

changes planned." So there.

massive concert in aid of the

— Mud Rumbelows, The Piazza.

3,000 fans go wild

Report by SHEILA WEBER

WHEN Joni Mitchell walked on stage at London's New Victoria Theatre, I thought the entire place would erupt.

The 3,000 or so people gave her a reception which clearly indicated their feelings, and this set the seal for the rest of the three-hour concert featuring Joni and her new backing group, Tom Scott and the LA Express.

The audience were with her all the way. Even the ones who had sat around on the pavement for hours just waiting for standing tickets. This was Sunday, and one of only three concerts staged in this country. The two shows originally planned for Saturday and Sunday were sell-outs within a few hours of the box office opening, so a third Monday date was added to cope with demand.

Three shows, same weekend, same venue, and that's your lot. A possible Manchester date was scrapped by the organisers so, once again, we in the North came out losers.

But it seems admirers of

Joni Mitchell may have better luck later in the year. Bill McAllister, who handled publicity for the tour, said commitments had prevented any extra time in England now, but that Joni hoped to be back, possibly after summer.

It was important to me to catch one of the London shows, so I made the effort of travelling there and back in one day. For anyone who didn't or couldn't make it, all I can say is — you missed a treat!

This was a superb performance in a concert with few drawbacks and well worth the 400-or-so-mile trip.

For those familiar with Joni's work, I should perhaps mention more popular numbers she has recorded such as "Big Yellow Taxi" and "Woodstock." To the initiated, she needs no introduction, and I am pleased to be able to report that her stage performance matched — if not bettered — the studio sound she produces.

The show opened with about thirty minutes of LA Express appearing with Joni

for the first time in this country. The sound was good and tight, if a little loud. When audiences become more accustomed to the line-up, LA Express could receive more deserved and individual appreciation.

Then Joni walked on and swung straight into "This Flight Tonight," with the LA Express. The band stayed on stage throughout the first half, accompanying Joni, who also played guitar and piano, to recent songs like "Free Man in Paris" and up-dated versions of early numbers. After the break, she came back to do a solo set and, for me, this was the highlight of the evening.

While the LA Express complement Joni's voice perfectly to produce a new and exciting sound, it still seemed a little incongruous to watch Joni Mitchell as part of a stage act. Maybe I am just a conservative at heart, and I suppose we will get use to the modern format, but she seemed to lose identity somewhat in the merger. There can be no doubt that together they



really had the crowd swinging, and I hope my initial reservations are unfounded.

With just her guitar and piano, Joni ran through some of her best-known numbers, each one receiving enthusiastic applause with just the first few bars. She chatted to the audience in between, seeming giggly and actually stopped in the middle of one story to ask: "Can you relate to this at all?" The crowd laughed with her and the show went on.

LA Express came back on stage for a grand finale. The audience went wild. A man leaped into the centre aisle waved his arms about in time to the music. Bouncers moved in and he returned to his seat.

But the fans wouldn't let it go there. They stamped and cheered until Joni was forced to come back and do a soft, piano accompanied encore of "Last Time I Saw Richard."

The London appearances follow a thirty-city tour of America, again for the first time with the LA Express. The venues were almost identical to the ones previously played by Bob Dylan on his come-back tour and Press reports were enthusiastic to say the least.

FASHION changes in flowers just as it does in clothes, and now it seems it is once again the turn of the various members of the primula family to achieve stardom.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the polyanthus and auriculas were members of the exclusive group of florists flowers, the term "florist" then meaning someone who grew and bred flowers especially for the show bench.

The florists became highly skilled at breeding for certain characteristics, such as the gold edge to the petals of a polyanthus, which they classed as gold laced varieties. There were striped varieties that were favourites of the Victorians, and the grey edged auriculas.

Most of these had almost disappeared from the

Flowers in fashion

programme of hybridisation is being continued that started in America in the 1930's. With seed of polyanthus and primroses from Suttons of Reading, primroses of twenty-five different shades have been produced, at the same time keeping the blooms to size and so not losing their charm. Using the pinky mauve Marie Crousse, an old double primrose, as a pollen plant has resulted in various shades of doubles, still with the silver edge to the petals, that are more vigorous than the old plants.

Primroses like dividing fairly often so you could soon build up a collection from one or two plants. They like a moist soil with plenty of peat or leaf mould added.

There were some beautiful daffodils at the show, and I particularly liked Binkie, a trumpet variety in lemon yellow.

The hybridisers have also been busy with this flower, but not, to my mind, for the better. For me, a daffodil must have a nice, big trumpet, but in the split corona hybrids the trumpet has been split and flattened