

Joni Mitchell Sings A Graceful Message

By TERRY KLEIWER

Joni Mitchell is into something a lot of the rest of us are still looking for. Maybe it's something that's not easy to find; maybe it's as simple

as the messages of her song lyrics.

The Joni Mitchell message is delivered with grace, style and poise. It's a message of love and open acceptance of life. Joni teaches through her songs and tells of herself.

Joni's Saturday night show at Dallas Memorial Auditorium was a smooth and cool lesson in life and a nice lesson in contemporary musicianship, too.

BACKED BY Tom Scott and the LA Express, Joni opened with a solid upbeat presentation of "Turn Me On, I'm a Radio." The star and her sideband meshed talents in a tight but flowing current of melody.

Scott's group, which opened with a set of its own, was at its best backing Joni. Scott particularly lent presence and polish to Joni's numbers with telling touches of flute and saxophone. The band never got in Joni's way, but furnished her songs a solid beat without which they would have suffered.

On "Rainy Night Priest" the Joni-LA Express combo came up with a nice almost bossa nova beat, maintaining the air of light melancholy which characterizes the song.

The new generation rock classic, "Woodstock," was reworked into a bluesy sort of number, underscoring its theme of lingering retrospective looks at the bygone Sixties.

"BIG YELLOW TAXI," the song about paving paradise and putting up parking lots, drew the biggest applause of the evening. The song was maybe the most familiar of all she sang Saturday, but her entire program included nothing but hits large and small.

Joni can sing anything from flirtatious laughs at men and their flaws to solemn memories of love gone stale. She sings of herself



Joni Mitchell . . . At Memorial Auditorium Saturday night.

and her own career and its contrast to careers of good musicians who never make it.

The cry "We love you, Joni" rang out through Memorial Auditorium through the night. She smiled quietly, mostly to herself, each time she heard it.

Near the end of her show, she and the band hit into "Both Sides Now," a super song which Judy Collins made famous in the late Sixties. The audience loved it, falling in time with the easy swaying rhythm.

That very sentiment, the willingness to grow with love and look at it from both sides, is the essential Joni Mitchell message. To look at love from both sides and confess to really not knowing love at all.