



By MIKE O'CONNOR
Journal-News Writer

Although I prefer the heavier beer of rock and roll, the sweet white wine of Joni Mitchell is welcome. With each new album she gains popularity and is quickly becoming a rock heavyweight contender. (Excuse the wording, the Ali-Frazier fight is on tv.)

Heavyweight? Joni Mitchell, you say? You mean she's in there slugging it out with the likes of the Rolling Stones, the Allmans and (gasp) the Dead?

It sure looks that way, judging from her latest album, "Court and Spark", on the Asylum label. Once the almost exclusive property of folk music, Joni Mitchell now commands a wider audience, while sacrificing none of her early intellectual purity.

She can still lead the wide-eyed listener through a wondrous land of emotions, both pleasurable and mad. She bares her emotions on record for all to gawk at, risking scorn simply to remain true to her own sense of honesty. She is the true poet, recording her everyday experiences into song and verse.

But, when a poetess becomes that good, her work begins to sell for money. She becomes popular company; her songs and words are suddenly "in demand."

Now she finds herself in a fix. Playing the "stargame" makes her feel intensely guilty. But she isn't ready, or legally allowed, to back out on legal contracts and the good life they bring. The resulting dilemma for Joni Mitchell becomes more clear with each new album.

On "Blue" and "For the Roses" particularly, she first broke into a wider appeal bracket. Her heart-breaking honesty and clarity was soothing medicine in a top 40-wearied world.

But now on "Court and Spark", a frightening new dimension of Joni Mitchell's self-enforced honesty surfaces. Dark, deliberate descriptions of her own mental Third World War seem almost desperate. The word "crazy" is in several lines of lyric and phrases like "flipped out" and "spaced out" are dropped with alarming regularity.

The L. P. culminates in a bee-bop jazz number (Spectacularly brilliant vocal) called "Twisted". (Title is self-explanatory.)

Finally, a garish inside-sleeve photo of her makes the potential listener an uncomfortable viewer.

But looking closely at the picture, a wildly happy sense of release and freedom can also be found. I think Joni Mitchell may find the answer to her head's problems in her music, and her own vast talents.

The musical sophistication of "Court and Spark" is alone enough to assure you Joni Mitchell has her feet firmly implanted in Mother Earth. She may be "flipped out," but crazy she ain't.

The single "Raised on Robbery" is not really representative of the album, except that it is consistent with the change Joni Mitchell is going through. From her street Canada backwoods upbringing she thrust herself into a world of "rock and roll men," drugs, spotlights and Los Angeles, "the city of fallen angels," as she calls it.

Her sensitive, peeling style amid all the clamor of rock has always been one of her most appealing aspects — like a socially aware princess leaving her throne to wander among the rabble.

"Raised on Robbery" delights many new listeners and shocks the old. It's a good rock and roll tune with tuff rhythm guitar and a vocal which at times unintentionally stilted, but not at all lacking in feeling.

The sly sexually-colored lyrics of "Raised on Robbery" offer further evidence that Joni Mitchell is no longer an English Lit major singing from a pedestal. She is human, and she has just begun to develop her full musical talents and potential.

Her stylized jazz vocal on "Twisted" is as astounding as the song is bright and clever. Despair, depicted in earlier songs on the album, is laughed at by the album's end. The sheer joy of singing is medicine for Joni, apparently.

She experiments in dreamy, almost euphoric sounds, mixed with reed instruments and sweet, sweet harmony structures. The music is wispy and fine, but it's like a rainbow in its shining majesty.

Most of the tunes are slower-tempo. Some deal with lost love with several hidden references to songs on earlier albums. Others explain the loneliness of the rock and roll star, a loneliness, she says, can come close to putting one off the edge.

The songs are mostly autobiographical, or at least written to close friends, maybe lovers. The first songs are almost crying in despair. "Help Me," "Court and Spark," "Free Man in Paris" all paint vivid pictures of her troubled mind.

"People's Parties" ends with her wishing she had more sense of humor so she could "laugh it all away." No dies, though. "The Same Situation" starts the cycle of loneliness all over again.

In "Just Like This Train" her subtle humor re-emerges and she takes hold of her feelings, even scolding herself for her shortcomings. "Troubled Child" displays incredible insight, much as Van Gogh painted his growing madness on canvas for all to see.

Sunday theater programs

Key to movie ratings: (G) General Audiences; (PG) Parental Guidance suggested, some material may be unsuitable for pre-teenagers; (R) Restricted, persons under 17 are not admitted unless accompanied by parent or adult guardian; (X) Parents under 17 not admitted; (TV) Individual titles may change to reverse age limit; (S) Special films; (S) sometimes are indicated by (S).

<p>Alma Secret Life of a School Girl (G) 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 Diamond Girls (R) 9:15</p> <p>Canoe II Pyrathlon (PG) 7, 9, 11:30, 10:30, 11:30</p> <p>Canoe III Paper Chase (PG) 12:15, 2:10, 3:35, 5:40, 8:10, 10:15</p> <p>China West The Seven Ups (PG) 7, 9:15, Rosemary's Baby (PG) 11:30</p> <p>Court Executive Action (PG) 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30</p> <p>Hollywood Vanishing Wilderness (G) 1, 3, 5, 7, 9</p> <p>Jolly Roger Beach Party (G) 7:15, Muscle Beach (PG) 9:15, 11:15, Polynesian Beach (G) 10:30, Papaya Pasty (G) 12:15</p> <p>Maddy Vanishing Wilderness (G) 1, 3, 5, 7, 9</p> <p>Misses/Women The Seven Ups (PG) 7:15, 9</p> <p>Narrative I Executive Action (PG) 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30</p>	<p>Northgate II Pony Car Summer (G) 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30</p> <p>Northgate III The Sting (PG) 1, 3:10, 5:15, 7:40, 9:50, 11:55</p> <p>Policeman The Sting (PG) 1, 3:10, 5:15, 7:40, 9:50, 11:55</p> <p>Princeton II Vanishing Wilderness (G) 1, 3, 5, 7, 9</p> <p>Showcase I The Way We Were (PG) 12:15, 2, 4:15, 7:10, 10:10, 12:30</p> <p>Showcase II Ash Wednesday (R) 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, mid-night</p> <p>Showcase III The Evening (G) 12:30, 2:45, 5, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30</p> <p>Showcase IV The Seven Ups (PG) 1, 3:30, 5:15, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30</p> <p>Talwards Last Tango in Paris (R) 1, 3, 5, 7, 9</p> <p>Valeo The Sting (PG) 1, 3:10, 5:15, 7:40, 9:50, 11:55</p>
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THE STING

TECHNICOLOR
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Cinema WEST

863-4805

EVA'S PANTRY

4th & Dayton Sts.

JOLLY ROGER