

Folk artist makes sparks

Joni Mitchell conquers New Haven crowd

By MICHAEL W. KOZLOWKI
Behold her, single in the field.
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
William Wordsworth

NEW HAVEN - Saturday afternoon we arrived there, waiting to hear the Highland Lass from Vancouver, Joni Mitchell, reveal herself. Her concert, sold out for a number of weeks, was to be held in Yale's Woolsey Hall away from the night's snow, sleet and rain.

Joni Mitchell was born 30 years ago in Canada, and has devoted the last third of her life to music. She played an instrument for the first time at 20. Prior to that time she had been interested in painting and sketching, but after receiving a ukelele as a present, she learned to play it quickly. She then graduated to guitar and began polishing her style. In 1967 Tom Rush saw her and brought her to New York where her performances were like pebbles on a lake sending out concentric circles of appeal to farther and farther reaches of the surface.

But, it was still just the surface, despite the concurrent release of her first album *Joni Mitchell*. She was to remain in near anonymity for several more years, when Judy Collins would establish Mitchell's name as the author of "Both Sides, Now." Subsequently, Mitchell released five more albums, garnering more and more disciples with each disc.

And Wordsworth continues:

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far off things,
And battles long ago;
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of today?
Some natural sorrow, loss or pain,
That has been and may be again?"

Her songs can only be described as songs about love. She contrasts romance and reality to express feelings stemming from personal experience. These feelings grow in her thoughts and mature in her songs. It is clear such experiences are intensely real to

her, but they are also familiar to her audience.

She is not merely a story-teller, but an excellent poet in music. She has been likened to Dylan in her quest for expression, and David Crosby called her the best poet/songwriter around today. Certainly, her lyrics contain all the intricacies and devices of an accomplished poet. But her subject matter maintains the simplicity which explains her relativity to everyone.

Musically, up to her fourth album she played most of the instruments herself including dulcimer, piano and guitar. She still plays as many instruments as possible on her latest album, *Court and Spark*, but her maturation process has led her into new realms where her songs use more and more orchestration to echo the tone of her lyrics.

So, Saturday last, some 2,700 of her "friends" came to grasp at a moment in time that comes all too rarely. After hours of patience, the doors were opened and a mass ingress ensued. Within minutes, all the seats were filled with expectant parents, all waiting for Joni to emerge from the darkness. After Tom Scott and the L.A. Express tuned us with a well played warm-up set, she came and conquered. The first song, "This Flight Tonight" from her *Blue* album, confirmed everyone's suspicion that she is not merely a studio performer. She added more evidence with a slowed down "You Turn Me On, I'm a Radio" ending it with musical acrobatics that matched spiraling notes emanating from the lead guitar.

Next, she got into her latest album which is without a doubt her best one yet. "Free Man in Paris," "The Same Situation," and "Just Like This Train," drew warm responses from the audience, most of whom recognized the good things happening to her in her sixth album. Even "Woodstock," from her third album, resounded mysteriously in a new arrangement, with Mitchell's chastising the flute for its soft approach and mocking the recorder for its limited range.

After a brief intermission, she was back to renew the mass hypnosis that she controlled so effectively. "Cactus Tree," "Big Yellow Taxi," and "People's

Parties," completed a guitar set. After which she sat down and strummed a dulcimer to "All I Want" and "Case of You." Her voice, however, was the main focus of attention, as she poured it into "For the Roses," "Cold Blue Steel," and, at the piano, "For Free." The audience framed "For Free" in applause; in the beginning it was the applause of recognition, at the

end it was the ovation of release.

Lastly, she returned to *Court and Spark*, doing four songs from it. She interjected "Both Sides Now," in series "Troubled Child," "Help Me," "Car on the Hill" and the rocking "Raised on Robbery," receiving another ovation for the latter as she walked off the stage in its midst.

Refusing to let her go the audience's applause brought her back ten minutes later. She encored with "Twisted" the only song she ever recorded which she didn't write. Standing to the end, the gardeners in the yard watched their favorite rose disappear into winter.

Our senses thus purged in a catharsis of musical enjoyment, we were expelled into the night, filled with memories and confronted by reality. Her performance had to recent an effect to be disturbed by the bad weather outside. We just brushed the snow off our cars and moved on.

I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

William Wordsworth

Film-maker counterpoints image, sound in cinema

By GAIL LAWSON

Peter Kubelka is probably the most economical film-maker alive today. As of 1967, his total work did not exceed 35 minutes. He makes his films frame-by-frame.

He said, "I know that film is made of 24 still pictures every second - so there must be no frame of it left in the film which is not absolutely necessary to the whole work; because that frame will detract from the total, will have its effect in weakening my experience of the moment."

He views cinema as being rhythm, not movement, and his films attempt to place image and sound in musical counterpoint. Cinema is the meeting of sound and image at the rate of 24 impulses a minute. "Cinema is the quick projection of light impulses," according to Kubelka. It is between frames

that film speaks; light alone becomes the image.

Kubelka's films are built on visual repetition with slight variation of each image. He makes each film with the utmost accuracy and, in fact, memorizes each frame of each film. For *Unsere Afrikareise* (12½ minutes), the record of an African safari, he memorized 14 hours of tape and three hours of film, taking five years to complete the film.

Time is concentrated and condensed in Kubelka's films. This crystallization is produced by the reduction and abstraction of the subject matter into a perfected unit which is one frame. The perfected unit involves not only the image but the sound, too. *Adebar* (1½ minutes), for example, is positive, negative and freeze-frame images of couples

dancing with a steady repetition of electronic beeps on the soundtrack working in rhythmic counterpoint with the images.

Kubelka considers films to be documents for posterity. He works entirely alone in Austria, making films for American audiences.

The program will be shown in Room 228 of the Fine Arts Center. Admission is \$1.

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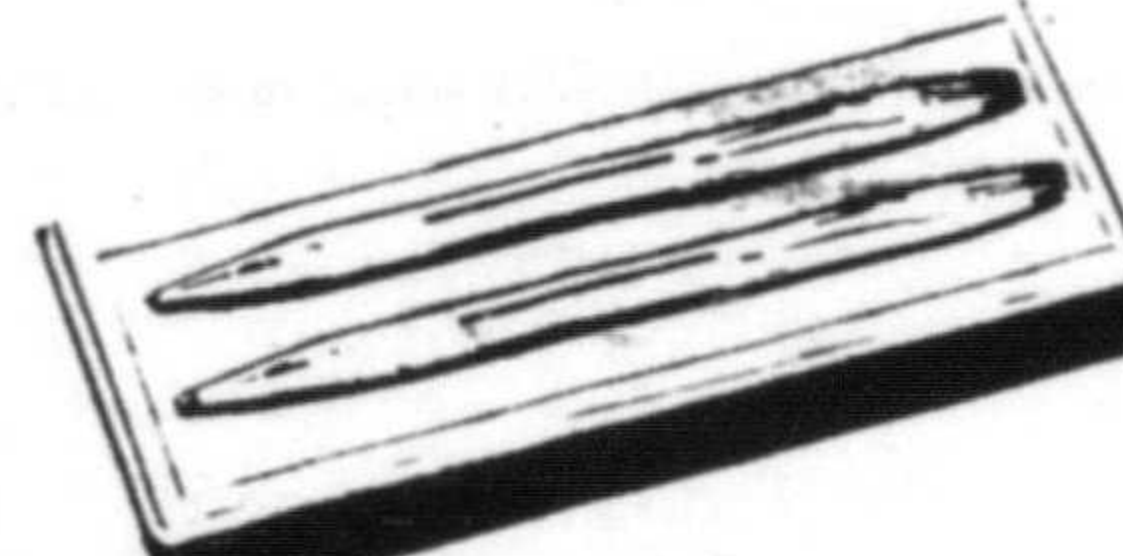
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