

Singer Joni Mitchell paints album in 'Turbulent Indigo'

Joni Mitchell

"Turbulent Indigo," Reprise Records.
Reviewed by staff writer Diana Penner.

★★★ Joni Mitchell smolders on this album — there's a thick-brush-stroke, Van Gogh kind of anger and passion about it. It's the style she evokes when she paints, and samples are included in the jacket design. Musically, that fuel mostly works dramatically well, as on *The Magdalene Laundries*; rarely, as with *Sex Kills*, it is flattish and unlikely to hold up over time.

The title song, a pounding paean to the painter, captures the mood most descriptively: "You see him with his shotgun there? Bloodied in the wheat? Oh want do you know about living in Turbulent Indigo?"

Not to Blame tackles domestic violence, and it doesn't gloss over the ugliness. In the '70s, Mitchell frequently included signature story-songs, following a character or two through an encounter that felt universal after she sang it; *Yvette in English* has that kind of familiar quality.

On the final song, *The Sire of Sorrow (Job's Sad Song)*, Mitchell draws the painful poetry out to more than seven minutes, a rarity in music today. And it's worth sticking with the song. Mitchell's development of the story may not be clear, per se, but lyrics like "Already on a bed of sighs and screams, and still you torture me with visions" evoke a mood, if not a crystal clear picture. Kind of like Van Gogh.



Reprise Records

MUSICAL ARTIST: Joni Mitchell sings story-songs in tuneful brushstrokes.

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