

Joni: Love and Life

Joni Mitchell/*Hejira*/Asylum 7E-1087

By Marguerite Ortega

It is a rare occasion when I find a female artist with as much depth as Joni Mitchell. Her voice articulates every word, every note—to get exactly the meaning she wants.

Her motto for the past nine years has been quality...releasing an album once a year around Christmas. Her present release *Hejira* still holds true to her past style, but it's not as diversified. It can get confusing at times, compared to previous releases. Every song seems to be preoccupied with traveling, and many of the lyrics relate to her past life and loves.

Joni has made quite a transition since her beginning in '68. She has progressed through folk and jazz, with always a smattering of variety in her songs. "For the Roses," her 1972 release, was a listener's treat. It is no wonder other artists, such as Roger McGuinn, use her material.

It is fascinating how much her music resembles a jigsaw puzzle. Anyone can put the pieces together in a different way. In the back of my mind whenever I hear one of her songs and listen—really listen—to the lyrics and music, I wonder what

on earth triggered her to relate her life to that of a "Coyote" (one of the cuts off her album).

I suppose there was an incident or impression left in her mind at one time or another that caused her to use a "Coyote" or a "Black Crow" (another cut off the album) as the base of a song to come.

It is nothing short of astonishing



how she comes up with a tune. I was slightly disappointed, though, (and a little bored) at the angle she took on this particular album. Usually she has much more variety,

and a person who has never listened to her before would appreciate her music and could easily find something to relate to.

This album tends to be mundane in places, but it definitely has good songs, too: "A Strange Boy," "Song for Sharon," "Blue Motel Room."

I found "Song for Sharon" engrossing because, just when I thought I had it figured out, she would throw me for a loop—with a word or another phrase—that I couldn't possibly see any connection to.

The best thing to do with any Joni Mitchell tune or album is to listen to it while not doing much of anything a couple of times. After a while, it makes more sense and a listener enjoys it more.

What is interesting to note is that when she progressed more to rock in the '70's with "You Turn Me On I'm a Radio," "Big Yellow Taxi," her music was more popularly played on the radios and she was more easily identified with her music. But once she got in more soul-searching songs—"Refuge of the Roads" (another cut off the album) she wasn't splashed on the radio every five minutes.

If Joni Mitchell is already a favorite, this album will be appreciated. One reason: a listener has already tailored herself to her music. But if she has not yet entered herself in your record collection, give it a chance, don't reject the album off the stereo or pass it by in a store for another album because it gets a little heavy at times.

She is an emotional writer-musician blending her feelings, thoughts, opinions, and everything else into a song. Definitely making it an invitation to listen.

"A" for Styx Disc

Crystal Ball/Styx/A&M SP-4604

Review by George Gesner

Born in Racine, nurtured in Chicago and taking the world, Styx is becoming one of the top American bands. *Crystal Ball* is the finest album to date for the band that encompasses the styles of top English bands and takes their music one step further.

The group's vocals have a shade of Yes and the style is more concrete on the first cut "Put Me On."

The single is "Mademoiselle." The song is fashioned after the giant hit "Lady" with brilliant

"Jennifer," a powerful rocker about a girl trapped between two worlds; "A child in her mother's eyes but a woman every night."

The Stygians (Dennis DeYoung, Chuck and John Panozzo, James Young and Tommy Shaw) have two numbers, "Crystal Ball" and "This Old Man," thap slow down the pace a bit. The tunes are a fusion of melodic ballad and rock energy that proved be successful for such groups as Queen, Uriah Heep and Kansas (American group).

The piano solo sets the mood for "Ballerina" that starts slow and

Delicious
Sweet
Pronto
Café

1

6