



by PAT PAOLUCCI

## Cats back

Magic, Reggae rhythm and a spectacular stage arrangement were just some of the components that went into Cat Stevens' fourth concert tour in the United States.

The tour, entitled "Majikat 1976" displayed a combination of Steven's greatest talents. Included in the tour was a professional magic act that was tastefully woven into the concert.

Although the concert was over two weeks ago this performance marked a near point of perfection in Cat Stevens' career. Not only did it display Steven's ability to adapt a new style of music but it also showed a complete change in the Cat's routine performance. Moge, a slang English word meaning "slow cat," is what Stevens is called by his close friends and this seems to apply to Stevens' new style—slower, deliberate and precise.

Tracing Stevens' music back to his very first LP entitled *Matthew and Son*, it is clear that the Cat himself began his career as a "pop star" as one of his later songs with that exact title explains.

His music was typically bubblegum but if the album is listened to carefully the lyrics prove to be a bit more advanced that the music would lead you to expect. Songs such as "In The Blackness Of The Night" and "Matthew and Son" hold some powerful lyrics.

But it wasn't until after Stevens released his fourth LP *Mona Bone Jakon* that his advanced style of music combined with his lyrics began

to take shape. This album was his first release after an 18-month stay in a tuberculosis sanitarium.

With a definite change of character and music style Stevens began a tour with a new image. Instead of the clean cut "pop star" style, Stevens, now with long hair a beard and mustache, performed quiet, mellow and some very introspective songs. About this time his most famous album *Tea For The Tillerman* was released. Included in this are most of his old favorites such as "Sad Lisa," "Where Do The Children Play," and "Wild World."

But too many fans stopped following the Cat when he began to change and incorporate more musical arrangements with his songs. After *Teaser and The Firecat*, Stevens began to work with larger musical backgrounds. When he appeared in Cleveland in 1972 he was still performing with only a few of his regulars such as Alun Davies and Jerry Conway, but added to this was a string orchestra of about 16 pieces.

*Catch Bull At Four* was the album that made the first evident break from Stevens' mellow pattern. More percussion was added to the arrangements and more emphasis was placed on foreign rhythms. An example of this can be heard in the song "O Caritas" which included Greek rhythms and lyrics. This is where the Cat definitely lost popularity.

Following this album Cat went to Jamaica and cut an LP called *Foreigner* which was his first attempt at the Jamaican Reggae effect. The entire first side of the album is an arrangement called "Foreigner Suite" and it runs for about 20 minutes. Again his popularity decreased.

At about this time, Stevens concert

tour was entitled "Bamboozle" and it was complete flop— in Cleveland anyway. The idea behind "Bamboozle" was to try to carefully put together some of Cat's old songs while introducing his new material. The results was a mixture of two completely different styles which came across as being very awkward. To complicate matters more Stevens yelled at the Cleveland fans and only performed for about 45 minutes.

This brings us to the present and his latest concert tour. The "Majikat" tour displayed a careful organization of the Cat's varied material—which is a hard to do. Most true followers of Cat agree that his recent music is the best he's ever done and it shows a great deal of progress and true composing talent. But what about the greatest portion of Cat's fans? Those who remember him for "Hard Headed Women" and "Morning Has Broken" These are the people that Cat can't forget when he tours.

"Majikat" appealed to all of Cat's fans in a very peculiar way. He achieved this goal by adding a mild Reggae rhythm to all his songs—both old and new.

The "Majikat" concert included a ten-person backup crew plus a complete magic show. Chuck Dent, Greg Smith (seen below) and Kathy Schoppe, the main magicians, executed some very skillfull illusions including a levitation act. The various magic acts were placed throughout the concert during periods when Cat played only music.

To add to this huge production, which took three full-sized moving vans to bring, the background curtain had a section cut out and a movie screen was placed behind it. On the screen he showed graphic drawings which he drew to go along with his latest album "Numbers, A Pathagorean Theory Tale. He also showed a film of his "fictitious fruit" the banapple. The banapple is a cross between a banana and an apple and according to his song everybody is "getting high on banapple gas." The song further explains that no one knows "what goes inside, but it must be good 'cause it's certified."

Cat wrapped up the concert with a song called "Blue Monday" an old Fats Domino rock and roll tune. The Cleveland fans, that Cat complimented several times throughout the concert, showed their approval after this last song by standing for another Twenty minutes after Stevens left.

Joni Mitchell,

L.A. Express

at Public Hall

by DAVE MENDLOVIC

The problem with most big names in music is that the concert appearance become larger events and the recordings lose some quality with each release. Friday the 13th, Joni Mitchell was in a position to do what she wanted, which was mostly new material. So left out the oldies that made *Miles of Aisles* such a fine live recording and chose to do much from her new *Hissing of Summer Lawn's* her worst album in years.

Someone like Joni Mitchell should stay away from doing new material live. If an artists music is unique, then unless you're familiar with the songs, they can all sound the same.

The best part of Ms. Mitchell's music is her voice which was in top form. Her guitar playing also was suprisingly good.

The L.A. Express did a fine job as an opening act and as Mitchell's backup band. Their jazz sound is heightened by musicians—Robbon Ford on electric guitar and Tom Scott's replacement, David Luell on horns.

Joni Mitchell's high spot was when she did material from *Court and Spark* and *Miles of Aisles*. This was done in the very beginning and end of the concert which included popular hits "Raised on Robbery" "Free an in Paris," "Big Yellow Taxi," "Help Me, I Think I'm Falling," and her encore, "Twisted."

