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*Mitchell style*

# Disc shows emotion

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Chronicle Staff

**"For the Roses"**

Joni Mitchell

Asylum Records (ATCO) 5057

Because Joni Mitchell gives no concerts, her freaks must subsist on albums. Her fifth, and latest release, "For the Roses" has therefore been anxiously awaited. As demonstrated in her previous efforts, her work is careful and thoughtful. This album is no exception. Her development has not been marred with the mediocrity or commercialism that some pop artists have succumbed to.

If Joni Mitchell has a weakness it is her unreasonable attachment to 4/4 time. It isn't as obvious as it could be because she is able to break it up with tricky rhythm and unpredictable turns in melody. The unexpected happens—don't try a Carole King sing-a-long, or you'll get caught.

**Accompaniment supplement**

The musical accompaniment on the album is Joni Mitchell's basic heavy-chorded right hand, arpeggio left hand piano, and easy-listening guitar. It is supplemented with effective touches of woodwinds, reeds and strings. Other help includes Stephen Stills on electric guitar, Graham Nash on harmonica, and Russ Kunkel, drums.

One apparent development in her voice styling is that she has dropped her singing to lower keys. "For the Roses" contains the vocal vignettes that are the subtle frosting on her songs. They appear as a pleasant surprise in multi-voiced, close harmonies and imitations of sounds in nature and mimicks of musical instruments.

The words are, of course, the vision and insight, and the strength. The lyrics in "For the Roses" explore and interpret the situations and relationships that surround Joni Mitchell, since in most of her songs she deals with her own reality. From groupies and rock 'n roll men in "Blonde in the Bleachers" to sizing up a triangle relationship in "Electricity," Joni Mitchell develops and explains with the uncanny sixth sense that enables her to pick out details that are so precise that they live. Accurate emotional pictures are drawn with sensitivity, all in the space of a three or four minute song with the limitations placed by putting them in a framework of music and rhythm.

In "Cold Blue Steel and Sweet Fire" heroin is personified as "Lady Release." "Corridors spit on prayers and pleas, Sparks fly up from Sweet Fire, Black soot of Lady Release."

**Personal statement**

The album is a very personal statement—it is an affirmation of freedom and sanity. It comes to terms with things that her last album, "Blue," left unfinished. "Blue" seemed sad and self-pitying, which put a restriction on her usually uncluttered perspective. In this album she has grown and mellowed, "Papa knows somehow he set me free....It's a rough road to travel, Mama let go now, It's always called for me....Let the wind carry me."

Listen in the dark when the streets are wet. It deserves concentration and several plays. "For the Roses" is a fine effort by a consistently talented artist.

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