

Joni Mitchell Show Is Labeled Miracle

By FRED A. PIPES

Sometime last night a miracle happened. Joni Mitchell, a popular rock singer, came to town and after several hours of performance, she had captured the minds and attention of a packed Assembly Center. Her voice, her style and her love for her audience did something extraordinary to those lucky enough to attend.

Miss Mitchell came on stage quietly, or rather it seemed more like she crept on during a song and took control of the stage. She appeared tired and thin and was not at all the great bulwark of a star one imagined; she was more of a frail child needing protection.

But after two and one-half hours of total concentrated performance, the exhausted artist attempted to leave the stage, much to the dismay of her audience, which rose to their feet and clamored for an encore. Several minutes passed and a few imagined she was going for good when Miss Mitchell re-appeared smiling on stage.

Few Smiles
Often during her performance, she was unwilling to give smiles freely, and only once when a total fan screamed "I love you" did she even acknowledge the greeting. She was completely involved with her music, nothing would interrupt it, and the audience amazingly respected her wish to do just that.

Then she drifted back into the melancholy and sang ballad after ballad with themes sometimes bordering on the morbid, but with a gentle reproach to society for making her sing them in such manner.

Her style was extremely haunting and during the performance. The evening did not seem real at all and returning to the damp atmosphere out-

side the Assembly Center was total shock to numbed senses. Once she did change the quiet pattern and broke into merry "boogie" with the musicians while the audience stamped, clapped and in some way kept time with the beat.

Miss Mitchell fought a cold throughout the concert and her fans appreciated every note that came from the folk singer. Several times she was visibly straining to reach a high note or difficult one and once grasped, relief would automatically flash across the faces of the crowd. They loved her completely and couldn't bear the thought that she might stop.

Back-Up Musicians
To mention Miss Mitchell without mentioning her back-up musicians, Tom Scott and the L. A. Express, would be the same as saying nothing at all. They were in themselves superb and a combination of the most unique musicians ever set upon a stage.

The most observed was the constantly-in-motion guitar player who either attempted to devour his shoes or contemplate the activity on the floor near his feet. The others were all together with their rhythm, like a good soup.

But perhaps the best was the leader of the group, Tom Scott, who played the saxophone the way cajuns peel crawfish—fast and smooth. His ability to play different types of music lent itself greatly to the evening.

In one of her soft, mournful songs, Miss Mitchell sang of the millions lost who were searching to be found. She made them cry. She made them feel every emotion between here and forever. But in the few hours that she took over Baton Rouge, she found an audience that refused to release her.

6 Indicted For Bribes

HAHNVILLE, La. (AP)—A state grand jury has indicted five South Louisiana Port Commission members and the owner of a consulting firm on charges of public bribery and theft.

The consultant, Eugene L. Wallace Jr., was only last week indicted by a federal grand jury in another case, involving the controversial Family Health Foundation of New Orleans. Wallace is chief executive officer of the foundation.

The state charges, announced Thursday by state Atty. Gen. William Guste and St. Charles Parish Dist. Atty. Melvin P. Barre, accused Wallace of conspiring to pay \$51,000 in bribes to Port Commissioners Stuart Creel, Henry Hymel, Willis Poirrier, Raymond LeBouef and Gerald Alexander.

In a separate indictment, Wallace was accused of defrauding the state of \$68,500. The port commissioner, the indictment said, "agreed to accept the amount of \$51,000 in U. S. currency, to be paid \$300 per month to each of the aforementioned commission members over a 34-month period."

It went on to say that the purpose of the payments was to influence the awarding of a contract for consulting services to I. D. Consultants, Inc., Wallace's firm.

In May of 1972, the indictment said, the port commissioners voted to assign the contract, which previously had been held by another firm, Development Dynamics, Ltd.

The theft indictment against Wallace accused him of billing the Port Commission for retainer fees, consulting fees and travel expenses "knowing

full well that in truth and fact no such services had been rendered nor travel expenses incurred."

Creel, Hymel, Alexander, LeBouef and Poirrier all were members of the Port Commission during the times covered by the two indictments, and all except Poirrier still serve on the commission.

The indictments climaxed a three-day grand jury session at Hahnville. Guste said the evidence presented to the panel was accumulated during a three-month investigation by his office's organized crime and racketeering unit in cooperation with the district attorney and U. S. Attorney Gerald Gallinghouse of New Orleans.

It was Gallinghouse who presented evidence to a federal grand jury which recently indicted Wallace on fraud charges relating to the Family Health Foundation. Three other top foundation officials also were indicted in that case.

The Family Health indictments dealt with purchase of mobile health clinics, some of which never were delivered.

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Governor's Brother Testifies Of Hearing About Bid-Rigging

By BILL BANKSTON
Gov. Edwards' brother Marion testified today that he told the state's chief executive about an alleged bid-rigging scheme shortly after he heard about it from the two principal parties involved.

The governor's brother was a witness for the state today in the continuing public bribery trial of Robert L. Baskin, former head of the State Bond and Building Commission.

Harry Layne of Covington, president of Lassco, Inc., Metairie, and the state's chief witness, testified yesterday that he agreed to cooperate with Baskin as a possible subcontractor to construct a new State School for the Deaf.

Truck Driver Robbed, Forced To Strip by 2

A truck driver told police he was robbed yesterday by two men who flagged him down at the intersection of Gus Young and North Foster Drive.

The two got into the truck, asking him for a ride because their own vehicle was disabled, he said.

One of them then pulled a gun on him and had him turn off onto 48th Street, the driver said.

The two robbers then had him halt, get out of the truck, disrobe and lie on the ground. They kicked him, took his wallet containing \$15 and two rings, the victim said.

The two walked away and the driver got dressed and went looking for police.

Baskin was indicted in connection with the bidding on contracts for construction of the new school.

Layne was cross-examined by the defense this morning, repeating much of the testimony he gave yesterday.

Marion Edwards said he learned of the scheme from Layne, who was dissatisfied because Baskin had allegedly not paid off.

Layne's company was to submit excessively high bids or no bids at all in connection with the construction project apparently so that another bidder could get the job, testimony has indicated.

The governor's brother said that after he had heard from Layne, he called Baskin about the complaint and that Baskin told him the deal was off. Edwards said he then contacted his brother. Shortly thereafter, Baskin was asked to take leave of his position while a grand jury investigation was conducted.

Layne testified yesterday that James Donelon, Gov. Edwards' executive counsel, was present when the alleged bribe took place. Layne said he complained to Marion Edwards when the deal began to fall apart.

Barges Loose Near Orleans

GRAMERCY, La. (UPI)—The Coast Guard said today that 23 barges had broken loose on the Mississippi River about 50 miles above New Orleans.

The barges breaking free somewhere near Gramercy were last reported about 45 miles above New Orleans.

The tugs Terry James and Rusty were rounding up the barges.

Baskin was expected to give Layne \$5,000 as reimbursement of expenses incurred with submitting a "complimentary bid" and to give another \$5,000 to Donelon to take care of a campaign debt when Donelon ran for Jefferson Parish district attorney, Layne told a five-man jury in Judge Dan LeBlanc's section of court.

Layne said he asked Donelon to be at the meeting so in case of a slip or misunderstanding, Donelon would be a witness to the deal. He added he did not

"recall Donelon saying anything" as the deal was discussed with Baskin.

At the time of the bidding, according to Layne, he was working on getting a contract to do the cabinetry work at the LSU Veterinary Medicine School.

From Layne's testimony and the opening statement by Asst. Dist. Atty. Tony Graphia, the jury heard that Layne was to submit a high, or "complimentary," bid on the Deaf School work so that Layne's company would, in turn, get the Veterinary School contract.

When it appeared he was not going to get the cabinetry contract, Layne testified he com-

plained to "Marion Edwards and Mr. Donelon."

Gov. Edwards called for the Deaf School contract to be rebid when he found out about the apparent irregularities in the procedures.

James McPherson, New Orleans defense attorney for Baskin, told the jury the deal was hatched by Layne and Donelon and Baskin's mistake

was not going to Dist. Atty. Ossie Brown with the facts once he was approached.

McPherson also questioned in his opening statement why Donelon waited some three months from the time the alleged bribe took place to go to the governor.

Donelon and Marion Edwards are also slated to testify, along with Baskin.

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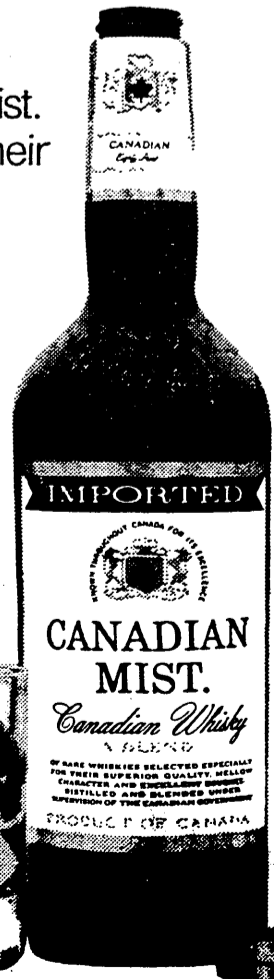


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