

COHEN, JONI MITCHELL COMING!

Isle of Wight plans to add Sebastian

LEONARD COHEN, Mungo Jerry, and the Pentangle have definitely been signed to appear at the Isle of Wight Festival. And negotiations are also under way to bring over Joni Mitchell and John Sebastian.

Fiery Creations' Pete Harrigan told the MM: "It looks pretty certain that this will be the biggest collection of American artists ever assembled at one time in Britain."

Bert Block, the festival's American agent, confirmed this week that Cohen has been exclusively contracted to play there on Sunday, August 30.

This is in response to thousands of letters which have flooded into the festival office on the island, requesting Cohen's appearance.

Friday's bill stars Chicago, while Mungo Jerry join the Who on Saturday. Pentangle line up with Richie Havens and Cohen on Sunday.

Tickets go on sale on July 3 at 250 agencies throughout the British Isles and a similar number of agencies on the Continent and in America.

This weekend, three top West Coast managers are flying to the island to look over the site and negotiate appearances for their bands with Fiery Creations, who have been receiving hundreds of letters and phone calls every week asking for information about the event.

Beach Boys personal manager, Fred Vail, told the MM that the group is "tremendously keen" to play at the Isle of Wight.

Festival organiser Ron Faulk countered rumours that Sly and the Family Stone would appear by saying: "The Family Stone is definitely not contracted to play at the festival."

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LEONARD COHEN: huge demand for him to appear at Isle of Wight

American students ground Air Force

GINGER BAKER'S AIR FORCE are the latest victims of student unrest in America. Their tour, set to begin on Saturday, has been cancelled. A spokesman told the MM: "We have been told by our American agents that the people who normally buy tickets for rock concerts are at the moment more concerned with using the money for anti-war purposes. If they feel this is more important than rock concerts, it is impossible to argue with them. This is not something unique to Ginger Baker's Air Force. Several top English groups in the United States at the moment are having to cancel dates. But with a band this size the problems are more acute." It is hoped the tour will take place in the autumn. Ginger and his musicians were all very disappointed at the cancellation. Baker told the MM: "Let's hope they stop the war." (More groups hit: see page 32).

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FROM AMERICA: MELODY MAKER EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS

by JACOBA ATLAS in Los Angeles

JONI MITCHELL IS A POET WHOSE TIME HAS COME. Because she uses the vehicle of music, her words and thoughts reach out to countless minds. With Joni, there is no restriction of reading or schooling; she sings her poetry and brings it to the people.

In the past year, Joni has emerged as a major force in music. Her songs, once the exclusive property of a few, have become the catchword of many.

No longer is she only known to the few connoisseurs who read album credits; instead her creations are sought after and her work applauded.

Her songs are reflections of a very feminine way of looking at life. All too seldom in music, and indeed in any art form, is the female view of the world set down. Joni does just that.

One critic suggested that women think in a complicated manner and speak in simple terms. This could certainly be said of Joni's material; but her simplicity reveals a sensitivity and awareness that few composers possess today. With phrases like "know that I will know you" and "while she's so busy being free," we are given an entire picture of a woman's mind and heart at work.

Joni has been seeing situations and storing them in her memory and in her music since her birth in Canada some 25 years ago.

She originally wanted to be an artist, a desire she still retains. Interestingly enough, most of her musical adjectives relate directly to a painter's vocabulary: "umbrella's bright on a grey background," Joni describes her home as "a musical one" and her interest in writing "was there since (she) I was nine."

In the mid-sixties Joni came to America and played in clubs, travelling the folk circuit in the East, bravely waiting out her turn to make the mark.

But the single folk singer was on the way out — rock was coming in, and managers figured with a Joan Baez and Judy Collins, who needed a Joni Mitchell.

Fortunately, fellow folk singer Tom Rush, heard Joni's songs and introduced her material to his following and the writer to Judy Collins.

The result was an invitation to sing at the Newport Folk Festival and Miss Collins' recordings of "Both Sides Now" and "Michael From Mountains."

Exalted

Her present manager, Elliot Roberts, brought her to the attention of Reprise records. Her first album was "Song To A Seagull." It sold only moderately; but she became an underground "find." With "Clouds," Joni's second album, it was evident that she had arrived; with "Ladies of the Canyon" her third album, it is evident that she is exalted. With each album there has been more music, more of an effort to bring in other musicians; but despite added instruments and group singing on various stages, Joni remains forcefully a loner.

"I used to be in a duo and that was the last time I played with anyone else except for my friends. I like to play with Graham (Nash) and Judy (Collins), but we sing together for fun.

"I flat-pick my music and I know there are places to be filled in. There could be more texture to it. When I finger pick, I play the melody line and in many cases that's the way it stays. When I've finished a song, I've honed it to a point where it's a completed song to me. And anything that is added . . . might to other people sound better and more complete, but to me it sounds extraneous.

"I'm very serious about my music and so I like that seriousness to remain. When I play with other people, I like that to be for fun. It's on another level . . . a looser level where a sense of my own imperfections doesn't enter into it, because it's just for my own pleasure. It

JONI: Let's make life more romantic

would be difficult for me now to learn to play with other people, like teaching an old dog new tricks."

Until "Ladies of the Canyon," Joni's melodies have emphasized her past association with folk music: simple and straightforward, they encompassed little of what rock has brought to the music scene.

However, her present association with rock musicians has somewhat liberated Joni from the confines of the folk idiom, and you can hear that change in "Ladies." "I guess there will just come a time when I'm hearing more music than I'm able to play and then the change will come about naturally."

Joni does not see adding musicians as back-up men as a step toward co-writing. "I don't think I could do that for the same reasons I can't play professionally with other people. I know what colours I want to use, I'm too opinionated . . . no that's not the word I want. It's just that I feel too strongly about what the finished thing should be, whether it's music or a painting."

"I mean, how many times do you hear about painters working together? The Fool are three painters who paint together, but how many times do you hear of that? I feel very much about my music like I feel about my painting."

"If I were working for a master and he came up to me and said 'Well, if you put a brush stroke of red in that corner, you'll save it' I would have to reject his way of saving it or improving it until I could find a solution of my own which was equally right."

Joni's strong desire to be independent and an entity unto herself can seem at times a contradiction with her own gentleness and music. However, it somehow isn't. Early on Joni was criticised for being too feminine, too romantic ("secrets and sharing sodas that's how our time began").

But just how a woman can be too feminine isn't really clear to Joni who sees the lack of womanliness in her contemporaries as one of the worst aspects of progress.

"I think there's a lack of romance in everything today. I went to see the film version of 'Romeo and Juliet' which is supposed to be the epitome of romance and I thought it was very unromantic. Everything was too perfect."

"I think that women are getting a bum deal. I think we are being misguided. It's just follow the leader. Like for a long time I wouldn't go

out without wearing my false eyelashes, because I thought that without them I was plain. You know, that's really silly isn't it? But that's what happened."

Now she rallies her defences

For she fear that one will ask her

For eternity . . .

"Cactus Flower"

"There's the fear of the big hurt, we're taught to be very cool. And be non-committal. That's the thing about places like Italy. Like they're encouraged to say 'oh I love you my darling' and then if it doesn't work out they all say 'poor little Emilio his heart is breaking' and nobody puts him down."

"You know, they're all very kind, they shelter him because he's mourning openly for the loss of someone. Whereas in America you stifle that so much . . . well, anything that's repressed and goes underground really gets distorted. You don't know what you want after a while if it's repressed."

Sometimes in the evening

He would read to her

Roll her in his arms

"Blue Boy"

"Even if I'm writing about myself, I try to stand back and write about myself as if I were writing about another person. From a perspective. I wrote this one song. I can't remember the name of it now, a triangular story where I wrote about myself from the point of another woman. It's written about one person and myself, and still another rolled into one. To give the person more dimensions."

"It's really tough because I want to explain to you how I write, but I can't. It's just standing back and getting another perspective on it. I step back and carry on a conversation with myself."

"It's almost schizophrenic. You lay out a case and argue with yourself about it and with no conclusions. But I have to write a long time after something has happened, because when I'm in the middle of something I'm totally emotional and blind. I can't get a perspective on it."

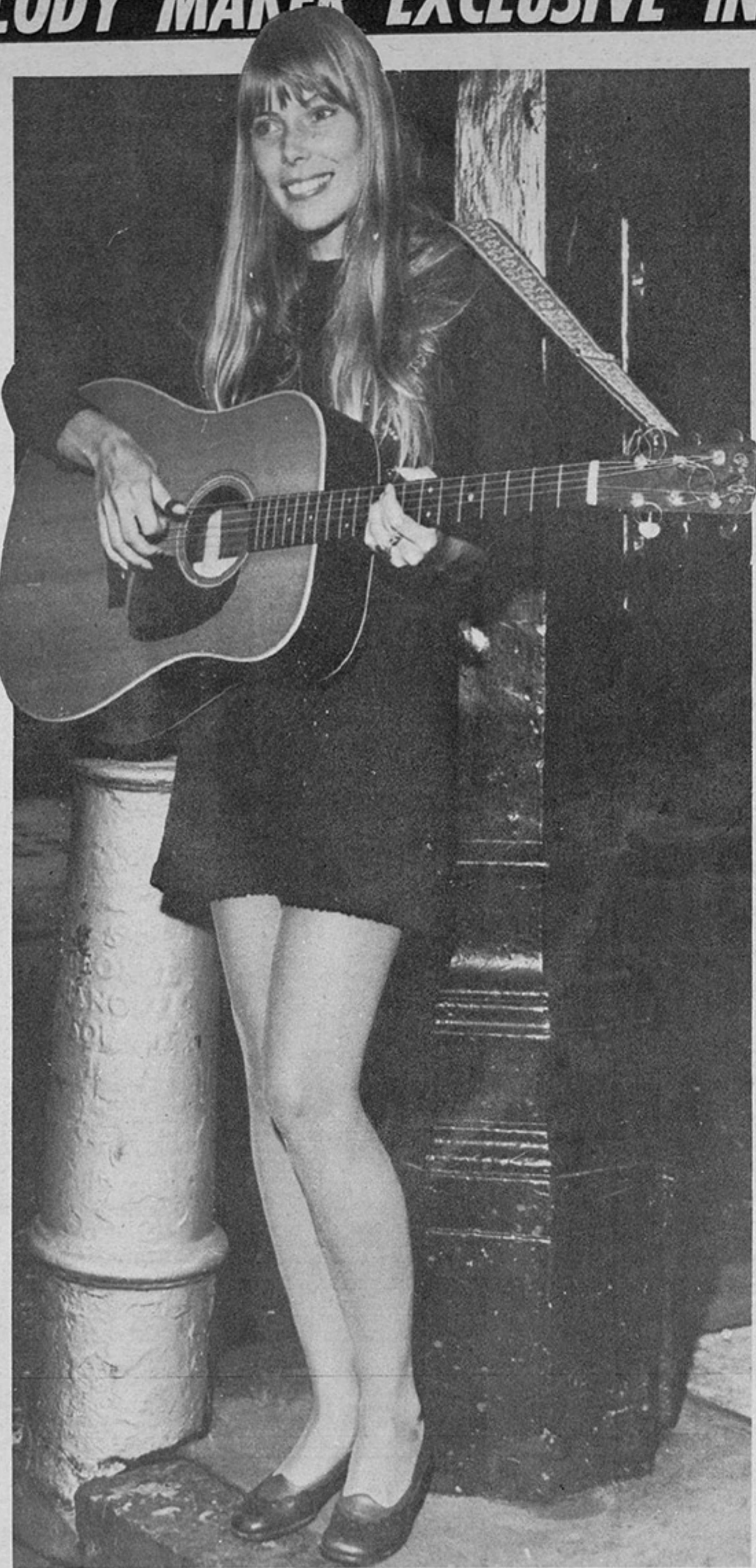
I asked him would he hurry

But he crawled the canyons slowly

Thru the buyers and sellers

"Nathan La Frenee"

Like many poets, Joni insists that her lyrics be worked over until every word is absolutely necessary and cannot be altered. She admires both Dylan and Leonard Cohen, although each for their differences.



JONI MITCHELL: "Women are being misguided."

"Leonard's economical, he never wastes a word. I can go through Leonard's work and it's just like silk. Dylan is coarse and beautiful in a rougher way. I love that in him. I think I'm a belated fan, at least my enthusiasm is growing the more I live in urban places."

"The last two years have made me a very strong fan; but before I lived in cities I couldn't see what he meant. I'd never know what the street meant. I was sheltered, I hadn't seen the injustices. Now I can understand him."

Her ability to understand and transform has made her almost a legend in the United States. Critics and listeners alike rhapsodize over her

songs and her psyche. She is fulfilling something of a "goddess" need in American rock, a woman who is more than a woman; a poet who expresses a full range of emotions without embarrassment.

Her legend is beginning to obscure her work; because she is virtually without competition (Joan Baez and Judy Collins don't have the output; Buffy Sainte Marie doesn't have the immediate newness), she is without comparison. Her work for now, goes almost totally without question, without debate.

Now I play if you have the money
Or if you're a friend to me
"For Free"

Success has worked its hardships on Joni's life as well. With sold-out concerts comes demands on personal time and involvement. After "Ladies of the Canyon" she split to Greece for sun and silence. She said she needed the time to be alone and find her creativity again.

Her house, redwood and hand-honed, high in Laurel Canyon (Los Angeles) stands empty and waiting.

One of her many treasures within the house is a grandfather clock which refuses to tick . . . it's too old to be repaired . . . it stands idle, useless, and beautiful.

That in itself tell us as much about the lady as anything she might write.

We are stardust
We are golden
And we've got to get ourselves
Back to the garden.
"Woodstock"

'Women are being misguided'