

row are Frank Mason, David Crompton, Jack Thomas, Jim Vancouver.

# JONI'S TRIBUTE TO MINGUS A PROBLEM

THE problem is: whether to be hip and go overboard about a fusion of jazz and inspired lyrics or to be truthful and say that there are still some things I do not understand about Joni Mitchell's tribute to jazz giant Charles Mingus.

For a start, I've always had more affection for her early records — the stark "Clouds" album being clearly the best — than her later work.

The addition of three of the world's best modern jazz musicians as accompanists only makes the job harder.

But bassist Jaco Pastorius, soprano sax-player Wayne Shorter and pianist Herbie Hancock are not simply in the accompanists' role: rather, they are putting flesh to the bones of music Mingus wrote for Joni Mitchell shortly before he died earlier this year; Joni Mitchell is an extra instrument in the way her voice is moulded into the final mix.



## SOUNDS AROUND



In some ways her lyrics are almost Jack Kerouac put to music; there is little of her accepted high standard of orthodox rhyming, onomatopoeiac writing.

Instead, her words are strung out to fit on to Mingus's slow, haunting, sparse compositions.

It is not an album to be taken too lightly or to be treated as one of her others, although they all require a high degree of concentration.

A new departure is difficult for all concerned — "Mingus" on the Asylum label is no exception.

Perhaps it will be seen as a hersy to say that the song which appeals to me most is one of a couple which Mingus had no part in.

"The Wolf That Lives In Lindsey" is given the best Mitchell vocals plus an eerie guitar backing, the loosened strings buzzing on the frets like a strange echo.

"The Dry Cleaner From Des Moines" is one of Mingus's tunes with which I feel at home. These are probably the best Mitchell lyrics on the album with their tale of the gamblers' luck.

I would hate to gamble my reactions to "Mingus". The work of Pastorius, Shorter and Hancock give it an edge, a tangential cycle of sounds which can be both soothing and disturbing; Joni Mitchell's voice and lyrics sometimes falls in line with their's and sometimes doesn't.

Like I said at the start, that is the problem.

CLIFFORD BIRCHALL

ana  
Cou  
mai  
Sidi  
Cra  
Jan  
Butt  
Bisc  
Swe  
glou  
Acti  
An  
caff  
She  
Dra  
spic  
Jan  
Pad  
Car  
pills  
Som  
bin  
And  
pan  
Can  
twin  
Pas  
shin  
Wa  
soaj  
Clo  
Box  
Bot  
Wri  
booi  
Nai  
hoo  
Lan  
To  
toll  
Stic  
Box  
Twi  
hap