

Joni's avante-garde: *The Hissing of Summer Lawns*

by David Nardozi,
Entertainment Editor

Joni Mitchell debuted nearly ten years ago and by 1971 had a swarm of devotees listening to the lady's original folklore. In recent years she captured another audience with the commercial releases of *Court and Spark* and *Miles of Aisles*. She's released her newest LP and her admirers have gathered to hear *The Hissing of Summer Lawns* (Asylum 7E-1051).

To say it's a masterpiece would probably be overrating it on my part, for I am one of those avid devotees from her gathering. But to say it's a collection of artistry and prose is calling it the truth, for Joni has painted ten very picturesque tunes that are hanging on display

between her cover and liner notes. The paintings compose a gallery reflecting the squinting suns and marks of time that she colorfully illustrates.

"In France They Kiss On Main Streets" introduces the layout with a commercial bounce that blends the happy days of the late '50's with the bar scenes and dwellers of modern France. The mood quickly changes as the warrior drums of Burundi pulsate the air of air-conditioned flows of grass and booze in the sleazy bars of France, New York and the "Deep heart of Dixie Blue." "The Jungle Line" is the swarming of men on women, or in her words "charging elephants and chanting slave boats."

a pimp buying his latest slave whose faithful and quite naive attitude cages her in his grip, while "Don't Interrupt the Sorrow" tells of another master buying his woman "cast iron and frail," the martyr-type woman who uses her beauty to snag her men. Scarlett O'Hara of *Gone With The Wind* is the comparison here.

The Hissing of Summer Lawns is the image foundation of the piece and connects the sides. It tells of the woman who enjoys being caged for money and booze to be paid generously for his righteous submissions to her.

Side one closes with "Shades of Scarlett Conquering" a beautiful ballad of a Southern belle who is

perverted, masochistic natures of Sister Geraldine's victims result in thought-provocative lingerings long after viewing.

Concluding *The Boho Dance* is an airplane landing into *Harry's House*, Joni's most artistic and forward cut. The scene slips from today to 1958 through *Centerpiece*, a jazz composition written by Johnny Mandel and Jon Hendricks. Joni slides into jazz and blues and concludes with an airplane taking off for *Sweet Bird*. Here the arrangements are similar to her *Blue* and *For the Roses* LP's.

Shadows and Light is the album's end, where Joni harmonizes with herself and uses an ARP Far-

to transform an air of the church and her choir. The song is extremely philosophical.

To say the album is a masterpiece is probably overrating it on my part. But Joni expands into the use of warrior drums, moogs, the Jazz Crusaders, the LA Express, James Taylor, Crosby and Nash, and herself. Her thank yous go to the Book of Genesis, Tom Wolfe, *Blue*, New York, Dixie, *National Geographic* and John Guerin.

The Hissing of Summer Lawns is a deep collection of philosophy, religious-oriented attitudes, and hard-core reflections of the moods mushrooming among today's people and rulers. It's new Joni Mitchell and a promise of prominence for the avante-garde perfectionist.

Review

Closet authentic novel, gay males might identify

A Year in a Closet by William Carney, Warner Paperback Library, 1974, 285 pp., \$1.50.

by Christopher McGlynn

This is a delightful novel. It is authentic. The characters are clearly drawn, gay males. They could be cops, firemen, bishops, shoe-salesmen. They are not bitchy, nor effeminate, nor do they use the feminine pronoun referring to other males.

Despite the unfortunate title, suggesting passivity, there is lots of action. Phil is a 24-year-old hustler recently moved from Cincinnati to San Francisco, where he becomes attached to a middle-aged architect with a slight fondness for masochism. When another hustler who remains anonymous carries masochism to its logical conclusion, the architect is found tied up and choked to death - whereupon Phil transfers his affection to, indeed, falls frantically in love with, the architect's 18-year-old son Mike.

Sadly, Mike has everything but goodness. Surely every one of us has had the heart-breaking experience at least once of becoming infatuated with an emotional idiot who gulls, us, bleeds us, and finally discards us with a snicker. It's part of growing up gay. And William Carney recalls it well in describing Phil's unilateral passion for Mike.

And that is about it. The novel ends on a downbeat but it is wonderful entertainment for all that. As I said, it is an authentic gay novel. But now for a few critical observations:

• It is rather off-putting in a gay novel to have handsome protagonist turn with equanimity from screwing his boy-friend to screwing his girl-friend, the boy-friend later engaging in a bit of muff-diving with lover-boy's middle aged mother, while lover-boy is at the same time screwing him up the ass. I find such a scene unlikely, confusing, and hard to visualize.

• Is "ass" a dirty word? William Carney prefers "butt" as in "Kiss my butt," "to take it up the butt," "a kick in the butt," "a well-built butt." Why?

• We all know that San Francisco is a picturesque city, but so is

everyman's hometown, whether it be Boston, Duluth, or Finleyville. Perhaps it contributes to verisimilitude when the author pauses every so often for a description of the view from Walrus Rocks or Twin Peaks, or tell us that Phil left Union Park, proceeded up Gary, turned left on Market, proceeded three blocks to Polk, etc., but does it really advance the action?

• Finally, the machine is surely quicker than the hand, but drafting a novel at the typewriter is something like composing at the provisionation, rather than tightly written prose. The following could be the longest sentence I have every read (p.273). Certainly William Carey or his editor should have broken it up or at least rewritten it. As it stands, I can't even make sense of it, much less diagram it. Here it is:

"And while I gauged the strut

and posing of the players moving around the table with their cues, it occurred to me that the very sincerity that someone in love and desperate at being left alone with it can bring to words and gestures used in an effort to convince the one who doesn't feel that way, and who maybe never did, will serve as an argument to confirm him - the other - in his decision to have no more of it, and that all the eloquence that's focused into that chance, that loaded moment, can only feed the other's counterpurpose, what you offer being converted by him into the science he can use, and maybe has to use, to put that first of many distances between himself and you who had so quickly come to be so close." Whew!

But don't mind me. I'm only a cranky old English teacher. Just buy the book and then settle in for six or eight hours of happy reading.

Review

No gay comedy in McPick

The Misadventures of Tim McPick: or The Story of Tim and His Zipper, by Daniel Curzon, \$3.50, 320 pgs., John Parke Custis Press, Los Angeles, 1975.

by Francis Wayne

The book jacket asks, "When was the last time you read a gay comedy?" The book is dedicated to Don Quixote and Huckleberry Finn, among others, indicating that the author felt some affinity between Tim, Don and Huck. Such affinity, if it exists, extends to the style of the book, which is episodic in nature and supposedly satiric in content.

Unfortunately, Tim McPick never comes to life. Accompanied by his faithful companion, Zipper, a poodle, he flits from one misadventure to another in a world of cardboard people performing before a vaguely futuristic backdrop. The characters are so poorly developed that motivation for the actions of the tially non-existent. The humor is forced and the situations so silly that "force" is too kind a term.

Add to this an attempt to link tragedy and comedy by periodically

ending an episode with a catastrophe. For instance, Tim is shredded in a train wreck and blown to pieces by a shot-gun blast. The author then intrudes to remind his readers that this is a comedy and that what really happened was... the result is annoying and merely adds to the sense of being involved in an overly long bad joke.

Curzon had a good idea, but in translating it into a novel, something went drastically wrong. *The Misadventures of Tim McPick* is dull, stereotyped and so cliché to be almost unreadable. When was the last time you read a gay comedy? Sorry, you won't find it here.

Sorry, sorry!

Due to scheduling complications, the interview with the Supremes could not be completed for this issue. The *Gay News* will attempt to publish a comparable feature in an upcoming issue.

CRITIC'S CHOICE

(Continued from Page B9)

discomfort succumbed by a Cuban bishop, Jesuit father, factory striker, a young prince and a beautiful manageress.

Lisa Harrow is strikingly convincing as the manageress, Emily, a sufferer of an unsuccessful marriage leading to murder. Gabriele Lavia is haunting as the innocent young prince whose only sin is a compassionate love for his sister.

Rodolfo quickly finds the source of all their grief, the head nun of the hostel. Sister Geraldine is a dark woman hovering over her convent like a shadow cast upon a pond. She stunts the dwellers beneath her and her guilt ridden, frustrated colleagues fear her presence. Power and money set forth her goals; religion camouflages these innermost thoughts.

Glenda Jackson is her prouder, undeniably one of the most exceptional actresses around. She has the uncanny capability enabling her to expose Sister Geraldine's deepest transcendentalisms through effective here.

The generous content of religious habits and attempted acts of martyrdom in unison with the as little as brief gazes or a hesitant walk. Her finest moment comes with a final confrontation with Lisa Harrow. Glenda's coy approach to the role makes her acting extremely



Glenda Jackson as Sister Geraldine in *The Devil Is A Woman*.

Ennio Morricone's eerie music sets the perfect mood enforcing Damiani's *The Devil Is A Woman* a hostel of power.

TOP DISCO HITS

Carl, "Mr. D.J." at Pittsburgh's Allegheny Social Club presents the following top disco report for the year ending 1975:

- 1) *Extra! Extra! (Read All About It)* - Ralph Carter
- 2) *Lady Bump* - Penny McLean
- 3) *Star Trek* - The Charles Ralph Green Sound
- 4) *Like You Do Do* - Jeanne Burton
- 5) *Little Drummer Boy* - Moon Lion
- 6) *Never Gonna Let You Go* - Vicki Sue Robinson
- 7) *Porto Rico* - Pinkies
- 8) *Change Makes You Want To Hustle* - Donald Byrd
- 9) *Jump For Joy* - Biddu Orchestra
- 10) *Thank You Baby For Loving Me* - The Quickest Way Out
- 11) *Chicano* - Black Blood
- 12) *Right Back Where We Started From* - Maxine Nightengale

Brian the DJ, House of Tilden, Pittsburgh Top Disco Hits for month ending December, 1975:

- 1) *Lady Bump/Lady Bump On* - Penny McLean
- 2) *Love Machine* - Miracles
- 3) *I Love Music* - O'Jays
- 4) *Thank You Baby For Loving Me* - The Quickest Way Out
- 5) *Soul Train '75* - Soul Train Gang
- 6) *Far As We Feel Like Goin'* - LaBelle
- 7) *Drive My Car* - Garry Thoms Empire
- 8) *You Sexy Thing* - Hot Chocolate

- 9) *Sunny '76* - Bobby Hebb
- 10) *Love Rollercoaster* - Ohio Players
- 11) *Wake Up Everybody* - Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes
- 12) *Love To Love You Baby* - Donna Summer
- 13) *Love or Leave* - Spinners

Joe Costa, sound and lighting director of the Bayou Landing, Cleveland, reports the following top disco hits:

- 1) *Baby Face* - Wing and Prayer Five and Drum Corps
- 2) *Lady Bump* - Patty McLean
- 3) *Nobody Loves Me (Like You Do)* - Jeanne Burton
- 4) *I Love Music* - O'Jays
- 5) *Little Drummer Boy* - Moonlion
- 6) *Lady, Lady, Lady* - Boogie Man Orchestra
- 7) *Theme from S.W.A.T.* - Rhythm Heritage
- 8) *Mondo Disco* - El Coco
- 9) *Change (Makes You Want To Hustle)* - Donald Byrd
- 10) *Love Explosion* - Bazuka

FROM ALBUMS:

- 1) *Entire Album* - Salsoul Orchestra
- 2) *Aranjuez mon Amour Exodus-Summer of '42* - Biddu Orchestra
- 3) *Tell Me What You Want/Same Old Song* - Armada Orchestra
- 4) *Love To Love You Baby* - Donna Summer
- 5) *Experience (side one)* - Gloria Gaynor

DJ's: Send your disco reports to the *Gay News* by our next editorial deadline!