

venue Friday, October 12, 2007

MUSIC  17JONI MITCHELL 

"Shine"

Joni Mitchell

★ ★ ★ ½

Joni Mitchell's new album, "Shine," is one of her more serious and emotional works, which is saying a lot.

The heavier-toned, striking 10-song collection that's all composed, arranged and produced by Mitchell has the legendary singer/songwriter laying her political heart on the line. She dives in and out of provocative topics that span



from the Iraqi war, to overpopulation, to saving the planet from the nonstop raid of tech-

nology.

Steeped in folk and jazz, "Shine" brings out Mitchell's rich melodies and boasts both her timeless vocal and lyrical range on cuts like "This Place." This save-the-Earth track, which takes on a pro-environmental fighting and protective stance, is passionately sung by Mitchell and includes bold lyrics like, "When I get to heaven, if it is not like this, I'll just hop a cloud and I'm coming right back down here."

Another powerful track on "Shine" along that thread is "If I Had a Heart," which bears a message of "if people thought twice about the Earth, it wouldn't be in the state that it's in."

But "Shine" isn't just all gloom. Sure, it broods, it's honest, it's provoking, but Mitchell softens up, too.

She slips into lovely, elegant tracks like "One Week Last Summer," an instrumental song that's laced with rhythmic guitar, piano and sax and soaked

in vibrant harmonies. "Bad Dreams" and "Shine," two Billie Holiday-esque tunes, have such a timeless sound, you would think they were standards written in the late 1940s.

A few upbeat songs like "Hana," a jazzy tune, and the last track, "If," which has a nice rhythmic Caribbean lilt, completes the folk-roots composer's bittersweet, gorgeous collection.

— Nathalie Baret