

### Peter J. Barsocchini

The double album set is in a deluxe package, complete with libretto, and is first class from sound to paper. It is a fascinating, entertaining work, definitely something toward which Christmas money might wisely be spent.

You can always say the devil made you do it.

#### Joni Mitchell—For the Roses (Asylum SD 5057).

The songs on this album, like the songs on Joni's last album (Blue), are not the sort you walk around humming to yourself. The melodies are too intricate, flowing, for that, and sometimes almost too fragile for anyone's voice but J. Mitchell's.

But these melodies do stay with you, in parts and phrase, rising up like remembered scents, sweet and sometimes somber scents.

And equal with the fluidity of the melodies are the enchanting poems she sings, happy, sad, reflective. Joni Mitchell is one of the few contemporary songwriters who writes lyrics which can stand intelligently and beautifully without music. But then these poems are laced with these melodies, and you have some of the best contemporary music available.

Joni's songs are fresh and interesting after many listenings, and the album stands on this achievement. That, and the simple pervasive beauty.

#### SHORT TAKES:

John Hartford — Morning

Bugle (Warner Bros. BS 2651).

This is an exquisite album of clean guitar and banjo picking, with other stringed instruments here and there, and unaffected singing. Hartford is the city-county boy we used to see on the Glen Campbell Show, and he's still picking and singing fine. An easy, pleasant album. Good listening.

Woody Herman — The Raven Speaks (Fantasy 9416).

Big band jazz with a nod toward pop tunes, such as "Alone, Again," "It's Too Late," and "Summer of '42." Less commercial stuff, like "Bill's Blues" and "Reunion and Newport 1972" give the work balance. A pretty good listen.

Poco — A Good Feelin' to Know (Epic KE 31601).

Those who are used to the light country-rock of Poco will be a little surprised, but certainly not disappointed, with this new offering. This has the strongest rock background this group has yet worked with, and they perform surprisingly well (considering certain past attempts at rock on their part). Their melodies are still strong and clean, the harmonies well balanced. But there is a depth to their drive here which is new and indicative of growth. It's their best work since "Deliverin'," and may even be stronger than that fine album.