



Joni Mitchell: Tonight's concert at CNE bandshell won't lean so heavily on jazz.

Joni Mitchell says thanks to Police

By Henry Mietkiewicz
Toronto Star

Fans relieved about Joni Mitchell's recent shift back to more realistic songs and away from the abstract, jazz-influenced material of the late 1970s have The Police to thank for the transformation.

Praising the British rock band's music as "simple but imaginative," Mitchell said at a news conference yesterday it was The Police who started her thinking about tighter rhythms of the sort she'll play in tonight's concert at the CNE bandshell.

Surrounded by blinding lights and whirring cameras in a Four Seasons Hotel suite, the smiling, Alberta-born singer said The Police helped her, for the first time

in years, to listen to the simple element of dance music in rock 'n' roll.

"That was the catalyst," she said, puffing on a skinny cigar and twirling a single red rose, as she sat beside her husband of eight months, bassist Larry Klein. "It was just one of them, but it was a major one."

Career took off

Mitchell, 39, whose career as a folksinger took off after she played Toronto coffee houses in the mid-1960s, confounded many of her fans, starting in 1975 with the release of five albums whose free-form lyrics and soaring melodies were heavily influenced by jazz.

Record sales and popularity dipped, only to undergo a gradual comeback last year with *Wild Things Run Fast*, an album that confirmed her continuing interest in jazz, but marked a return to more concrete imagery and accessible themes.

While the 1980 tour leaned heavily on jazz, tonight's concert promises to be more balanced. "I had a hundred-and-something songs to choose from," Mitchell explained, "and this show has a lot of the last album — about three-quarters of it — and a lot of retrospective material, but with a face-lift."

Even the make-up of the band reflects these recent changes through the heavier burden on the

lead guitar and the absence of woodwinds which give the music a jazzy flavor.

"The band is bilingual, trilingual — it plays rock authoritatively and jazz authoritatively. We have very flexible musicians, and the music itself is not as jazz-oriented as the last tour, but it's more improvisational in a rock vein."

Foreign yet familiar

Having lived in the United States longer than in Canada, Mitchell said she finds her native country "so foreign and yet familiar to me." And while she has never turned in her Canadian passport, "I don't feel like I have any nationality or race or class at this point. I'm a mutt."

Asked to explain her popularity, she giggled and replied: "Am I still popular?" After a pause, she shrugged and added: "Neil (Young) and I — the Canucks — have hung in there pretty good."

Marvin Gaye seduces 6,000 fans

By Greg Quill

simplistic erotic fantasy Gaye en-