

Joni Mitchell Delights Her Audience

By Lee Wilkins
(News Music Reviewer)

A live performance of every cut on her new album "Court and Spark" was Joni Mitchell's gift to a delighted Hill Auditorium crowd Saturday night.

Obviously there to see "Joni," the capacity audience greeted the few familiar numbers the songstress performed with immediate applause and granted the new numbers unrestrained enthusiasm throughout the two-hour concert.

Seeing Mitchell live, one is impressed with the awesomeness of her vocal instrument and the true struggle this introspective personality must go through each time she sets foot on stage to perform her highly personal music.

Saturday night, Mitchell sang everything with an ease

that dominated all her instrumental work. Not for her the job of some like Judy Collins who has only an average voice that must be coaxed for a little something special.

Mitchell's range and power were superlative as she blunted the edge on her upper register to blend that part of her voice with her lower range.

A technically excellent job of scatting on a little voice-guitar riff exchange with band member Robin Ford on "You Turn Me On" was but one of many easy evidences of her tremendous vocal talent.

Unlike Collins, however, Mitchell never really warmed to the audience. She doesn't have the kind of personality that enjoys exhibiting itself in front of a lot of people — a point she made before launching into a song from the new release that tells of her "frightened silence" during a party a lot of "socially prominent" people attended. Mitchell is a song writer — not an entertainer — and the whole performance gives the viewer a distinct impression that Mitchell believes having revealed so much of herself in her music, it is only right she keep the audience at arm's length.

The vast majority of tunes from the new album were performed much as they were recorded with little added nuance. One exception was "Twisted," a 1950's era jazz number which Mitchell

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recorded — as has Bette Midler. On the album, the songs seem heavy, as if Mitchell believed much of what she sang. But Saturday night, she upped the tempo and gave the lyrics a lighter touch — bringing out the latent humor in lines like "my analyst told me that I was out of my head . . . two heads are better than one."

She did few numbers from early albums — the exceptions being "Both Sides Now" which was made a hit by Judy Collins, and "Big Yellow Taxi." On that number, Mitchell added a new third verse which paraphrased went something like "construction workers and tractors took away my house and my land." After a new addition, she sang the better known ending to the tune.

She also performed "Woodstock" and the audience would have been thrilled to have heard more than the one encore she performed.

Mitchell was provided with a fine backup group, Tom Scott and the L.A. Express, who in their opening numbers proved to be more jazz oriented than accompanying Mitchell would have indicated.

Scott on woodwinds did a superb job of blending reedy

harmonies into Mitchell's voice and the group excelled at livening up tight arrangements.

The introspective aspect of Mitchell's music influences

her live presentations tremendously and while her performance was excellent it was obvious the audience had a better time than the performer.

U Students' Poems To Be Published

Four U-M creative writing students will have winning poems appearing in a book, "Intro 6," to be published by Doubleday in August.

The students and their poems are: Mary Brita Bergland, a junior in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, from Weldon, Ill., "Flower Picking in Vermont"; Joseph Salerno, a graduate student and teaching fellow in English, from Saddle Brook, N.J., "Epithalamium/Night"; Kerry Thomas, a graduate student from Clare, "The Wallace Stevens/King Kong Correspondence"; and David Tucker, a graduate student from Linden, Tenn., "White Flowers."

Miss Bergland won first prize in minor poetry in the U-M Hopwood Contest in 1973; Salerno won a second prize of \$1,500 in major poetry in the Hopwood Contest in 1970; and Tucker won third prize of \$500 in major poetry in the Hopwood Contest in 1973.

The "Intro 6" competition is conducted by Associated Writing Programs (AWP), a national organization of individual teachers, writers and educational institutions concerned with the teaching of creative writing.

In a letter to the Hopwood Committee, George Garrett, president of AWP, states, "The competition for space was especially rough this year, and surprisingly so, since we had time only for short notice and a very early deadline. I received submissions from the directors of writing programs at 90 colleges and universities. And a very large part of this work was of genuinely high quality. I am as dazed as I am impressed. That you all should end up with more people than anyone else speaks very well for the health and energy of your program."

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