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# Joni Mitchell Opens Her Musical Diary at the Shell

By Don Weller

Some people carry their past lives around in memories alone. Joni Mitchell carries hers around not only in thought but also in songs—songs which tend to be multilayered frameworks of images and ideas, of hope and despair, of flowing rhythm and near-stillness.

Performing last night to a crowded audience at the Waikiki Shell, Joni opened

up that musical diary which comprises the many songs she's composed over the past few years and delivered them in a correspondingly intimate, sensitive and intensely feminine manner. Her compositions themselves, plus the way she sings them (solo), make hers a very personal performance indeed, one in which the music is the music of a distinct "I" rather than "me and you" or "us."

That's about the best way to describe it. In recital she siphons all attention to herself, doing little to try to close the gap

between artist and performer (something modern rock and folk-rock try to foster). STILL, WHAT she sings is magnificent, and as a songwriter there are few people who can approach her overall ability to construct exquisite musical compositions. The audience was in no way hesitant to express its appreciation and approval of Joni's concert, as it called her back for two encores.

Jackson Browne, Asylum Records' singer, got things started around 8:10. Browne performs in a manner similar to Miss Mitchell. He sings solo, alternates between guitar and piano and has a very sensitive inward style. He began with a song he helped write for a group called Eagles (a song now on the charts) called "Take It Easy," then softened things up with "A Peaceful

Feeling"—a song which flows gently and with a kind of symmetry, creating the kind of mood it speaks about. His set continued with "Rock Me on the Water." Then he switched to piano for "Jamaica Say You Will," "Doctor My Eyes," back to guitar for "Song for Adam" and "These Days," and returned to piano again for "Looking into You." JACKSON has a clear,

easy-to-listen-to voice; one which carries each of his songs with enough strength yet enough ambiguity to create an inner tension which in turn enhances its over-all effect.

Rain provided a not-too-happy intermission, but the showers stopped after a little while and Joni made her appearance. She came out in a long flowing floral-print country dress, with her fine sunshine hair pouring over her shoulders.

She immediately got into "This Flight Tonight," and before the evening had ended had gone through "Cold Blue Steel and Sweet Fire," "Big Yellow Taxi" (a song about our ecological scramble which she wrote when last in Hawaii), "Caetns Tree," "Blue," a couple of new songs which she unfortunately forgot the words to and had to stop halfway through, "For Free," "All I Want," "A Case of You," "Carey" and "Circle Game."

SHE DOES a more than competent job on guitar, piano and dulcimar, and her voice sometimes carries a

power and intensity which seem at odds with the quiet passiveness of her music.

Yet Joni is primarily a songwriter. That is where her utmost talent lies. Her songs are her living biography, or, as she says in one of her compositions: "Blue, songs are like tattoos."

As a performer, the time has come for her to begin to change around a little to extend herself and innovate in singing her songs, add a couple of backup musicians and try to close the gap a little between herself as artist and those who constitute the audience. Doing that is itself a kind of "circle game."



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