

26-A THE MIAMI HERALD Wed., April 10, 1974

# Joni Mitchell—A Rare Pleasure

**By R. J. DEWHURST**  
Special To The Herald

Seven years ago when Joni Mitchell first appeared in America at the Newport Folk Festival, she was an awkward yet gifted singer-songwriter on her way to stardom at the age of 19.

Today, after disappearing from the concert scene for some time, Joni Mitchell is back. She is now very much the elegant and articulate songstress whose willowy presence and long blonde hair command audience attention with an almost regal assuredness.

Her music, although no longer solely folk, is a blend of the orchestrated pop sounds of her new album "Court and Spark" and her earlier material.

In Monday night's SRO concert at Miami Beach Auditorium she played for two hours, dividing her performance with an intermission that acted as a bridge between the rocking sounds of her backup group "Tom Scott and the L.A. Express," a very tight jazz-influenced group, and the acoustic portion of her show.

THERE WAS a genuine warmth that pervaded the performance. Miss Mitchell seemed very comfortable about being back on the concert tour, and paused between songs to answer questions from the audience and tell everyone about some of the things that have occupied her in her absence.

With the Scott ensemble's versatile range giving depth to her piano and guitar playing and the crystal qualities of her voice, the first half of the show featured a joyous version of "You Turn Me On," in addition to such balladic and plaintive change-of-pace numbers as "Free Man in Paris," which sounded very much like a lament written for her current boss, David Geffen of Asylum Records.

The first set ended with a de rigeur performance of "Woodstock," certainly a good song in its time but one that seems to have been

kicked into the ground much the same way as some old nightclub standards like "My Way."

After intermission, Miss Mitchell continued acoustically, playing the guitar.

piano and dulcimer, and performing with liting good humor many of her older numbers like "They Took Paradise and Put Up a Parking Lot."

Watching Miss Mitchell in

her satin suit, looking as fragile as the vase of roses next to her, it struck me that there is a large audience waiting to be entertained by intelligent, feminine voices like Joni Mitchell's.

There aren't enough like her, though, and she ought to make herself a little bit more available.

R. J. Dewhurst is a frequent reviewer of rock records and concerts for The Herald.

## MUSIC REVIEW

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