



Joni's Blues

by Deborah Gobbler

The queen of the metaphors has painted herself into a musical corner. Joni Mitchell has indulged herself in shades of *Blue* (Reprise MS 2038). The words flow in a stream of good ideas, sincere statements, and intricate images — a veritable tapestry of truth — but unlike that other brilliant and innovative lady, Joni has stuffed her thoughts into some tired old musical boxes. It'd be a great album if *Ladies of the Canyon* had never been published, but

as it is, the rhythm and piano of "For Free," "Conversation," and "Yellow Taxi" are blatantly and boringly rehashed. The friends and lovers (redundant, I believe, in this case) helping her out, Stephen Stills, Sneaky Pete, and the ubiquitous James Taylor, do fill in the corners, but the basic structure remains disappointingly the same.

No matter how brilliant the words, they are squelched if reprocessed into the same intervals and progressions. Joni's the organic answer to the plastic man, Rod McKuen, so why doesn't she put it down in pretty writing on rice paper or newsprint, and let her past musical triumphs sing for themselves while she finds a fresh sound? *Clouds* was a growth from the initial message; and *Ladies* was an exquisite surprise of newness, but *Blue* is a sad sequel.

... But the poet shines on... The lady has lived a bit — she's had many old men who are "singers in the park;" and the words in *Blue* scream out at everyone who's passed through her:

"All good dreamers pass this way some day;
I'm gonna blow this damn candle out."

"The Last Time I Saw Richard" is clear and true — the best words on the subject I've heard since the Incredible String Band's "First Boy I Loved" and "All I Want" evokes many a knowing nod. These first and last offerings seem to be the only ones that are fairly fresh music-wise, especially "All I Want," in which Joni restrains herself from emoting on the piano; something which she should continue to do until she learns some new chords.

Blue is "coming on Christmas/ They're cuttin down trees" full of seasonal shrewdness, but emptied of musical shrubbery. And you can't see the trees because of the forest. There are few individual songs; because of the sameness of arrangement the album is all one color, all one tone.

If the white album had never floated into my ears, I'd probably applaud the blue one, but as it is, the music fades familiarly into the background, and I pay my dues and respect and attention only to the words on the jacket, printed in off-blue, hinting of haystacks and beds and bitter memories and a touch of beauty and a whole overflowing handful of clear-eyed visions, which stand out like her ruby in a black man's ear.

But as long as Dylan and Beatles and the like live on, no artist, no matter how eloquent, can be forgiven for plagiarizing her own material. And I've heard *Blue* in an album of a different color.

MOVIE GUIDE

National

10925 Lindbrook Drive
479-2866

CARNAL KNOWLEDGE

Show Times 2:25, 4:25, 6:25, 8:15, 10:25
Mid. Show Fri. Sat. Sun. at 12:15

Oriental

7425 Sunset
876-0212

Barbra Streisand in
THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT
+ Rod Steiger in

WATERLOO

\$1.00 per person with this ad (Sorry, not good Sat. night)

Pan Pacific

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WE 8-7070
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PACIFIC'S Pantages

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469-7161 12:45

One Man is Missing—
Two call girls lie dead!

Jane Fonda • Donald Sutherland

KLUTE (R)

in color

Daily at 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

PACIFIC'S Picwood

Pico Near Westwood
272-8239

Bette Davis and Ernest Borgnine
have a groovy "pension" plan!

BUNNY O'HARE (GP)

12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00 p.m.

Plaza

Westwood Village
GR 7-0097
TR 9-9077

Jean Louis Trintignant in

Bertolucci's

THE CONFORMIST (R)

Starts July 14!

Bruce Brown's

"ON ANY SUNDAY"

Regent

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DUSTY AND SWEETS McGEE

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Matinees Sat. Sun. Mon. Only