

Fresh Display Of Greatness



By Tom Uhlenbrock

THE BAND

Ah yes, happy holidays from Robbie Robertson and

Yet the man who lifts the group to such superior heights may be the least noticeable of all. With a ripple from a synthesizer, an organ run or a touch of tight brass and woodwinds, Hudson brings it all

the credit lines for other performers' works (including Linda Ronstadt and Bonnie Raitt), Lowell George, mastermind behind Little Feat, is no longer a secret.

Hank Williams may have

Tucker has managed to combine a slickly commercial sound with the fiery sentiment that brought the good ol' bands out in droves. And emerging from the group is the South's finest writer, Toy Caldwell.

Those Southern gentlemen stick together, which accounts for Charlie Daniels fine fiddling and two of the Allman Brothers appearing on "Searchin'." Dickie Betts provides a too-brief guitar solo on the title cut and Chuck Leavell

steals "Bound and Determined" with his electric piano.

Band member George McCorkle's "Fire on the Mountain" kicks the album off to a spritely start, but Toy and brother Tommy take it from there.

A live version of "Can't You See" recorded in Milwaukee provides the climax and shows that even crowds north of the Mason-Dixon line know a good thing when they hear it.

**JONI MITCHELL
ADD PATTI SMITH**

The problems of putting poetry to music are evident in both Joni Mitchell's "The Hissing of Summer Lawns" and Patti Smith's "Horses."

Joni Mitchell showed that it's possible to take purely personal experiences, however insignificant, and make a universally enjoyable album in "Blue." She aimed a bit more at the sales figures with last year's highly successful "Court and Spark."

In "Hissing," she again tries to provide a melody for her short stories. The word pictures are great, but sometimes fail to generate excitement musically.

Most ungainly is "The Jungle Line" midway through side one in which she attempts to record using only her acoustic guitar and a heavy, continuous drum line. The pounding sounds like natives beating hollow logs and, indeed, is credited to "the warrior drums of Burundi." A good idea that rapidly grows monotonous.

Patti Smith suffers from much the same problem. Her reputation as a poetess-singer prompted a visit to her New York club by Dylan and a quick album.

At its best, "Horses" is high-energy rock a la Lou Reed. At its worst, it's a free form, speed-freak rap with the words coming in isolated phrases, many unintelligible, so it's hard to determine what she's so excited about.