

THE ARTS

New Joni Mitchell just what we need —another rock star

By Jack Lloyd
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Sooner or later, so it would seem, the bill comes. Even on the highest levels of pop art. And on Monday night at Spectrum Joni Mitchell's fans paid the price for her emergence as one of the monumental artists in pop music. Joni Mitchell became a rock music star.

First appearing many years ago in these parts at the Main Point in Bryn Mawr — it was called "folk" music in those days, friends — Mitchell progressed in recent years to concerts at the Academy of Music

And in this setting, she was responsible for some of the most memorable pop music events ever experienced here.

But things were somewhat different at the Spectrum. This time around, the coming of Joni Mitchell was more of a pop music event than a concert.

Backed by the heavy-handed L. A. Express (minus founder Tom Scott), Mitchell's lyrics—among the most sensitive and sensible written during the past eight or nine years—were frequently misplaced items in the rumble of sound, resulting from a

mix that made the instrumentalists at least equal partners in this business.

Adding somewhat to the annoyance of things was the pretense of performing within the "Spectrum Theater" structure—meaning that a large curtain was drawn across either side of the stage—to simulate the "look" of a theater atmosphere. The problem here was that all but those who had a straight-on view of the stage were unable to see the musicians behind Mitchell. And there were even those who had to stretch

a little to get a glimpse of the evening's star.

After a 20-minute delay in starting, the L. A. Express blew its high-powered brand of music (falling somewhere within the boundaries of jazz) for about 40 extremely dull minutes, leading up to intermission.

When Joni Mitchell finally arrived, she came on strong, hitting hard with such gems as "Help Me, I'm Falling" and "Free Man In Paris." But the warmth of past concerts was missing. Not to mention an atmosphere befitting the dignity of her music.



Joni Mitchell, once a folksinger, appearing in rock music act