



RICK EGLINTON / TORONTO STAR

**JONI'S BACK:** Joni Mitchell sings last night at her first Toronto concert appearance in 11 years. She sang both old works and some of her latest songs.

# Joni Mitchell back better than ever

BY PETER HOWELL  
ROCK CRITIC

## Concert Review

Joni Mitchell came out to play last night on Queen St. W. — and the welcome back was as big as Canada and as intimate as her living-room.

The legendary Canadian singer-songwriter made her first Toronto concert appearance in 11 years, performing live on the national MuchMusic network's *Intimate & Interactive* show, before an ecstatic and mostly young audience that included Queen St. strollers peering in through a large open window.

"This is the moment of my life!" said York University student Susan Wessels, 19, who waited three hours for a front-row window spot, clutching an old vinyl copy of Mitchell's 1974 *Court And Spark* album. "She makes you worship melancholy, if that's possible," said another star-struck Joni fan in the window, Tomaz Jardim, 19, of Toronto.

It was a capital "E" musical and emotional event, because

the Alberta-born, Saskatoon-raised Mitchell is the single most influential woman in pop music — everyone from Prince to Tori Amos sings her praises — and until recently it seemed she had all but given up live performances. There were fears she would become a recluse and was in drastically ill health.

Pushing aside all the intrigue, she was just down-to-earth Joni ("Fame doesn't mean that much to me," she said), all tousled blonde hair matched with tan overalls and cream blouse, casually puffing cigarettes between songs.

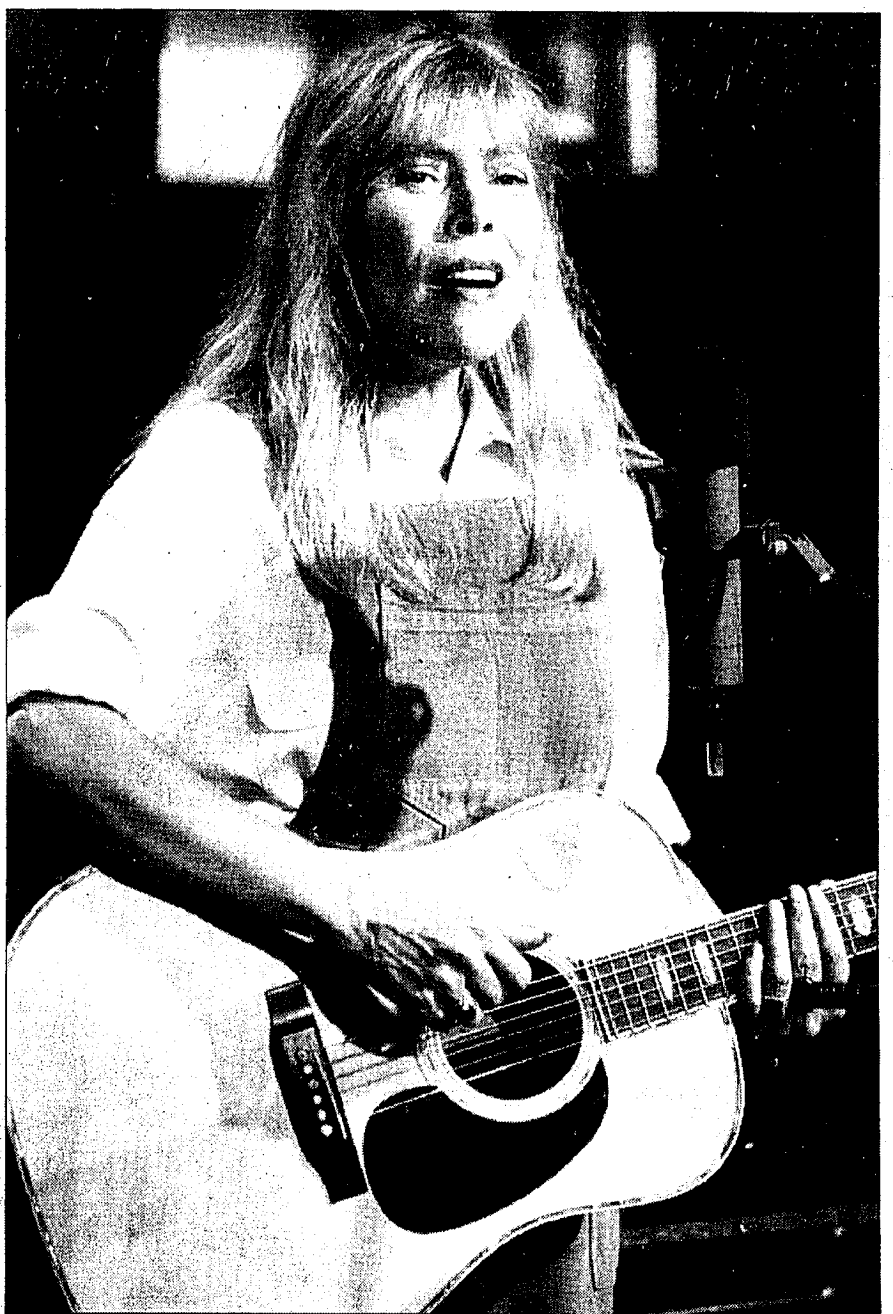
Nervous at first, but quickly gaining confidence, her distinctive soprano voice was flawless, bringing vivid stories to life in songs like the jazz-inflected mindscapes of "Moon At The Window" and the true tale of the horrors of a long-ago Irish nunnery, "The Magdalene Laundries."

She looked simply marvelous, lightly tanned and a least 20 years younger than her 50 years, despite admitting that, yes, she has had some problems with her throat — she didn't say what — that now seem to be resolved.

Mitchell performed solo on acoustic guitar, alternately standing at a microphone, sitting on a colorful couch and playing directly to the 75 people in the studio and those on Queen St., joking as a passing ambulance siren punctuated a line of one song with its insistent blare.

She strummed in difficult open tunings with her long nails, presenting songs both old ("Hejira," "Just Like This Train," "Moon At The Window," "Night Ride Home," "Cherokee Louise") and brand new, the latter including two tunes from her upcoming *Turbulent Indigo* album, and two that she has yet to record.

She shared secrets and fears about songwriting, her childhood friends and fights with



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**STREET VIEW:** An enthusiastic audience peers through an open window on Queen St. W. last night to catch Joni Mitchell singing in MuchMusic's studio.

her mom and dad, who were watching in Saskatoon, and let us know that even though she lives most of the time in Los Angeles, she also spends a third of the year in her B.C. chalet: "I'm sort of bi-national, I guess."

True to the "interactive" show title, Mitchell fielded queries both from her immediate audience, and from fans across Canada and the U.S. who sent in questions via telephone, fax, videotape and computer e-mail.

"Do your personal relationships have any influence on your music?" asked one Mon-

trepreneur, young enough not to know that Joni Mitchell is the poet diva of heart-on-the-sleeve confessional songwriting.

"Are you kidding?" Mitchell replied, enjoying the innocent sincerity.

Another young caller, a budding guitarist, wanted to know how she had made the difficult transition in her 30-year career from a café waitress strumming a \$36 ukulele to playing sold-out shows at New York's Carnegie Hall.

"Practise, practise!" came Joni's advice.

Her live audience included

such celebrities as Toronto pop singers Jane Siberry and Moe Berg ("She's one of my biggest influences," Berg said) and U.S. actor Ed Begley Jr., who is in town filming a movie.

After 90 minutes of song and chat, Joni Mitchell finished with a new number, "Facelift," a beautifully honest song about new love for a mature woman that she dedicated to her mother and to a quarrel she once had with her.

"Happiness is the best facelift," she sang, and it closed a show that came straight from Joni's hearth, via her heart.

# Girl flown from Philippines for life-saving heart surgery

## Doctor 'an angel' mom says for helping daughter

BY JIM RANKIN  
STAFF REPORTER

Carmelita Malabed left her home in the Philippines and came to Canada in search of a job that would pay for life-saving heart surgery for her 8-year-old daughter.

She found work as a nanny but soon realized she could never make enough to cover the cost of the expensive operation.

### HOLE IN HEART

Her daughter Angelica was born with a hole in her heart. Her condition has become so bad she can't do the things children her age do.

Malabed feared her daughter wouldn't live to see her next birthday.

That's when she walked into the office of Toronto doctor Francisco Portugal.

Portugal, who is also from the Philippines, had arranged for other children to come to Toronto for much-needed surgery and he took up Angelica's cause.

### GIVE HER CHANCE

With the help of the Toronto Mabuhay Lions Club and the Hospital for Sick Children's Herbie Foundation, Angelica will have the operation that will give her a chance of a normal life.

"The operation is the only thing that will save her — only the operation," Malabed said last night while waiting for her daughter and husband Emerson to arrive on a flight from the



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**IN TORONTO:** Carmelita Malabed holds her daughter Angelica, 8, last night at Pearson airport. The little girl was flown here to repair a hole in her heart.

Philippines.

The girl and her father arrived at Pearson International Airport on a flight paid for by the Lions Club, with special visas arranged by Portugal.

"He was like an angel," Malabed said before giving a hug to her daughter, who she hasn't

seen since January.

"A million thank-yous to the Lions Club," she said.

Angelica is scheduled to have her operation at the Hospital for Sick Children Oct. 13.

Doctors will first check to see if she is healthy enough, her mother said.

"Angelica, she gets tired, she turns blue and collapses. I'm happy she's here but I'm also nervous," she said.

The Lions Club also donated \$5,000 to the Herbie Foundation, money that will be used to help cover the cost of the operation.

# U.S. Senate angry over bomber display

## Veterans say planned exhibit of A-bomb plane is offensive

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — The U.S. Senate passed a resolution yesterday urging the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum to revise a script that will accompany a planned exhibit of the U.S. plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

Controversy has plagued the planned exhibit of the B-29 bomber Enola Gay, which dropped the bomb over Hiroshima over Aug. 6, 1945.

Veterans and others have charged the exhibit is biased against the Allied effort to end the war, features too much Japanese suffering and does not take into account that thousands of lives were saved by shortening the war and avoiding an Allied invasion of Japan.

"I think the passage of the resolution should send a strong signal to the curators at the Na-

tional Air and Space Museum that the United States Senate wants to see the plane exhibited in a fair and proper context," Nancy Kassebaum, the Kansas Republican who introduced the resolution, said in a statement.

The wording of Kassebaum-backed measure condemned the script as "revisionist, unbalanced and offensive."

Restoring the B-29's forward fuselage for exhibit is the largest such project in the history of the museum, which has eight million visitors a year.

The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans group, and Smithsonian museum officials, said in a joint announcement Thursday that the organizations will meet to try to settle the fray over a the exhibit, which is due to open next spring during the 50th anniversary of the end of the war.

"More than anything else, our disagreements centre on the number of lives saved by the use of atomic weapons in 1945," said William Detweiler, national commander of the legion.

"Was it 30,000 or was it 500,000 potential invasion casualties?" he asked in a statement.

# Remains of missing girl found

TISDALE, Sask. (CP) — Human remains found in heavy bush near town are of an 8-year-old girl who disappeared this summer, police confirmed last night.

The remains of Ashley Krestianson were discovered by a hunter Thursday in heavy bush with tall grass, RCMP said.

Foul play is not suspected.

The discovery was made about seven kilometres south and five kilometres east of where Ashley was initially reported missing.

Ashley disappeared July 14 while taking a shortcut during a walk.



**ASHLEY KRESTIANSON:** Remains were found by a hunter in heavy bush.