

The Daily Gleaner 15

fingers, her wide, deep blue eyes watching her own movements.

"Now I feel I have something to say, and I want to say it in my own terms." She was talking about an album she is going to be working on in the new year.

"I've written over 60 songs in the last two and a half years, so there is lots of material," she said. She would like to do a double album but that is unlikely for a first issue of an artist.

Very early the next morning I saw Joni Mitchell step down off the stage after singing 30 minutes of her songs. It's a good thing, I decided, that the cab-drivers of the world aren't running the entertainment business.

Joni Mitchell: Folk Songs And Cab-Drivers

By JOE LEWIS
Toronto Telegram News Service

It was late afternoon-early evening. That time of day when the sky is still too bright to call it nighttime, but dark enough that the street lights had been turned on.

Traffic was busy as we headed out of the down-town area. The cab-driver turned slightly in his seat and interrupted our conversation.

"There is no good entertainment in this town. There is no good entertainment anywhere these days. It's not like it used to be."

I turned to Joni Mitchell in the seat beside me and wondered what her reaction was going

to be to this statement. She was silent.

Earlier that afternoon she had taped a full hour of her songs for The Way it Is, the CBC-TV public affairs show.

We had just spent the previous two hours in a downtown bar eating sweet apples and sipping beer, talking about some of the good music around today, and talking about her career and especially her music.

I could understand her silence. There was no point in trying to tell this man about today's music. He had his mind made up. But she had to try.

Later I thought about young

Joni Mitchell when she first came to town. That was three summers ago, and she took the train down from Regina to see the Mariposa Folk Festival. That was the year it was held at Maple Leaf Stadium.

She never did go back west. She worked around the local clubs for a while and started writing songs. Then she got married, moved to Detroit and started working out of there.

She has spent the last couple of years working around the major cities, Toronto, New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, Miami, Boston, Ottawa.

Now she works out of New

York but spends a good deal of time in Florida.

Joni is as much a writer as a performer. "It's hard to separate the two. When I write a song I don't think, 'Who would sound good singing that?', I think of trying it on an audience."

"Lately I've been writing about four songs a week. I'm a personal song writer. Now I'm more people-oriented than landscape-oriented. I used to rely on optical things. Most are of the images I've experienced, and a lot of my songs are illustrative of a story."

As we talked the bar began to fill up with the supper crowd and she wound the ends of her long blonde hair around her