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Joni Leaves Them Grateful

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Inquirer Entertainment Writer

Joni Mitchell is a star.

With the grace and tenderness of a poet, the self-realization of a woman who repeatedly looks for and finds herself and the infinite skill of a musician, Joni Mitchell is one of those rare moments in entertainment in which sitting back and letting the music flow through you is enough.

Wednesday night at Temple University Music Festival in Ambler was the first of a two-night engagement for Ms. Mitchell, the only concert in the season which had been sold out in advance.

Her 4,000-strong audience were unquestionable devotees. They had bought their tickets months ago, bought and listened to her albums since the late sixties, could sing out her lyrics unfalteringly and clap to each of her songs before three chords rang from her guitar.

There was no frenzy in Ambler Wednesday night. Joni Mitchell, like her music, has a serenity and sophistication that prohibits orgiastic outbursts. The response is more one of recognition and grati-



JONI MITCHELL
... reaching out

tude: "I can feel the emotions she's going through," remarked 24-year-old Linda Puechl. "I've seen some of the same places."

The places Joni Mitchell sees are a landscape of human emotions where her mind and heart travel hand in hand. In her opening number, "Free Man in Paris" (from her latest album, "Court and Spark"), Joni

Mitchell swayed into her guitar and sang, "I deal in dreamers and telephone screamers. Lately, I wonder what I do it for."

At her concert however, there was no doubt about the total musicianship of her own talents, nor those of her band, "Tom Scott and the L. A. Express." It was one cohesive collaboration of skills well rehearsed, well refined. Ms. Mitchell and her band were consistently realized counterparts to one another.

For over two and a half hours Ms. Mitchell performed songs that have been peak moments in her musical history. From the lyrical "Both Sides Now," to the rocking "Yellow Taxi," back again to "Woodstock," and on to the blues lullaby, "A Case of You," she moved gracefully through the moods and their accompanying sounds.

Accompanying herself on acoustic guitar, piano and

dulcimer, and sometimes unaccompanied, her voice skimmed the deep and high notes like soft, powerful waves. And while there's a sameness to many of her songs, there's no feeling she's too timid to explore.

Joni Mitchell isn't just a poet-folksinger from Canada anymore. She's steadily progressed into the popular songstress who can just as easily wear satin pantsuits and long chiffon gowns and have a jazz-oriented band following her every step of the way.

The poetry is still there. She holds her arms by her sides with her palms stretched to the audience. She implores listeners to come with her as she closes her eyes to see the music she's making.

"You're in my blood like honey wine," she sings to the blue-lit audience. "I could drink a case of you down and still I'd be on my feet."

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