

# 'Mingus' remains distinctly Mitchell but incorporates elements of his style

**JONI MITCHELL: MINGUS (ASYLUM).** With "God Must Be A Boogie Man," "The Wolf Man Lives in Lindsey," "Sweet Sucker Dance," "Goodbye Porkpie Hat," and others.

Mingus is a well-crafted album pretty much along the lines of Joni Mitchell's last couple albums. Carefully planned and executed, Mitchell's poetry set to music, interspersed with "raps," amounts to reflections of time spent with her "musical mystic," Charles Mingus.

The music unobtrusively takes a back seat to the lyrics. Though top flight jazz-rock sidemen play professional, low-key accompaniments, Mitchell's voice is the most prominent instrument on the album. She jazzes her way

through the album.

The all-star cast of musicians flawlessly back-up Mitchell in the best bluesy pop-torch-ballad tradition.

Of course, Jaco Pastorius' electric bass in particular doesn't bring the music into focus like Mingus' rhythmic stand-up-bass plucking and bowing usually did for the latter's music, but rather colors the music while leaving the rhythm in storage.

The story in the vinyl is quite interesting. Mitchell picks apart Mingus' psyche and hers, then explains why she is attracted to Mingus, and how this attraction is sublimated only to reappear as an insecure "Pork Pie Hat Bar" affair.

Mitchell sees Mingus as having a loving and giving



Joni Mitchell

## Sounds

through four of Mingus' densely harmonic tunes and two of her own.

Fit the pieces (the songs and the spoken interludes) together, and you have one of the best miscegenetic ode-to-roots albums this side of ancient relics of the Rolling Stones, or some of Mitchell's own past work.

Musically, this album does not really reflect the intense blues-based output of Charles Mingus, jazz iconoclast and genius for 56 years. Mingus does, however, incorporate elements of his style but remains distinctly a Joni

side, a tormented and violent shade, and an objective one torn between the other two.

Her affair may be summarized in the verse not printed on the album jacket:

"Tonight the shadows had their say

There's a sucker born every day

I heard them say

Born to lose

Am I a sucker to love you?"

Robert Kiselik

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