



Joni Mitchell

Albums

One Step into the Future

FOR THE ROSES by Joni Mitchell

My dear S _____
I am driven to quotation:
"If people were interested in art,
you as an artist would receive wider
recognition—"

Wider?
Of course.
Not deeper.
Deeper?
Love, for example, is deeper
than flattery."

That's from e.e. cummings's introduction to *The Enormous Room*. Contrast with this, from the same place:

"I'm afraid you've never been hungry."

Don't be afraid."
Now, Joni Mitchell is open to criticism from many directions: that she's trying to pander to the public, that she's finding it difficult to keep up to former lyrical standards, that there is a limit to her originality (and she was already as original as she is going to get) and certainly a number of others.

From the struggling young artist perspective, however, it should be considered that: first, to continue in the same vein can be the easy way out, whether the tradition being followed is one you've created yourself or something you picked up off the streets; second,

"the same standards always apply in the same way" is an attitude that has always undermined art; and third, an artist has a duty to experiment, even if it causes a loss of face, exile, or nothing at all.

I believe most would agree that Joni Mitchell has always been bold; she is not afraid of presenting something that is not likely to be accepted. Her first album was a totally different approach to what most people thought of as songwriting. I believe she has kept up this attitude.

Furthermore, one of her strongest traits is her recognition of what defines a song. And unlike most people, her definition is not limited by the existence of a catchy tune. She realizes, more than anyone I can think of, that a song is a complex totality. It has word, it has music, it has arrangement, expression and many other, subtler elements. Many people think the words are incidental. Some, like Cohen and a lot of the French "poetic" songwriters, consider music mere background. Neither is true.

Lyrics and music interact, transforming each other into something neither can be by itself. Some dim perception of this undoubtedly lurks in the back of the mind of most songwriters, at least the ones who get anywhere at all. But the public demands so little of them and they think they're doing great when the music they produce is melodramatic or catchy—or simply well-advertised. They consider their work profound when it only acts as a mirror for the public's image of the truth.

With that thumbnail sketch of Things The Way I See Them in Mind, I will offer this evaluation of Joni Mitchell: She has been, and still is, the best songwriter I have ever heard. She has certain limits, to be sure, but she always attempts (and usually successfully) to overcome them.

She is aware of the mechanics of language and that, while alliteration and imagery can be good, they can also be a bore. The same holds true for music: mere complexity is not a measure of its worth. There's something in the total effect that has to be accounted for.

There are weaknesses in all of her albums. The first isn't as easy to listen to as the others. You might say that some of her later songs aren't very deep. Well, neither is "Night in the City," "Big Yellow Taxi," or "I Don't Know Where I Stand." In fact, most of her songs aren't deep, they're just finely crafted and that's what makes them art. What you say takes precedence over how you say it.

You say *Roses* gave you the impression she was just putting

music to words? Well, most people do the opposite. One can be as bad as the other but it doesn't have to be bad at all, as long as the result is a related whole and not a mere patchwork. There are melodies on the album which are often more subtle than what we're used to from her.

If you criticize the new songs, apply the same criteria to songs like "Blue Boy." I think you'll agree that, far from rejecting her past work, Joni Mitchell has simply refused to let it limit her. She's always just one step into the future.

H. K. Jordan

Bundles of Joy

"To them, that's really living."
—James Tate

It's beginning to look a lot like an underhand, done to a three-quarter crisp—as long as there's some left.

But once a year I find a dog-bitten mailman stretchouthand—his ears are cold.

We wish you one with no end in sight; slid down the left line like a bean can—keep the change.

When he's dry enough we can plug him in and watch him spark.

—Q.E.D.

New Riders At McDonough

New Riders of the Purple Sage headline a concert at 8:30 p.m. tomorrow in McDonough Gym, sponsored by the Student Entertainment Commission. Livingston Taylor and Jon Poussette-Dart also are scheduled to appear.

"New Riders was chosen because it is supposed to be one of the strongest acts on tour," said Mark Kenyon (Coll.'74), S.E.C. concert director, "and Livingston Taylor was chosen because of his appearance in recent student preference polls."

Kenyon added that he "expects four hours of music with New Riders playing for two" and that ticket sales are the best ever at Georgetown for a concert.

Theatre

Patience Is Paying Off

PATIENCE At Stage One, Tonite To Sat., Dec. 9 - 8 P.M.

Once upon a time, not so very long ago, there was a drama club (called Mask and Bauble) dedicated to the proposition that theatre should be professionally done, should be thoughtful, incisive, exciting and experimental. Unfortunately, the club sometimes neglected the fact that theatre (whether it be drama or comedy) should also be *entertaining*. Theatre should be done for, and not to the audience.

Well, forget all that! Now, at Stage One, *Patience* is playing. Director John PiRoman has gifted us with one of the most brilliantly done productions of this, or any season. *Patience*, thanks to the skillful touch of PiRoman and musical director Nikki Stern, is professional, thoughtful, incisive, exciting, experimental, delightful, refreshing—beyond this reviewer's finest expectations.

While we're at it, let me also congratulate Paul R. Hume, whose lighting design is one of the most tasteful and economic; Louise Knauf, whose set is light and airy and "Miss Gussie," whose sense of humor is fully expressed in her

"Prithee Pretty Maiden." She can come off with bittersweet satire or graceful humor with incredible ease and understanding. Nor is she alone.

Robert Pappas (Reginald Bunthorne) is an excellent mimic; his Mick Jagger bits are always well-timed, absurdly lustful and grotesque. His performance of "Am I Alone and Unobserved?" is admirable; the changes of mood and tempo are timed to keep the audience with him at every moment. We can only hope that we see more of him at Stage One.

Complementing Pappas' gutsy Jagger is Will Cooke (Archibald Grosvenor) as a narcissistic, bubble-gum wonder who never quite got over his own pretty looks. Everything about Cooke's performance was calculated to leave you roaring with laughter and begging for more. His entrance was absurdly funny, his timing precise and his costume well opposite Miss Wright (particularly in "Prithee Pretty Maiden"), and he betrays in himself (for instance, in "The Magnet and The Churn") a deft, almost music-hall skill.

Nor can we overlook the performance turned in by Miss Mary Ellen

ment and humor. Such large numbers as "The Soldiers of our Queen" and "In a Doleful Train" come off with excellent balance; the contrast between the two is exceptionally fine. The Finale to Act One is every thing that a finale should be. And numbers such as "If Saphir I Choose to Marry" are handled in a way that is utterly, irrelevantly beautiful.

Hats off also to John O'Connell (Colonel), who takes on the super-speed of a G. & S. goody with true spirit. His tongue is indeed quick and wondrous. Congratulations to Richard Giannotto (Duke). He has a very pleasant voice; it's a pity that he has had so few opportunities to display it. He is particularly pleasing in the Act One Finale, as well as in his number, "If Saphir I Choose to Marry."

If you haven't seen *Patience*, by all means, get over to Stage One and see it, hear it and laugh! I doubt that such an entertaining evening could ever be in store for you anywhere else. We can only say that it is certainly about time that the utterly irrelevant humor of the old team of Gilbert and Sullivan should hit this campus.

Michael P. Malloy