

Mitchell soothes audience with warm, intimate concert

By DALE ADAMSON
Cougar Staff

It's hard to write about Joni Mitchell.

Her songs are so intensely personal and her performances so intimately executed that any coldly typewritten review seems a betrayal of sorts—some kind of kiss-and-tell travesty.

But she's in the public eye. And, as her concert Sunday night in Hofheinz Pavilion proved, she can withstand the scrutiny, as well as the adulation, of several thousand fans in a single gathering.

With her thin face and sharply defined cheekbones, Mitchell strode unceremoniously on stage after a brief introductory set by her back-up band, Tom Scott and the L.A. Express. In her not-yet-

faded jeans and frilly peasant-white blouse, she hardly looked the role of the superstar.

In fact, she looked downright fragile—pale and small and more than a little apprehensive in front of the massive crowd of admirers.

But the apprehension faded quickly after a few timidly-performed songs like "You Turn Me On (I'm a Radio)" and "Same Situation."

Loosening up, acclimating herself to the crowd, she eased smoothly through her repertoire of songs like the bouncy "Big Yellow Taxi" and the sardonic "For Free."

Mitchell's primary asset—besides her skill as a songwriter—is her remarkably versatile voice. Her sturdy soprano can soar over a crowd—lifting it high with pure lungpower—or settle down

warmly like a soft, satin-lined blanket.

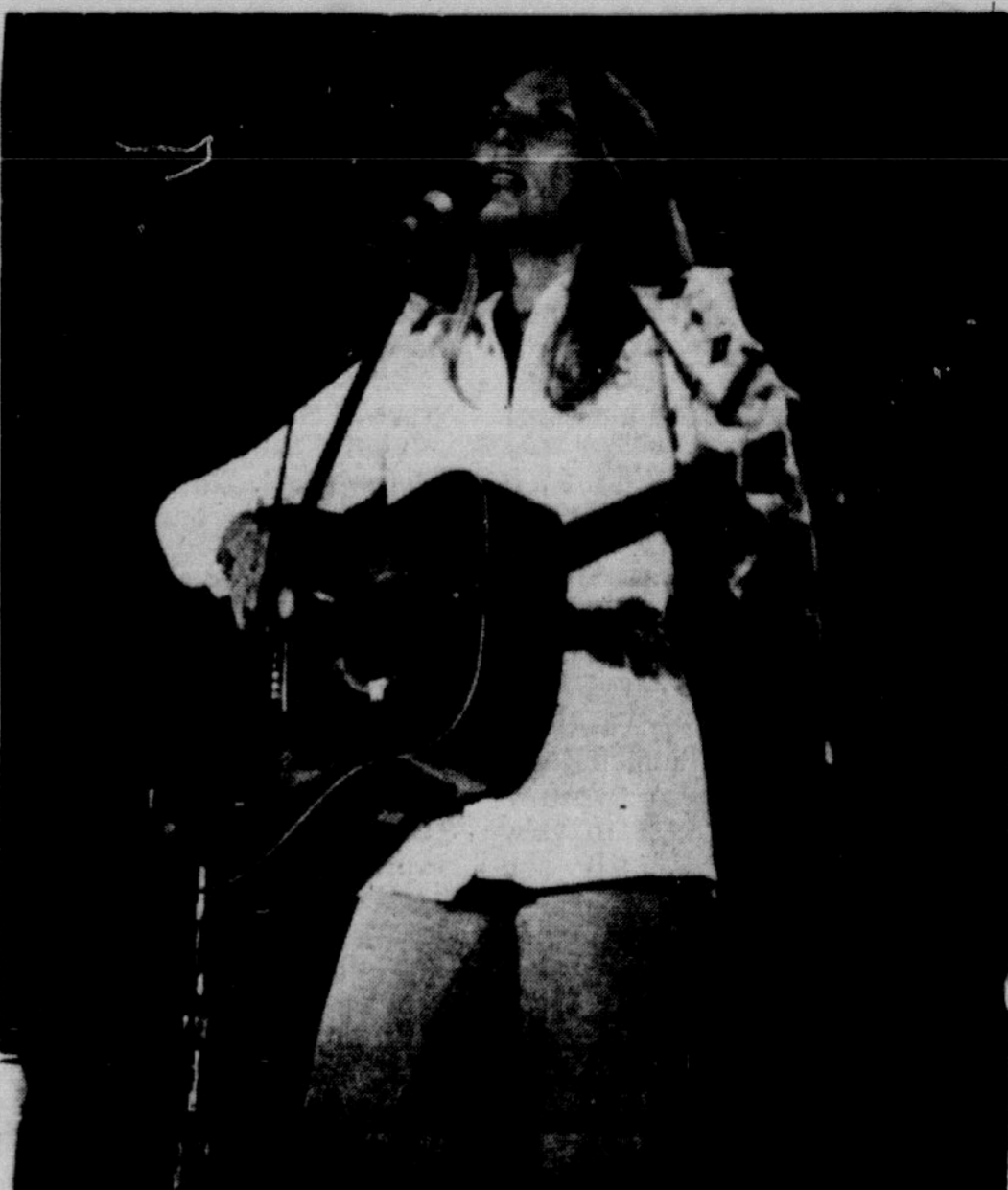
It can be harsh, as in her haunting rendition of "Woodstock" when she almost coughs the line, "I've come here to loose the smog"—or gently loving when in "Blue" she croons in a whispery vibrato, "Blue, I lo-o-ove you," stretching each word into long silky syllables.

She did it all Sunday night and the crowd belonged to her, responding to her rock 'n' rollin' "Raised on Robbery" with a standing ovation as respectful as it was enthusiastic.

Yet it hadn't been a night of "boogying." Far from it.

It was more thoughtful... more of a reflection. Mitchell had summed up the mood perfectly earlier when, in her classic "Both Sides Now," she subtly altered the lyrics, tailoring them to a more mature songwriter-performer and aiming them at a more mature audience.

"They tell me that I've changed. Yes, I have!" she sang affirmatively, then closed the song with a less pretentious statement on life, "I really don't know..."



DALE ADAMSON—Cougar Staff

JONI MITCHELL, in her long-awaited first Houston appearance, overpowered the space of Hofheinz Pavilion Sunday night to deliver a thoughtful, reflective and highly personal concert experience to a sold-out houseful of fans.

Goose Creek stomps, puppy fears for life

By LEON BECK
Cougar Staff

A little brown dog wandered around Liberty Hall Sunday night apparently dazed at the kicking, jubilant crowd and concerned that Goose Creek Symphony could ignite an audience into such a frenzy that it would be a suicidal mission for a pup to cross the floor.

Stomping, clapping and screaming, the roar of the crowd brought the Symphony back again

and again to quench their frenzied appetite.

Goose Creek Symphony is a traveling band of modern-day troubadours who stomped, clapped and had a rousing good time pickin' their guitars and playing their fiddles. Their music is a blend of honky tonk rock 'n' roll and country swing. To define their music is futile because with their sax, banjo, fiddle and guitars they run the gamut from a song like "Mountain Dew" and the rockin' "Teresa" to a little bit of "Liza Jane" and a Willie Nelson tune from their upcoming album.

The Last Mile Ramblers, a New Mexico group of semi-cowboys in western garb, utilized the vocal skill of two of their members to give excellent treatment to two Waylon Jennings numbers—"She's a Good Hearted Woman" and "We Had It All."

Their specialty is country music, some bluegrass and a touch of Texas swing. Their "Hot Rod Lincoln" was too fast and the words became slurred as the music became increasingly loud.

"Yonder Comes the Freight Train" effectively imitated the chug-chug-clickity-clack sound of a freight train and, along with "Ghost Riders in the Sky," the group demonstrated the tremendous power of their instruments.

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