

Review

Folk

Joni Mitchell Concert

By Louise King

Joni Mitchell has come full circle. Over the years, her music has undergone a continuing evolutionary growth, from intensely personal love songs to experimental, sometimes forbidding jazz. Along the way, she's alienated some early "Woodstock generation" fans who expected her to remain the ageless flower child forever.

On Saturday at the Fox Theatre, Mitchell laid the criticism to rest by taking the best of her divergent sounds — folk, rock, jazz — and molding them into one fine performance.

She began with "Coyote," from the jazz album, "Hejira." The songs from this period were met with considerable appreciation by the crowd, but the standards of the early '70s drew the loudest and longest applause. Mitchell cleverly sandwiched classics such as "You Turn Me On I'm A Radio" and "Big Yellow Taxi" into her two-part set.

By digging into the past for style, as well as subject matter, Mitchell drew the crowd to her like sheep back into the fold. Her new album, "Wild Things Run Fast," signals Mitchell's return to

the pop mainstream, and she gave the Fox crowd a heavy dose.

Throughout the evening, Mitchell accompanied herself on guitar and piano, sometimes alone, sometimes with the help of her band: Russel Ferante on keyboards, Larry Klein on bass, Vinnie Colaiuta on drums and Michael Landau on guitar.

Mitchell, the storyteller, chatted with the audience throughout the show, sharing her inspiration for songs like "Refuge of the Roads." She took the crowd on an emotional roller coaster ride, making them laugh with lyrical ad-libs on "For Free," then lulling them into a dream state with "Love."

The second half of the show consisted almost entirely of rock tunes, from "Raised on Robbery" to Mitchell's version of "I Heard It Through the Grapevine." Mitchell, who turns 40 this year, proved she can still make the kind of music an entire generation grew up with. Much of that generation was in the audience Saturday night. When Mitchell took the stage for the last time, the fans screamed for the song that became their anthem, and she obliged — with "Woodstock."