

An artist to be held in reverence

ROCK

By LES GIESLER

Joni Mitchell And Band
Doug Ashdown And Band
Capitol Theatre
March 11 and 12
Sydney Opera House
March 23, 24 and 25

JONI Mitchell didn't need the high-heeled shoes she was wearing to elevate or make her presence known. Black, they were. A light blue singlet was neatly tucked into ankle-tight pants. They, like the sport coat she wore, were colourless — goddess white.

She was well into the third song, Coyote, one of them, of her first Australian concert, before the 2,200

strong audience became aware of the four superb backing musicians. And it became apparent that this high priestess of the arts should never be reviewed, but only held in reverence.

It was therefore befitting that one of Australia's most talented singer-songwriters, Doug Ashdown, was selected to be Miss Mitchell's special guest artist throughout her entire national tour. With Sam McNally (keyboards), Doug Gallacher (drums), Air Supply's Rex Goh (lead guitar) and Greg Lyon (bass), Mr Ashdown delivered a no less than brilliant 30-minute set. Wearing black shoes and trousers, white sport coat and bright red shirt, Doug's vocal control and power was at his career's best as he sang updated arrangements of Willy's Shades, Winter In America, plus his new title-track single, The World For The Right Kind Of Man.

At first Joni Mitchell, with light blond hair extending three inches past her shoulder level, looked five years younger than her publicity photographs and a decade younger than self-portraits. By the end of her two hour and 20-minute show, she had taken on the charm and appearance of a confused and innocent teenaged school girl.

With perfection, the charismatic Canadian-born singer-songwriter unleashed 25 songs, folk, rock and jazz, from her 19-year career which had its beginning at The Mariposa Folk Festival in 1964.

And while Miss Mitchell is best known for more laid back ballads, the secret is now out that she can, in fact, rock your socks off — all with the aid of her husband, Larry Klein (bass), Russell Ferante (keyboards), Mike Landau (lead guitar) and Vincent Colaiuto (drums).



Joni Mitchell

However, Joni spent a third of the concert on stage alone, moving with dexterity from acoustic piano to guitar to dulcimer. Selections during the evening included Amelia, Woodstock, Both Sides Now and from her latest album, Wild Things Run Fast, the track You're So Square (Baby I Don't Care) and Chinese Cafe-Unchained Melody.