

Joni Changes Song Style

JONI MITCHELL
"FOR THE ROSES"
 Asylum SD 5057

If you're going to like Joni Mitchell's new album "For the Roses" you're going to have to work at it some.

As with all Joni Mitchell albums, the quality is there but on her first album for the Asylum label it's sometimes hidden quality. By that I mean even long time devoted Joni Mitchell fans like myself have to listen several times through before the meaning and value of some of the songs become apparent — something you didn't have to do so much in her earlier work.

This is not a good album for a relatively new Joni Mitchell fan to start his collection of her work with, because it's her most complex offering to date, featuring strangely structured lyrics without patterned verses as in the past.

Alternating between solo piano and guitar accompaniment, Joni offers a long album of 12 tunes, all composed by her, and mainly dealing with her most overworked subject the real, or perhaps fictional, men who are now either com-

BUD NEWMAN



...record rap

pletely, or on the way, out of her life.

For any other contemporary composer - singer to release as many songs on basically the same subject would never go over. But with Joni, the rules bend a little because she's had the experience about which she writes, as best I can tell.

Her ex-husband once told me that as far as he could determine, everything she's ever written has been autobiographical so there's no reason to believe that many of the new songs would be any different.

The album begins with "Banquet," which is confusing through several listenings because her point never materializes. The piece has some political - social overtones with lines like these:

"Who let the greedy in
 And left the needy out . . .
 Some get the gravy
 And some get the gristle
 Some get the marrow
 bone
 And some get nothing
 Though there's plenty to
 spare."

Joni's images are interesting as usual and several songs feature very appealing analogical structures. A typical example is her single release — a first, I believe, for Joni — called "You Turn Me On, I'm a Radio."

Joni compares herself to a country radio station into which her man can tune when he's within earshot.

"And I'm sending you
 out
 This signal here
 I hope you can pick it up
 Loud and clear . . .
 If your head says forget
 it
 But your heart's still
 smokin'
 Call me at the station
 The lines are open."
 As with so many of Joni's

tunes, the lyrics are as catchy as the music. The piece is beautifully harmless and totally well done.

Other highlights on the album include another lyrical analogy called "Electricity" in which Joni compares her love of a man to electrical terms:

"We once loved, together
 And we floodlit that time
 Input-output-electricity
 But the lines overloaded
 . . ."

The title song, "For the Roses," and "Barangrill," both on side one comprise the nicest tunes on the side. "For the Roses" tells the story of a rock and roll man who suddenly makes it big and leaves Joni in his wake.

"And now you're seen on
 giant screens
 And at parties for the
 press
 And for people who have
 slices of you
 from the company."

Side two begins with "See You Sometime," which seems very close in theme to "For the Roses" which ends side one. Again Joni talks about a man at the top who she'd like to see occasionally if he took the time to remember her.

Her most autobiographical song may well be "Blonde on the Bleachers" which again tells of a girl following a rock and roll man — something Joni has done a lot of in the past.

The point of the song is that "you can't hold the hand of a rock and roll man very long," which I believe is what Joni is finding out in real life, having made the rounds with a considerable number of artists, like most of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and James Taylor.

This isn't Joni's best album I still prefer her first one released four years ago. And she doesn't have a worst album, just albums with some different things.

If this is the new direction Joni will be taking, I don't prefer it over the old style. But then an artist must grow and in Joni's case, where so much of the material she writes is about her own life, she must find new ways of expressing herself.

That much latitude she deserves, but if the quality gets any tougher to find, it will be a sad day for Joni Mitchell's fans.

Dec. 10 in Opperman Music Hall on the FSU campus and proceeds will go to the FSU Dance Scholarship Fund.

CHORAL UNION. Collegians and University Chorus concert will begin at 8:15 p.m. today in Opperman Music Hall on the FSU Campus.

CHAMBER TRIO of the FSU School of Music, will present a free public concert at 8:15 p.m. Dec. 5 in Opperman Music Hall.

Lectures

PREHISTORIC MAN IN NORTH FLORIDA will be discussed by Richard Ohmes of Chaires, in his talk to the Tallahassee Archaeological Society. The free, public lecture will be at 8 p.m. Dec. 5 in room 249 of the Florida State University Fine Arts Building. Ohmes has done extensive research in river archaeology, such as the Aucilla River, and will reveal his observations on the nature of life of prehistoric man in this area.

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