

# Joni Mitchell: Court and Spark

# OVERVIEW



Court and Spark  
Joni Mitchell  
Asylum Records

photo by Rooke

Two albums ago, Joni remarked that, "All good romantics pass this way, Cynical and drunk, And boring someone in a dark cafe . . .

Acid, booze and ass, Needles, guns and grass, Lots of laughs, lots of laughs."

It's afternoon, and she's still in the land of Barangrill, over there in the dark corner by herself. Occasionally she gets up and drops a quarter in the Wurlitzer machine, and if you sit down by her, she'll talk to you. This time 'round,

"I can't find my goodness, I lost my heart Oh sour grapes Because I lost my heart."

Court and Spark is the latest installment of the Joni Mitchell Story. It's easily her best and it's been laid on a solid foundation of previous albums, notably her last effort, For the Roses. One cannot but sense that Joni may have peaked on this album. It's such a beautiful album, so flawless, that it appears that it will be difficult to reach that pinnacle again. She's also made some paramount statements about her inner struggle. Hopefully she hasn't sapped her strength.

Neil Young has a pet cloud that he takes for a walk on a leash. James Taylor's brain has the consistency of soup. Dylan is not the genius he pretends to be. And Cat Stevens is reputed to be so vain. But unlike her peers Joni Mitchell radiates a sincerity and warmth, that is not common in the music biz. Although she's a commercial success, and amidst an entertainment shortage crisis — an artistic

success, she's managed to retain her true identity. Ms. Mitchell's music is poetry, not boogie. Her lyrics are not riddles but are simple and deep. Why be pretentious when you're singing about love, and meaning of life.

Joni is no longer a lone minstrel pickin' her guitar. The voice is accompanied by background harmonies, choruses and her own dubbed-in backup vocals. Her piano and the orchestration is rich, creamy and smooth. Everything blends in well, and there's no filler material whatsoever to ruin the overall effect. Even the little ditty, "Twisted" has its place, as well as "Raised on Robbery". The art work on the cover, by Joni, fits the theme also. It's a picture of a mountain peak, set apart from the other peaks, embracing itself. Or also it's trying to dig out some change from its back pocket. No money, no honey, no funny.

One by one Joni describes the trips she's been on — lovers, people in the music industry, and all the other people who have tried to pigeon hole and fit her into the right place. They've frustrated her while they were molding her. Now "the peacock is afraid to parade," because

"Up in a sterilized room, Where they let you be lazy, Knowing your attitude's all wrong, And you got to change, And that's not easy, Where is the lion in you to defy him When you're this weak And this spacey . . . You really can't give love in this condition Still you know how you need it."

Then she's been to "People's Parties", where she's mingled with all the other lonely, hip, plastic swingers with their passport smiles. She may be over 30 but she hangs around with the Dylan-bred, once radical, but now the laid back generation.

"I told you when I met you I was crazy  
Cry for us all Beauty  
Cry for Eddie in the corner  
Thinking he's nobody  
And Jack behind his jokes  
And stone-cold Grace behind her fan  
And me in my frightened silence  
Thinking I don't understand . . .  
I'm just living on nerves and feelings  
With a weak and lazy mind  
And coming to people's parties  
Fumbling, deaf and blind."

She's counted lovers, like she's counted railroad cars. They've all left her empty in her search for something more. Here's hoping she stays clear of the spaghetti heads and gurus in the music biz. Joni is delicate and lonely. Some of the things she says may well mirror our own expressions, if we were to turn the volume down. She admits to being out of her head, to being a child and a fallen angel. Can't help thinking about the "clown" who said that his wisdom could only be understood by children, fools and shady sisters.

by John Lejins

## Funky Stuff

Wild & Peaceful  
Kool & The Gang  
GRT Records

This issue we're reviewing the latest LP release of "Kool & The Gang". This album is entitled **Wild & Peaceful** featuring their hit 45 — "Funky Stuff".

### The Group:

Kool & The Gang consist of: Kool, a rather young musician, approx 14 yrs. old, he plays fender bass vocals, Ronald 23 yrs. old, he plays tenor sax / soprano sax / vocals. Spike, 25 yrs. old, he plays drums / vocals / misc. percussion. Dee Tee, 23 yrs. old, he plays alto sax / flute / congas / vocals. Clay 24 hrs old, he plays guitar, Rich, 21 yrs. old, he plays electric piano / vocals.

### Music:

They record off "De-Lite" records which is distributed throughout Canada through GRT records of Canada. All selections were produced and arranged by Kool & The Gang Enterprises, Inc.

### Background Vocals:

Sung by Tomorrow's Edition / Roy Bell / Don Boye in "Roogie Man".

### Their Sound:

"Funky Stuff": This song is sort of a soul - commercial song. Nice but very commercial.

"More Funky Stuff": Nice guitar riffs at the beginning of this song, but still on a commercial bopper sound.

"Jungle Boogie": Possibly the best cut on the LP. It's got a real funky beat to keep you moving on the dance floor.

You'll probably hear more of this song then you will of "Funky Stuff". Overall a good dancing - foot stomping song.

"Heaven At Once": Waltz - type tempo. Kool sings this song with a message: that message is for "Peace for you & me."

"Hollywood Swinging": Again a commercial - type of song with not too much imagination put into it. Mello - soft sound.

### Side Two

"This is You, This is Me": This song is sort of jazzed up with sax and trumpet notes with a "Temptations" sounding background vocals. A rather nice riding song. It's even got a boggie harp man getting in on with the lead guitarists (Clay).



"Life is What You Make It": This song has only the good quality of the lead guitarists riffs & fast picking notes. But besides that the song is rather monotonous.

"Wild & Peaceful": The song is called "Wild & Peaceful" but I would say that it's more of a 9:23 sec. of Peaceful jazz type music. This song starts off very quiet then blends in some nice flute notes with some strong trumpet & sax harmonies. Very nice trumpet playing by Spike and guitar playing by Clay. I would also say that this song revolved around these two fine musicians.

This "Kool & The Gang" LP can be heard on Campus Radio this Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. on the Solid Soul Show. So be here with your Manitoban and take a listen — you just may like the LP of Kool & The Gang's album — **Wild & Peaceful**

### Next Review:

Mr. Al Wilson's latest LP of **Show & Tell** will be reviewed next Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. Until then, if you've got to make it, "Make It Funky".

by Larry Da Barber