

Joni's 'Blue' album shows less artistic skill

By Rich Warren
 At the end of her new song "California," Joni Mitchell asks "Will you take me as I am?" That alone is the most important qualification in listening to her new album, "Blue."
 This album marks a radical departure in both Joni's song-writing and singing. The album is deeply introspective, to the point where it becomes painfully obvious that Joni Mitchell is hung-up on herself. The songs are no longer her interpretations of the world, but interpretations of herself.
 There is nothing intrinsically

wrong with this, except that all the songs say the same thing, and too many times in the same way. Unlike her previous albums there are no happy songs, no "Night in the City," or "Chelsea Morning" or "Big Yellow Taxi." There is no joy, there is only "Blue." And the words of her sorrow are not really so very new.
 In many songs her lyrics tend more toward top 40 rock, than the exceptional poetry she has written in the past. The songs are rich in the vernacular and colloquialisms, and words like "baby," or phrases like "out of sight" are more

common than effective.
 There are three or four songs on the album that remind the listener of the vivid imagery and the ability to turn the sound of words directly into music, that only Joni Mitchell is capable of doing. "The Last Time I Saw Richard" is the most graphic example of this. The song is about idealist that has traded his dreams for alcoholism and a house in the suburbs, and she tries to convince herself it won't happen to her.
 It is a chilling song for the demise of dreamers, "He put a quarter in the Wurlitzer, and he pushed three buttons and the thing began to whirr... You got toms in your eyes, but the songs you punched are dreaming." And later: "Richard got married to a

figure skater, and he bought her a dishwasher and a coffee percolator and he drinks at home now most nights with the T.V. on and all the house lights left up bright." The songs of a painter, the canvas of Joni Mitchell.
 Joni's singing style has changed as well as her words. Where her enunciation used to be precise and perfect she now slurs her words and runs them together creating interesting musical effects, but very great difficulty deciphering the lyrics. Reading the words printed in the album are a necessity, although when reading the words instead of listening the

songs tend to come through with diverse meanings.
 Her voice quality has changed little, or if any, for the better. Joni Mitchell's voice is one difficult to make any better. Her new way of working with words is matched by her new way of saying them.
 Ultimately the 'old' Joni Mitchell was an artist of greater skill than the 'new.' The album is not a masterwork of art as her earlier ones were. It's a personal outcry and a turbulence against stagnation. It's only a 'half finished' album, a half way point on a road that Joni Mitchell is traveling.

GSA undecided on TA study committee selections

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) has not yet made any decision on whether it should make appointments to three committees being formed to study the problems of teaching assistants.
 Herbert Carter, vice chancellor for academic affairs, has asked GSA to make appointments to the committees, which he is establishing.
 However, members of the Assistants Union (AU) have requested GSA not to make appointments to the committees because the committees lack the

power to effect changes and will hinder AU's efforts to form a collective bargaining unit.
 John Briggs, GSA general chairman, said last week he expected GSA to reach a decision in less than two weeks. The group plans to consult teaching assistants of various departments for their views. The teaching assistants organization in the department of philosophy recently expressed opposition to the study committees.
 Briggs said some applications for the positions have already been submitted to GSA.

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