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Walsh song on the album is terrible, he doesn't play anything particularly earth-shattering here, as there is already an established Eagles guitar sound which he fails to break out of. Although Walsh's co-composition *Life in the Fast Lane* is fairly good, it's still an Eagles tune—there is evidence here that a group comprised of Henley and Walsh could be pretty interesting, but here the negative points of the rest of the Eagles continue to bring Joe and Don down in the mire. Without the California laidback/cowboy mystique, The Eagles would be just another bunch of singer/songwriters banded together for no apparent purpose. With it, they're a group who make records together for the sheer sake of momentum—they don't sound like a band really,

but a bunch of solo artists with very little in common. They sing nicely together, and occasionally write well, but as far as I'm concerned they're less of a band than Kiss, and though at times they may show a slightly greater degree of musical knowledge and melodic gift, in the long run neither is particularly inventive musically and the only battle between the two is in terms of who has the most mundance lyricists. While Kiss may lack subtlety and charm, when it comes to writing banal words, Glenn Frey can take on all comers. J.T.

**Eagles:**

Sound: A-	Performance: B-
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**Kiss:**

Sound: B+	Performance: B
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**Hejira:** Joni Mitchell  
**Asylum 7E-1087**, stereo, \$6.98.

Last year's **Hissing of Summer Lawns** was not an easy pill to swallow. A total departure from the phenomenally successful **Court and Spark**, it was a daring, highly idiosyncratic and lavish album that some people did not like at all.

**Hejira** (which refers first to Mohammed's flight from Mecca and generically to the pilgrim's flight from the holy place) is much sparser. The sound, no less personal, is cut lean and to the bone, and is very challenging. Jaco Pastorius is brilliant every

time his bass playing appears. Larry Carlton's guitar leads and Victor Feldman's vibes perform some uncanny tricks. Surprisingly, Joni Mitchell's piano work, which had been strongly emphasized since the **Blue** album, is completely gone. She contents herself with her special guitar rhythms which unite the album sonically, with the effect of a smooth motor in a new car.

This album is completely a road album. It is spent in cars looking up at jets in the sky or strung out on another man. Coyote opens with an encounter on the road near Joni's Canadian hometown. *Amelia* following it

is triggered by six jets over the desert in "the hexagram of the heavens," with visions of Icarus doomed to fall, she compares the fallen aviatrix and her own state—"I crashed into his arms." The song is another view of *Both Sides Now* fully a decade along, her fear of flying all too alive. *Furry Sings the Blues* takes place at Furry Lewis' place on crumbling old Beale Street in Memphis. The obsolescence of the wonderful old Blues singer is tender and sad. *Hejira* is at the beginning of her second 30 years. It looks directly at the aimless, endless road-

ing and fully acknowledges the alternative—"I'm) a defector from the pretty wars/until love sucks me back that way."

The *Song for Sharon* faces the same dilemma through the image of a childhood friend who has her family and farm and still keeps her music for them held against her own checkered romantic history, the bitterness like a lozenge that won't dissolve. *The Blue Motel Room* is in Savannah, and the encounter there leads inevitably to the *Refuge of the Roads*. The uncertainty and the ever-altering scene-

ry are all Mitchell can count on, this "rolling taking refuge in the roads." *Hejira* is another difficult pill to swallow, as open as it is.

The cover gives some clues. It is in striking black & white, black for asphalt, white for freedom, and the birdlady poses are stunning.

**Hejira** is a challenge to absorb. It is demanding of you, and it's not easy to shake off or forget. If it takes a little getting used to, it is easily worth the effort.

M.T.

Sound: A — Performance: A —

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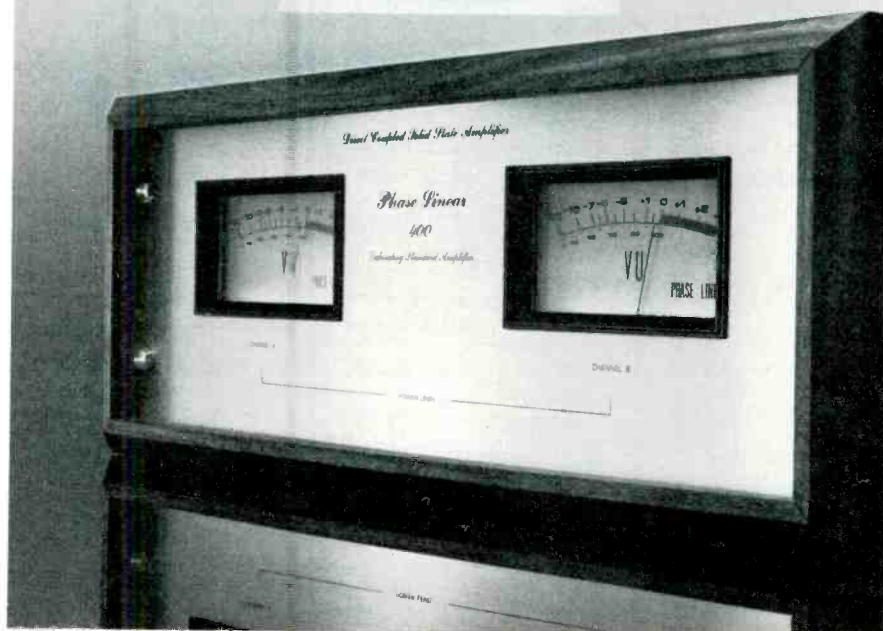
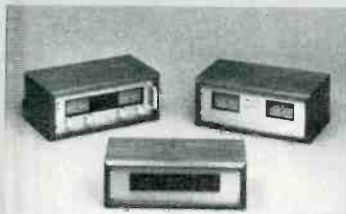
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**Blue Moves:** Elton John  
**Rocket 2-11004**, stereo, \$6.98.

I'd like to go on record as saying that Elton John hasn't done anything particularly stunning musically since **Goodbye Yellow Brick Road**, and although his subsequent albums initially satisfy, they have no long-lasting musical impact, up until now.

**Blue Moves** is the album which changes all that, I reckon, because it doesn't satisfy even from the very start, and after several listens, you wonder exactly how many songs Elton has written and how much of this album is actually non-songs produced/played/engineered into masters. His damn predictability never really bothered me because his hook lines were the big surprise. He'd sucker you in with a fairly mundane verse, and then come in and grab you with the chorus on something like *Don't Let Your Son Go Down On Me*. Even though he hasn't written anything but the most self-indulgent songs recently, I never really found Elton to be quite so unmemorable as not to merit a fourth listen, until his last studio album. But this one, this two-record set, which I wish I could say would make a good single album or at least a decent EP—this is just two pieces of plastic.

He's got all the right names on the album—you find arrangements by the overlooked (and misspelled) Curt Boettcher, Bruce Johnston, and Captain Daryl Dragon, engineering by ex-Sparks guitarist Earl Mankey, and background vocals by Tenille, The Cornerstone Institutional Baptist and Southern California Community Choir, Cindy Bullens, and Crosby & Nash. Production by Gus Dudgeon is the usual "I love treble don't you?" and Bernie Taupin's lyrics border on total worthlessness. I've always thought Elton was trying to achieve something before, but here I'm lost looking for any redeeming value. J.T.

Sound: A — Performance: F+

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