

14

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JACK LLOYD
On the Record

Joni Mitchell's 'Blue' Rates as Her Finest LP

The title of Joni Mitchell's new album for Reprise Records is "Blue." But don't you believe it. This latest collection of Joni Mitchell songs indicates that the lady from

Canada has never felt better in her life.

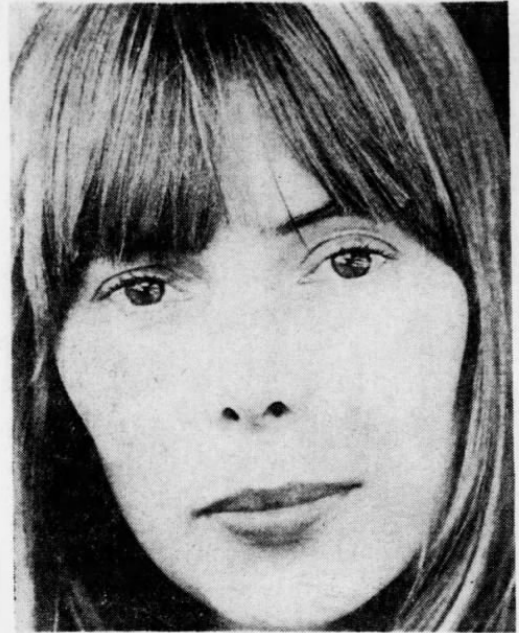
And that's the feeling you have after listening to "Blue." A good feeling, because the album is a gem. Possibly the best work in Miss Mitchell's recording career. There is even a good feeling about the sad songs.

Miss Mitchell writes some of the most personal music being turned out these days. Personal and totally uncluttered. One cannot say for a fact that she has lived the experiences of "California" or "This Flight Tonight" or "Carey," since tight security covers Miss Mitchell's ramblings, but her songs all have the ring of Truth.

It is all so personal to doubt when Miss Mitchell sings about sitting in a Paris cafe, reading the news from back home, which is all bad because they won't give peace a chance (but that was just a dream we once had), yet itching to get back to California and hear a good rock 'n' roll band because this town is too old and set in its ways.

Not that autobiographical content is all that vital — unless you have become hooked on the game we learned to play with the music of James Taylor. What counts is that Miss Mitchell is a charming story teller and a skilled musician. She writes songs that are disarmingly simple on the surface, yet totally unique in construction and execution.

"River," for example, is a simple song of lost love, except that Miss Mitchell says the same old things with a brand new point of view.



Joni Mitchell's new album is "Blue": "It is a gem. Possibly the best work in Miss Mitchell's recording career."

greeted it with warm praise, hardly anyone bought the LP. Hopefully, "Album II" will result in the recognition Wainwright deserves. The immediate reaction is to compare Wainwright to vintage Dylan because of the Woody Guthrie type presentation, but it quickly becomes clear that Wainwright is as contemporary as the headlines in this morning's paper.

Wainwright can write with good humor, which he exercises in "Samson and the Warden" and "Nice Jewish Girls." This sense of humor sometimes takes a sardonic turn, such as on "I Know I'm Unhappy" and "Suicide Song." But then Wainwright will hit you with something like "Motel Blues," a song of deep loneliness.

"Album II" is not a com-

plete winner. "Plane; Too" falls flat and "Be Careful, There's a Baby in the House" is a good idea which Wainwright doesn't know quite how to handle. However, the good outweighs the bad.

MORE LPs: Few practitioners of country-rock perform their duties with more skill than the Flying Burrito Brothers, and they maintain this status on their new album for A & M Records, "The Flying Burrito Brothers," even though the group has evolved into a softer sound than previously unloaded. A fine album . . . The country approach of Southern Comfort (minus Matthews) does not fare nearly as well on this group's new Capitol release, "Frog City," which is rather uninspired.

'Devils' on Record

The martyrdom of Urbain Grandier in France in 1634 was an isolated event which 1969. Tatania Troyanos is Jeanne, and baritone Andrzej

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