

# Sound

Le Bon Temps, Dec. 10-16, 1976

5

## Joni Mitchell — Trying the road for refuge

By MARTIN COVERT  
Times Entertainment Editor

In a highway service station  
Over the month of June  
Was a photograph of the earth  
Taken coming back from the moon  
And you couldn't see a city  
On that marbled bowling ball  
Or a forest or a highway  
Or me here least of all  
You couldn't see these coldwater rest-  
rooms  
Or this baggage overhead  
Westbound and rolling taking refuge in  
the roads.

On the cover of the new Joni Mitchell album, "Hejira," there is a picture of Joni and a lone, lonesome highway stretching into her persona.

It is not in the picture alone, this rambling, rocky road inside of Mitchell. The glossy is only the premise to an

For those who have followed her career, bought her albums regularly, as they appear on the market, it is perfectly obvious that the woman is getting more intense, is building thicker, wilder images, is cataloguing every experience into poetic music.

She is not happy with her existence, made clear in the album title and song. Hejira is the flight Mohammed took out of Mecca, but the term has entered the language to mean a journey taken to escape from an undesirable situation.

Joni is attempting to escape by hitting the highways. She writes of picking up hitchhikers and watching the cloud formations in the sky and wanting to continue on alone.

A favorite cut on the very quiet album is "Amelia," Joni's ode to Earhart. This artist compares her yearnings to the aviator's. "A ghost of aviation-she was swallowed by the sky-Or by the sea, like

.....  
*I tried to run away myself  
To run away and wrestle with my  
ego  
And with this flame  
You put here in this Eskimo*  
.....

album of speedy introspection.

Joni's travelings have always been a source for her music. She has always been a sensitive soul, searching for some sort of inner sanctum.

And she's not found it yet. The beauty of this album is in its sadness, its depression. Mitchell is still in the clouds, looking for truth, and reason, and a little bit of love.

From the nine songs on this new Asylum album, it is more than clear that

me she had a dream to fly." The song continues as a message of dreams that break, that don't play themselves out, that are "false alarms."

Throughout the album, Joni writes of her relationships with men, of her reluctance to be overpowered, of her need to be close, of the constant battle between her warmth and her soulful frugidity. She speaks of wrestling with "this flame you put here in this Eskimo."

.....  
*Maybe I've never really loved  
I guess that is the truth  
I've spent my whole life in clouds at  
icy altitudes  
And looking down on everything*  
.....

Joni Mitchell has not given up the search for all these things. What is so ironic about the product is that Joni Mitchell's pain is our pleasure.

The music on "Hejira," for the most part supports these lyrics, these poems. After a couple of listenings though, the

See Mitchell on Page 6

6 Le Bon Temps, Dec. 10-16, 1976

## Joni Mitchell--traveling introspection

**From page 5**  
eerie strains of clarinets, the strange movements of harmonica begin to take on more power.  
Mitchell has once again put down her

perfectly expressed thoughts and coated them with music which says the same things. Her guitar playing laments the same as the lyrics do.  
Joni is singing the blues. She is seek-

ing release. She is playing out the themes of such tunes as "All I Want," "The Last Time I Saw Richard," "Car on a Hill," "Down to You," and all the rest.

Joni is a poet, and she is the leader in a generation where the search for poetry no longer leads to magazines or paperbacks. If you want to read the poetry of today you must buy albums and read the jackets.  
This new volume of Joni, where she is seeking the refuge of the roads, where she is trying to work out her part in the scheme, is another brilliant entry.

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