

## Paris Theatre, London - October 1970 (55 mins)

Tracks: *Song About The Midway, Gallery, The Good Samaritan, River, Blue, Carey, Case Of You, California, For Free, The Circle Game, Close Your Eyes*

This concert was first broadcast by the BBC shortly after recording, and then again in August 1986. Unfortunately it was medium wave (i.e. not FM broadcast). Joni starts out sounding fairly nervous but her confidence increases and is especially emboldened once she is joined by a slightly stoned sounding James Taylor on all the songs from Carey onwards.

The first half features solo Joni, on guitar, piano or dulcimer. Later on, Joni is joined by Taylor for a series of duets. There's lots of between song chat about Newport Festival, Crete, Neil Young, Appalachian dulcimers etc. Quite a lot of these songs were new at the time with the songs that would eventually appear on Blue being aired nine months prior to recording. The concert is played to a hushed and reverential audience which seems to contribute to Joni's unease.

(Richard Lee)

## Budokan, Tokyo, Japan - 7 March 1983 (90 mins)

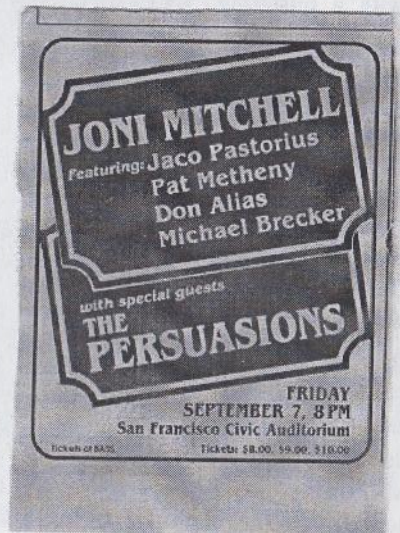
Tracks: *Freeman In Paris, Edith And The Kingpin, You Dream Flat Tyres, Refuge Of The Roads, Baby You're So Square, For Free, Big Yellow Taxi, Case Of You, God Must Be A Boogie Man, Underneath The Streetlight, Wild Things Run Fast, Don't Interrupt The Sorrow, Solid Love, Chinese Cafe, Help Me, You Turn Me On*

*I'm A Radio, Love, Both Sides Now, Underneath The Streetlight (repeat), Woodstock*

Very much a retrospective of the Mitchell canon, but my god, what an exceptionally dull band. Everything sounds like the worst aspects of the Wild Things... album. The band seem to make everything sound uninteresting, quite a feat with material of this quality! Its almost like a Joni Mitchell cover band. Highlights are solo renditions of *For Free, Big Yellow Taxi, Case Of You and Woodstock*, but with a band like this its not surprising she didn't tour again until 1994!

### Memorabilia

In each issue we hope to be able to share various pieces of Joni memorabilia. Here, courtesy of Richard Lee we have a newspaper advert for a 1979 concert on the Shadows and Light tour.



## A review of "Turbulent Indigo" (and in passing "Just Ice")

by Jeff Hankins

You've got Joni as ol' bandage-head Vincent on the cover, and other miniatures (at least they're miniatures by the time they've been reduced for the purpose of decorating the lyric sheet!) largely of cold scenes, snowy, craggy mountains... and you end with Job's Sad Song. Pretty bleak stuff, you have to say. But get yourself a copy of the sing-along to the album music book of Turbulent

face. Now that's more like it.

And incidentally - before we get into Turbulent Indigo proper - that's the kind of balance you'll find on 'Just Ice', a wonderful live recording of a concert at Toronto in December 94. You've got the same tortured songs there (the title, after all comes from the song 'Sex Kills' written after the LA riots) but the general mood is a more celebratory one, despite the sparseness of accompaniment (yes, just the guitar; it's been a long time since she's been that bare and unplugged and it sounds very good). Such is the mood of buoyancy that she even jokes at one point that she has to 'psyche herself down' to play those sad songs. Without getting into Hello magazine realms... there's enough evidence on the recording to tell us that the joy is partly attributable to a new love (what happened to the marriage, Joni?) which itself is the source of two new songs on the recording, one in fact co-written with the gentleman in question, one Donald Freed.

But even if this kind of lightness, this sense of balance, is missing from Turbulent Indigo, it in no sense suffers as an artistic achievement. And for reasons which the listener need not even bother trying to work out for himself, it does repay listen after listen after...



Indigo (any self-respecting Music Store) and you'll see there a photograph of Joni holding up her 'self-portrait as Van Gogh' and there's this enormous grin on her



The reviews that came out on its release, guided largely, I imagine, by comments which the artist herself had released in interviews that accompanied her concert performances around that time, focused on the fact that this is an album about abused women. Well yes. Some of the songs are about this. Two at least, unequivocally... but probably a few more too. And the two that are certainly about abused women are chillers. 'Not to Blame' features a poignantly understated lyric paralleled by an equally understated piano-accompaniment-and-melody, using as its starting point a news story of a woman beaten to death by a husband who presumably claimed he really loved her but she had it coming to her. Joni imagines the kind of male camaraderie which might have bolstered such evasion of responsibility... and leads us in the final verse to two images: one, of the unattended graveside of the dead wife, and the other of the way that the disrespect for women that engenders such horror can be passed too easily down the generations..

Equally chilling, the other graveside song, stimulated by another news story - of the exploitation of those classed as fallen women, by the Roman Catholic

Church in Ireland, put to work in the 'Magdalen Laundries' and given inhumanely compassionless burials. As horrifying as the exploitation itself (and the song portrays this most effectively through its 'narrator') is the fact that the fallen woman classification included those who by the late twenties had not married and were considered as culpable objects of temptation for the men of the villages! I've recently started singing this song



unaccompanied with an Irish accent, in my local folk club. It works surprisingly well. There is something of an old ballad lament to it; and its marriage of haunting melody and genuinely moving lyric for me at least give it a real striking quality.

'Sunny Sunday' may or may not be about an abused woman, I don't know - it hints at a woman trapped by the drudgery of domesticity, tempted to a violent response. That one little victory, that's all she needs. It's a sharp, neat lyric, finely honed. 'Sex Kills' actually chronicles all sorts of modern evils, which presumably she sees as contributing to the boiling-over of urban riots, like the ones in Los Angeles that provided the context for this song. There's a lot going on under the surface of a

deceptively simple song, but for me I would have liked the connections to have been more explicit... As it is we don't really explore the 'What is justice really?' theme, and more significantly, the song doesn't give us sufficient images to help us appreciate the way that sex does kill, though we could guess at meanings. I remember feeling the same kind of missed connection when I listened to 'The Three Great Stimulants' from the Dog Eat Dog album: immensely listenable and intriguing but the stages of perception which led the writer to her observations in the song seemed for me irritatingly missing.

Maybe Yvette is another abused women? We have here a beautiful vignette of an encounter with a woman of the night, but the nearest we come to social politics in 'Yvette in English' is that we're told she's 'quick to question her own worth'. The fact that it's co-written with David Crosby intrigues me; the rhythmic alliterative, imagist qualities of the lyric are pure Joni Mitchell, I would have thought ('Burgundy Nocturne tips and spills/They trot along nicely in the spreading stain..') but then again so is the melody - a finely structured one, again with a haunting and deceptive simplicity. If anyone doubts the new quality of Joni's voice, let them listen to Crosby's own version of the song recorded on the Thousand Roads album; it's a nice version, a really nice version, with a real charm to its accompaniment and a sweet listenableness in the voice; yet after a few plays I was finding it by comparison bland, lacking the bite of Joni's version. Hard to be objective, I know - but I don't think that's just an enthusiast's bias..

You could say then that these songs provide the thematic link in this collection of songs. And they're probably the strongest, too. I'll leave it to someone else to talk about 'Borderline' (is this *Both Sides Now* again? Or is it its antithesis? ). 'Last Chance Lost'; 'How Do You Stop' (how clever to take someone else's song and make it very much your own..) and the title song, an articulate observation about the discrepancy between the comfortable world of the art-lover and the discomforting artist. Just a final word about 'The Sire of Sorrow'. If Joni Mitchell has always had an interest in the Judaeo-Christian tradition of spirituality, I for one only noticed it surfacing on 'Wild Things..' In an otherwise lightweight album we had this musical reworking of the famous I Corinthians 13 chapter. Most strongly we see the interest on 'Night Ride Home' where 'Passion Play' gave us perspectives on the Messiah-Liberator from the viewpoints of Zaccheus and Mary Magdane. On the same album we have that outstanding interpretation of Yeats' apocalyptic vision of a 'Second Coming'. And now here we have a similar type of adaptation, a Job's eye view of suffering; and I must confess when I first heard it, it seemed too much an academic exercise. But it's grown on me, and I find more in it to appreciate than I at first heard. Not least, the mesmeric quality of a kind of repetitive, minimalist melody line.

Is minimalist the right word for what I mean? What I mean is that here is an artist who no longer constructs extravagant octave-jumping melodies, but now writes within a more modest vocal range and whose lines have subtleties that only reveal themselves on repeated playing.



The style itself is 'minimalist' in the same way; an evolved picking style now uniquely hers, a range of about fifty different tunings on the guitar (!! ) yet a series of fingering patterns that vary very little. A fascinating blend of the increasing search for newness and innovation (she talks on 'Just Ice' about

tuning her guitar to the tonal references of the British Columbia seascape for that day) and, conversely, comfortably employing a range and a style that have become her own undisputed and inimitable territory.

So how is it for an ear-cut-off, bleak landscape, tortured-with-visions album? Ah, it's good, it's surprisingly good.

## The Boys In The Band

In this series we highlight the careers of those musicians who have helped make Joni's albums so musically accomplished. One of the most loved of Joni's fellow musicians was *Jaco Pastorius*

John Francis Pastorius was born in Norristown, Pennsylvania USA on 1 December 1951. Encouraged by his father (a fellow musician) he learned to play bass, drums, guitar, piano and saxophone whilst in his teens. Soon he found work playing bass for visiting pop and soul acts. After having backed the Temptations and the Supremes his reputation began to spread.

Suitably impressed, Bobbi Colomby (drummer with *Blood, Sweat And Tears*) arranged the recording of Jacos first album,



*Jaco Pastorius* (1975), featuring future Mitchell sidemen Don Alias, Pat Metheny and Wayne Shorter. A year later, he was invited to play on Pat Metheny's debut LP. Later that year Jaco was asked to join influential jazzers *Weather Report*, contributing to their *Heavy Weather* album. By this time he had developed a cult following, with his virtuoso performance on fretless bass, combined with high jinks on stage.

Between 1976 and 1980 Jaco played bass on four Joni Mitchell

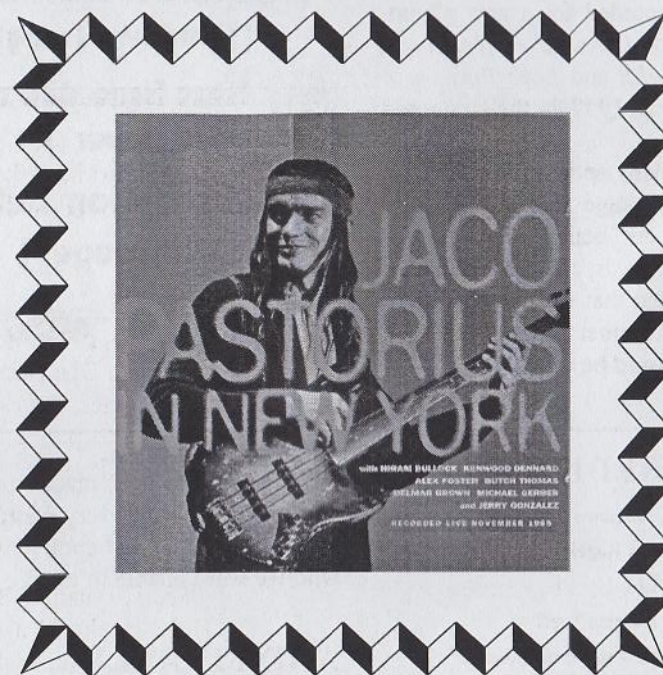
albums, *Hejira*, *Don Juans Reckless Daughter*, *Mingus* and was in the band for the *Shadows And Light* tour. *Hejira* arguably featured his finest work, where his technique and sensitivity gelled with Joni's finely crafted compositions, playing single notes, chords, harmonics, sometimes swooping, sometimes flying, clanging, crashing, growling and purring, his distinctive style to the fore at all times.

In 1980 he formed his own band *Word Of Mouth* and toured for three years. Live recordings from 1985 of *New York Club* sessions were posthumously released in

1993 (*Jaco Pastorius In New York*). Pastorius also recorded with some of the top names in jazz.

Unfortunately Jaco fell victim to manic depression and alcoholism and in 1987 suffered fatal injuries in a fight outside the Midnight Club in Fort Lauderdale. He died aged 36.

Jaco Pastorius has been called the most influential bassist since Charles Mingus (yet another of Joni's musical partners) and he will be missed. He gave us some great music.



In the next issue of *Shadows & Light*

Taking Risks - Mitchell cover versions, the good and the not so good

Wilson & Alroys Record Reviews - "We listen to the lousy records so you won't have to"  
How do Joni's albums rate?