

ROCK music

Joni mellow

By NIKKI HANDROS
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For too many, Joni Mitchell always has been too personal, too revealing for them to be comfortable with her singing and highly stylized songs.

They preferred to hear her compositions done by other artists with deeper voices, a stiffer beat and less of the lilting softness that marks Joni's style.

But the lady's newest album, "For the Roses," (Asylum) is likely to satisfy Joni's upfront converts and those who previously were uneasy with her almost shrill piercing voice rendering the conversational lyrics seemingly devoid of periods and pauses.

She's considerably mellowed while retaining her quiet, bared soul personality. It's still the personal side of Joni Mitchell, but without threatening the listener's conscience or consciousness.

For those who have waited for an album the caliber of "Ladies of the Canyon," this is it and more — a Joni Mitchell who will share hours of song with feeling.

In "Barangrill," Joni departs with an observation of everyday life she shares but is not personally involved in — "waitresses all wearing black diamond earrings talking about zombies and Singapore slings."

Another distance observation is created in the lyrics of "Blonde in the Bleachers," a simple exposition on groupies.

Sure, a lot of Joni is still love lost and love gained in "Lesson in Survival," "See You Sometime," "You Turn Me On I'm a Radio" and "Woman of Heart and Mind."

Only in "You Turn Me On" does Joni rock a bit with a faster pace that made hits of such standbys as "Woodstock," "Circle Game" and "Yellow Taxi."

Since that album more than three years ago, they paved paradise and put up a parking lot — but Joni Mitchell's still in business.

Oh, if it matters, the lady who looks like a seasoned camper on the woodsy front cover bares it from the back on a west coach beach in the centerfold.

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As Broward officials would have it, the Traffic concert next Saturday has been moved to West Palm Beach Auditorium. They'll appear with Free and John Martyn.

Coming . . . Santana, Alice Cooper, Frank Zappa and The Guess Who.

Miscellany . . . Today marks the 11th anniversary of the Beatles' first U.S. concert at Carnegie Hall.