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Joni Mitchell . . . Stunning Folksinger

By JACK LLOYD
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Music Review

If anyone showed up at the Academy of Music Wednesday night still thinking of Joni Mitchell as one of those "folksingers" who blossomed so beautifully during the '60s, this old folkie faithful had to come up with a quick re-evaluation of the image.

Joni was simply stunning—not that folks can't be stunning, but you just don't think

of folksingers as being quite that sexy. Quite that slickly sophisticated, with a glittering floor length gown featuring very little material in the upper front section and even less in the upper back.

But there was Joni Mitchell, smashing beautiful,

dressed up like it was opening night in Vegas, and accompanied during most of her program by a slick five-piece, jazz-oriented band from Los Angeles.

Fortunately, the core of Joni Mitchell's music has not undergone drastic shock treatment in an effort to keep up with the times. Keeping pace with the times . . . indeed, often establishing the

lead . . . is something this elegant lady from Canada has been doing steadily with each of her record albums over the last several years.

The folksinger tag never really fit. She arrived on the pop music scene as the writer of such songs as "Both Sides Now" and she had the obligatory long, silky hair and she strummed an acoustic guitar. Her songs, though, were

strictly contemporary, but record industry people did not know what to do with her or how to handle this unique new talent. And so Joni Mitchell was labeled a folksinger.

She was, and remains, totally unique. A genuine original. Her songs penetrate deeply into the human psyche. Joni Mitchell's psyche in particular. There is probably no writer around today whose songs are as starkly personal as the ones written by Joni Mitchell.

When she sings of a lover . . . the "constant stranger," perhaps . . . who has done her wrong, the message can be so intimate that one often has the embarrassing sense of eavesdropping on a private moment of despair.

Wednesday night's concert before a capacity house began a half-hour late, and then came a half-hour with the opening act, Tom Scott's L.A. express.

The band's efforts ranged from undistinguished to rather decent examples of rock-based jazz. But, it turned out, the band's prime purpose was back-up for Miss Mitchell, who in the past has traditionally worked with only her own piano and guitar accompaniments.

People in Entertainment

Rick Nelson Still a 'Ramblin' Man'



RICK NELSON
... on small club circuit

RICK NELSON (it isn't Ricky anymore) has eight gold records to his credit. An acknowledged pioneer in the development of rock music, he has made any number of fortunes during a show business career that began at the age of seven when he and brother David first began appearing on his parents' old TV series, "The Ozzie and Harriett Show." Yet he continues to work as hard as ever. "I've always felt a responsibility to myself," said the 33-year-old singer. "You have to justify your existence, have to contribute something." His career has gone through several variations — the latest of which is the realignment of his back-up group, the Stone Canyon Band. Most of Rick's engagements these days are on the small-club circuit across the country.

HENRY FONDA'S one-man show, "Clarence Darrow" — which comes to Philadel-

phia's Locust Theater on March 18 — premiered in Chicago with mixed reactions. Darrow, the underdog-loving lawyer who defended 102 men on murder charges and did not lose one of them to Death Row, was given a "fine, heartfelt rendering," according to one reviewer, but he added that "those with less than a sustaining interest in Darrow might find it tedious."

SOVIET DANCER Valery Panov reported that he has refused several official offers permitting him to emigrate to Israel — without his wife, Calina. Panov made the disclosure in a telephone interview from Leningrad with a Tel Aviv newspaper. The Panovs, former leading dancers with the Kirov Ballet, were dismissed when they sought permission to emigrate to Israel in 1972. He is Jewish; she is not.