lot more English than people realize."

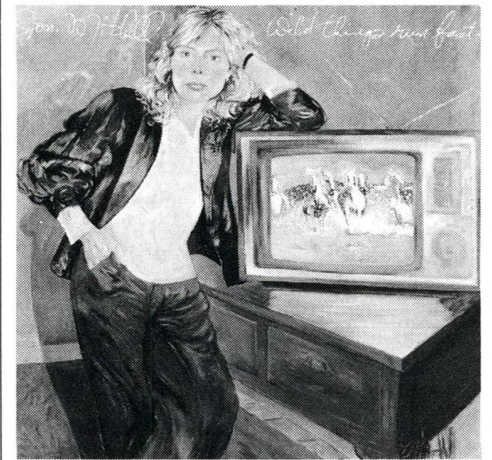
Pope was born in England, moved with her family to Canada around 1950, attended a suburban Toronto high school, and upset her parents by moving downtown. After trying, she says, "to find the meaning of life through acid," she worked in commercial art and animation houses and met Kevan Staples at an audition for a band in 1968. Although she acknowledges that she and Staples were lovers and is aware that bisexual references in her lyrics arouse speculation as to her personal pleasures, Pope puts a limit on biographical revelation. "I don't think it's anybody's business what I do. I'm sure there are a million stories about my sex life, but I think that's part of my mystique. Keep them guessing."

Pope's sexual mystique does not dominate Rough Trade the way it used to. On *Shaking the Foundations*, she delivers not only shock but substance. The title song is a call for political alertness. *America: Bad and Beautiful* is about nothing more racy than cultural imperialism. That is not to say, however, that she has abandoned the wild side of life. "Tanned bodies bathed in sweat," "a bloodstained pillow," and "the gun still smoking" all figure in the first cut. In that way Carole Pope remains true in her fashion. And in a land where government reports on the CBC make up showbiz chatter and Pierre Berton's bow ties count as style, such fashion is not to be snubbed. ♣

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FOR THE RECORD

In pursuit of love



WILD THINGS RUN FAST
Joni Mitchell
(Geffen/WEA)

This is an album about time, the trouble with men (they just want to make tracks) and, mostly, love. Love longed for and enjoyed—"solid love," "precious, precious love," "real sweet love." The first song, *Chinese Café*, is a sad piano-based reflection on the coming of middle age, but, while acknowledging that the wild "birth of rock 'n' roll days" are past and done, Mitchell recalls lingering refrains, and the tune drifts into *Unchained Melody*, with its still-pertinent plea, "God speed your love to me." The last song is a paraphrase of Corinthians 1:13, which tells of the putting away of childish things, but, for the Bible's more social ideal of charity, Mitchell substitutes "the greatest beauty," love. While the lyrical themes are unified, the musical styles are diverse. The title cut opens with a rush of guitar chords that could have come from Joan Jett. *Man to Man* is a free-form samba, and *(You're So Square) Baby, I Don't Care*, a Leiber and Stoller 1950s dance tune, and the exuberant *Underneath the Streetlight* are jukebox jivey. Similarly, the language is loose, less bookish than usual and typified by short vernacular phrases such as "We got a chance/Hot dog darlin'." Those who count on Mitchell for poetry may find this album undisciplined and slight. However, for those who can take inspiration from an intelligent woman accepting adulthood and continuing to believe in the power of rock 'n' roll and the possibility of love, "We got a chance/Hot dog darlin'" cannot be anything but a welcome encouragement. —DAVID LIVINGSTONE

Pope and Staples with backup musicians, 1981: consumerism, fascism, sex and more sex



ZONTAI/GENERAL IDEA

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