

Entertainment/Arts



Joni Mitchell

# Joni Mitchell's Mingus tribute 'lovely, lyrical'

By JACK GARNER  
Gannett News Service

Joni Mitchell has long experimented with an original concept — the merging of folk and jazz music strains. Several of her albums, most notably the live "Miles of Aisles," employed jazz session players to give a contemporary jazz flavor to her folk ballads.

This album is a full-scale plunge into jazz, in the form of a tribute album to the late jazz bassist and composer Charles Mingus. The album was begun as a collaboration — with Mitchell cementing her lyrics to Mingus melodies. But when Mingus died in Mexico on January 5, as the album neared completion, it became a tribute set.

Through jazz purists may disagree, I think it's lovely, lyrical and robust.

There are six extended songs, two by Mitchell and four by Mitchell and Mingus. Interspersed are taped conversations in which Mingus can be heard — including an eerie segment in which he talks about the kind of funeral he wants to have. Fortunately, the talk-

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ing segments are all quite short (none more than minute long) and they do give the album a special quality.

Supporting Mitchell are superb jazz musicians — Wayne Shorter on soprano sax, Herbie Hancock on electric piano and Jaco Pastorius on bass. Pastorius, in fact, is the third most dominant force on this album after Mingus and Mitchell. His unique electric bass soars, slithers and booms majestically through the proceedings. Pastorius also contributes a great horn arrangement for a funky romp, "The Dry Cleaner from Des Moines."

Mitchell's lyrics match the wit, intelligence and verve of Mingus' music — several are influenced by Mingus' autobiography, "Beneath the Underdog." Among the best songs (besides the great "Dry Cleaner") are her own "God Must Be a Boogie Man," an incisive attempt to define Mingus as a person, and "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat."

The most fascinating thing about this unusual album is Joni Mitchell's vocals. She reveals herself to be an excellent jazz vocalist. Her highly identifiable voice — as rich, fragile and lovely as fine crystal — becomes a marvelous instrument to be woven and wrapped around her lyrics and Mingus' music. She soothes and soars and stizzles.

## No FCC flack for FCC band

By MARK SCHWED  
United Press International

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Mention "FCC" and one thing comes to mind — the Federal Communications Commission.

That's why music industry lawyers advised a record company not to

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