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# Joni Mitchell: beautiful

By MIKE O'CONNOR  
Joni Mitchell is beautiful—I finally came to that much-pondered conclusion this week after completely and happily absorbing her new album "For the Roses," on Asylum records.

Unhappily, she is also difficult to write about. I could write a short verse, but it would never do justice to her. I could write a short review but it would never begin to penetrate the depth of her melodic soul. I could write a lengthy essay, tearing her lyrics to pieces, line by line and examining every word in search of her work's essence; but that too would fall short of capturing Joni Mitchell, because her most delightful and alluring trait is not in pretentious depth or deadening weight of material, but in her unique ability to add a light, dancing, louch like that of a small girl, to everything she writes and performs.

Maybe my tastes have changed, or rather mellowed, since my half-baked experiments in folk-music several years ago. At that time (and in a large part now) most of the "folkies" were high-minded types who found little security in modern society and a great deal of it in the past.

We must have some tradition, we thought, and with that hundreds of bearded and guitared grad students went searching for America's past through its music. The result was a glut of simple-minded "folk-songs," usually accompanied with a footnote "Trad. Arrangement."

This was all very "impressive" while it lasted. The hootnanny craze fed the fire for a few months but ultimately and harmfully, exposed the movement to be as shallow as the television networks that aired the folk-singing shows.

Those who survived this "tradition mania" were then lost in the clanging and shrieking of hard-metal rock. The flower power people came into view and seemed to profess the same qualities and beliefs as the folkies who survived, but unfortunately acid trips only lasted a few hours.

Fortunately for us, however, Joni Mitchell has lasted through all of this. She sings about her life and every new quirk and new turn it presents. She is an incredible intellect, spiced with emotions that sometimes seem childish in their purity.

She seems perfectly capable of understanding her emotions and she is just as capable of portraying

them through words. Much as Van Gogh displayed astounding artistic detachment, Joni Mitchell seems to be able to rise above her own human frailties and emotions and write about them, even though she seems to be more subject to them than most.

And, it is grossly unfair on my part or any critics part, to classify her as strictly a folk artist. This misconception has too long kept many from truly enjoying her work. She is not one to throw into the same burlap bag with such people as Judy Collins, Bob Dylan and the like. The association is easily made and too easily retained.

She is a musician, full of unfamiliar and wonderful nuances. Her Canadian-bred voice is husky, airy, loving and demandingly self-assured. It is dry, humorous, rich, romantic and erotic; it is sad, painful and anguished. It is a voice that paints with the ease of a brush, clear and accurate, yet colorfully tinted pictures of her life and those around her.

The sheer exuberance of "Woodstock" and "Chelsea Morning" or the pathos of "Blue"—all this is Joni Mitchell. (That sounds like a liner note, one of these days I'll learn how to write "good stuff")

"For the Roses" demands complete attention. The music and the blur of lyrics come across as nice background music, but that is a prostitution of her talent. She comments on it in the title song.



...the company-They toss around your latest golden egg-Speculation - well who's to know-If the next one in the nest-Will glitter for them so.

It fits not only the record execs but maybe even the vast majority of those who "dig" Joni Mitchell.

Remember the days when you used to sit-And make up your tunes for love-And pour your simple sorrow-To the soundhole and your knee-And now you're seen-On giant screens-And at parties for the press-And for people who have slices of you-From the company.

Indeed, as she says later in the song, she seems to be biting the hand that feeds her.

"Now I sit up here-The critic," she says. What a puzzling way to live, but not a bad one at that, she seems to add with a tinge of regret.

More songs questioning her very life-style are to be found. In "Let the Wind Carry Me" she is the wandering soul who will

never be tied down. A walking, breathing cliché, yet a reality in her case. "Sometimes I get that feeling-And I want to settle-And raise a child up with somebody-I get that strong longing-And I want to settle and raise up a child with somebody-But it passes like the summer-I'm a wild seed again-Let the wind carry me."

The simple lyrics are devastating when put to a Joni Mitchell melody.

Youth is too sweet to waste she says, yet is she actually wasting her time pursuing the life of the romantic fool?

If you stop and listen to her music; put down your book and put down your television; you will be rewarded with sweet love stories and wonderful tales set to equally tasty music.

Other songs on the album are comments on her world—all with the insight and desirable aloofness of a troubled princess.

Carry on Joni Mitchell. You have at least one new fan, and hopefully many more after "For the Roses."



# Glynis Johns takes tradition

EDITOR'S NOTE — Glynis Johns, that atomized dynamo of theatrical versatility, that little bit of England that captured American hearts, that sceptered lady from that sceptered isle, has carried her family's footlight tradition one more step. Guess what?

"It is," she observes with the careful precision that goes with apparent total recall, "my first stage musical since I grew up."

The show, to clear possible confusion, has nothing to do with Mozart's renowned divertimento, instead is based upon Ingmar Bergman's 1956 film

Such basis training, she feels, was of value far beyond mere terpsichore later on.

Her infantile induction into the entertainment world occurred in Pretoria, South Africa, where her parents were on tour with a family troupe that had been founded in Australia two