

for the record

ELVIS COSTELLO: "Taking Liberties." Columbia JC 36839.

TAKING LIBERTIES is 20 cuts from earlier Elvis Costello efforts, previously unreleased in the United States or only available on English singles or EPs. Where you'd expect everything here to smell a little musty, the surprise is that Costello has, even in his remainder pile, enough sparks to keep things bright and fresh.

Songs fall roughly into three groups: old continental hits ("Radio Sweetheart," "I Don't Want to Go to Chelsea"), earlier versions of tunes he redid on later LPs ("Clowntime is Over"), or things he felt sounded too similar to other recordings.

The mixed-bag quality of that arrangement is either satisfying to Costello fans, or else disturbing to those who expect to hear evidence why people regard this guy as one of rock's leading figures.

If you're somewhere in-between, *Taking Liberties* will serve as great litmus paper. If you get to the point of listening three or four times, you'll be won over. Despite the sometimes-monotonous vocal delivery, *Taking Liberties* is extremely catchy and impressive in displaying the multiple musical tricks old Elvis has up his pants legs. Definitely a good three.

JONI MITCHELL: "Shadows and Light." Asylum BB704.

Joni Mitchell qualifies as rock's most gifted poet and the best example around of the romantic-confessional balladeer who uses personal ex-

periences to shed light on the endless battles between men and women, good and bad, young and old.

Shadows and Light is appropriately titled, being a two-disc revelation of Ms. Mitchell's mixed feelings for all those contending principles.

Apart from being, on one level, a "best of" collection of both older and more recent works, *Shadows and Light* is also a perky showcase of Mitchell's super-session musicians. "Gifted" is not kind enough a word to describe the skills of her backup band: Pat Metheny, Lyle Mays, Jaco Pastorius, Don Alias, Michael Brecker and — on two cuts — the Persuations.

Equally impressive are the discs' superior engineering and mixing, which help give *Shadow and Light* not just a bright "live" sound, but a careful musical layering with more depth and precision than you get on most studio albums.

In her earlier live double album, *Miles of Aisles*, she sounded like a studio singer who used her hand to give her material an underlying toughness and sense of dynamics that her voice couldn't provide.

The difference here is hearing Mitchell work as singer and musician in a band that doesn't need her for their focal point. Ironically, that lets Mitchell use her voice and guitar playing that much more effectively. That's one musical bonus in a set of songs that are perfect examples of quality songwriting.

— Tom Sowa



ELVIS IS BACK — Mr. Costello and the Attractions pull some wonders out of their remainder pile.

Comedy at high school

Central Valley High School theater department will present the comedy, "Deadwood Dick," today and Saturday at the school auditorium, starting at 8 p.m.

Sinatra to head Reagan inaugural

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Entertainer Frank Sinatra has been named director of entertainment for President-elect Ronald Reagan's inaugural gala, officials said Wednesday.

Sinatra will be responsible for coordinating selection of acts and other aspects of the stage production at the Capital Centre in Landover, Md., on Jan. 19, the night before Reagan's inauguration.

"Frank Sinatra has the task of insuring that the gala reflects the rich variety of American music and dance," said Robert K. Gray and Charles Z. Wick, co-chairmen of the presidential inaugural committee.

In a statement they released, Sinatra was quoted as saying he is honored to be have been chosen. His publicist, Lee Solters, said the singer is the only person who has performed inaugural entertainment duties for two presidents.

Paintings displayed

Recent paintings by Spokane artist Harley Phillips will be exhibited until Dec. 13 at the Cafe Delizioso, S123 Wall.

Hours are 8 a.m.-10 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday; 8 a.m.-midnight on Friday; 6 p.m.-midnight on Saturday.

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