

Joni Mitchell Changes With The Times

by Van Ault

If one were to suggest that it pays for musical performers in general, and those of superstar status in particular, to change with the times, one need look no further than Joni Mitchell for convincing proof. Formerly a folk music idol in the sixties, Mitchell moved into mainstream pop music in the early seventies. By the middle of this decade, she had dramatically veered away from the mainstream sound, and begun to experiment with the jazz genre. Those experiments reached fruition with the recent release of "Mingus," a musical collaboration with the late jazz bassist-bandleader Charlie Mingus. The music on the album was composed by him, with

Mitchell's lyrics added later.

The catchy melodies and personal, introspective lyrics have vanished, and what emerges now may be perplexing to some, engrossing to others. "Here's the thing," she told the press recently. "You have two options. You can stay the same and protect the formula that gave you your initial success. They're going to crucify you for staying the same. If you change, they're going to crucify you for changing. But staying the same is boring. And change is interesting. So, of the two options, I'd rather be crucified for changing."

If the reception at Joni Mitchell's concerts in San Francisco two weeks ago is any

indication, she is hardly going to be crucified. With a new band and her new material, Mitchell performed a set of fifteen songs drawn mostly from her last four albums. These mixed her mainstream hits, such as "Big Yellow Taxi," and "Free Man In Paris" with expositions from "The Hissing Of Summer Lawns" to the "Mingus" collection. From the latter, she performed "The Dry Cleaner From Des Moines," her new single, and "God Must Be A Boogie Man," which had the audience singing the chorus. "You Christians shouldn't be offended," she quipped as she introduced the song. "After all, God does have a sense of humor: he made all of us!"

But the most intense musical moments were with material from 1975's "Hejira" album. When it was written, Mitchell was on a personal trip around the country. The contemplations of the title song, "Amelia" and "Black Crow" all expressed the anxieties and insecurities one feels when appraising one's life from afar.

Through the course of the evening, individual members of the band were allowed to perform extended solos, which included a somewhat improvisational bass solo, and a climactic bongo solo, which led into "Dreamland." Exhibiting a vulnerable stage presence, Mitchell shunned the usual self-accompaniment on guitar, and stood alone at the mike to sing "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," which drew a thunderous ovation of approval. "Raised On Robbery" dropped all restraint, and allowed the band to plunge full-force into the bombastic rock style seldom associated with Joni Mitchell. In closing the show, Mitchell brought out the opening act, The Persuasions, a five-man group that sings

two cents

Minerva Knows

by George Epsilanty

"I'm off on some kind of trip, and a new cycle is starting." At least that's what Minerva says. Minerva, as you all know, is the Roman goddess of Wisdom who writes the Sunday Horoscope in the pink section. "It's decision time," she says, "and yours is most likely to be 'no'." Well, my "no" decision was not to go to class on Tuesday in face of all the Foghorn work I had to do. I hope Sr. Neil can forgive me.

Ramones fans already know that one of the funniest rock films around is the Saturday Midnight feature at the Roxie. Not everyone is ready for **Rock and Roll High School**, though, and it was with some trepidation that I took my entire household to see it. The reaction was varied: three had mixed feelings, three really liked it, and one has gone totally bananas and now wanders around the house shouting, "I want you a-rou-ouund!!!" The Roxie is in the Mission, near **Taqueria La Cumbre** (remember last issue?), at 16th and Valencia. Call 863-1087 for info.

Do people laugh at things you say? Do you like to see movies, listen to records, participate in cultural activities like Sunday Park roller skating, and read books, magazines and the Foghorn? Do you hold strong opinions that everyone else disagrees with? If you answer "yes" to any of the above, then you are the person I am looking for to write for the entertainment section. Consider it. The experience is valuable, the money useful, and the company is outstanding. Drop by anytime, but Thursday night at 7 is best...

There are so many good things to do for entertainment in this city, it boggles the mind. San Francisco is easily one of the top three cities in the U.S. for interesting things to do and see, and it's especially noted for having them in a small, easily accessible area. Boredom is inexcusable. To allow yourself to be bored is to insult your mind and deaden your spirit. Take a chance! Go to a movie you never heard of. Go to a bar or cafe and talk to strangers. Go for a long aimless walk on a sunny afternoon. Do it! It's taking a risk, but nothing will make you feel more alive.

Next week the Foghorn presents the X interview.

acappella. Backing her on "Shadows And Light," the song assumed hymn-like connotations, as perhaps an ultimate statement on the conundrum of human experience.

A standing ovation brought her back to the stage, where she sang the poignant "Last Time I Saw Richard" while seated at the piano. Another standing ovation, and Mitchell encored

with a revised version of the old hippie anthem, "Woodstock," a fitting conclusion to a magnificent concert. "Woodstock," a product of the sixties, in its new form seemed to underscore how much Joni Mitchell has progressed musically from those early years, and why she continues to remain an innovative force in contemporary music.



JONI MITCHELL: From Canaanian folkie to sophisticated jazz vocalist.