



RECORDS

JONI MITCHELL



Joni Mitchell, Don Juan's Reckless Daughter (Asylum)

The message of Joni Mitchell becomes more clear than ever on this album. Joni Mitchell is the queen of the avant garde. *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter*, while not as problematic as *Hissing of Summer Lawns*, nor having nothing as immediately identifiable as *Hejira's* "Song for Sharon," illuminates one thought. Joni Mitchell is way out in her own world, and nobody in the American musical mainstream even comes close. She is her own woman, her own poet, and her own musician. Not only are all of the above qualities enough to set apart any talent, but she is also an acute observer of trends, and as such, was a major sponsor of many jazz careers (first Tom Scott, as early as *For The Roses*, and later with Weather Report, the Crusaders, and bassist Jaco Pastorius). As the queen of the Woodstock generation, Mitchell was the flaxen haired waif, giving up her personal life for her music, and letting an entire generation of peasant shirts in on the secret of a lover's cry. Now, there are those who can't pick up *Reckless Daughter* and see that Mitchell has advanced more than any other of the late sixties' singer-songwriter generation, giving a place in that venue for real jazz and rock and roll, not just horn charts and kalimba in the percussion section. (Those of you who read this column on a somewhat regular basis will discover that we find it hard for many of that generation's singer-songwriters to muster the stamina to keep their careers flowing in a captivating manner.) With the integration of Pastorius and now Airtio Moreira, Mitchell maintains her giant poetic stature and grows as a musician. On this album she is a positively arresting as ever.

Roger McGuinn fans will recognize "Dreamland," an obscure followup to "California" from the *Blue* collection. Also featured is the studio version of "Jericho," introduced on the *Mile of Aisles* tour. "Jericho," indeed, all of side one, has that jerky, uncertain syncopated Mitchell free-tuned acoustic guitar that sets Mitchell apart from other acoustic guitarists. She is learning the jazz rhythm, and not relying on the accepted use of six-string acoustic. If you remember, she was featured on *Hejira* playing electric blues on "Blue Motel Room". The horizon just keeps getting wider for Mitchell. "And just as ancient Eve succumbed /To reckless curiosity/ I take my sharpened fingernail/ Ans slash the globe to see . . ." ("Paprika Plains").

After sharpening here outlook on the outside world (*Hissing and Hejira*), Mitchell has returned for the most lyrical part on this album to her doomed romanticism and her inability to allow a cease fire to the roaring inhibitions within her. "Talk To Me", "Don Juan's Reckless Daughter," "The Silky Veils of Ardor" are all exposes of that uniquely emotive Mitchell treatment. And still within this context Mitchell remains true to her search for varied and consummate accompaniment. The joining of the two is what keeps Joni Mitchell the top female artist (and there is really no other way to describe her) recording today. This album reaffirms it.

For those Mitchell fans that cannot accept her inevitable transition, I pity their loss. She's the same Joni Mitchell, only better. More mature. The growing process lasts infinitely.

—Barbara Komansky

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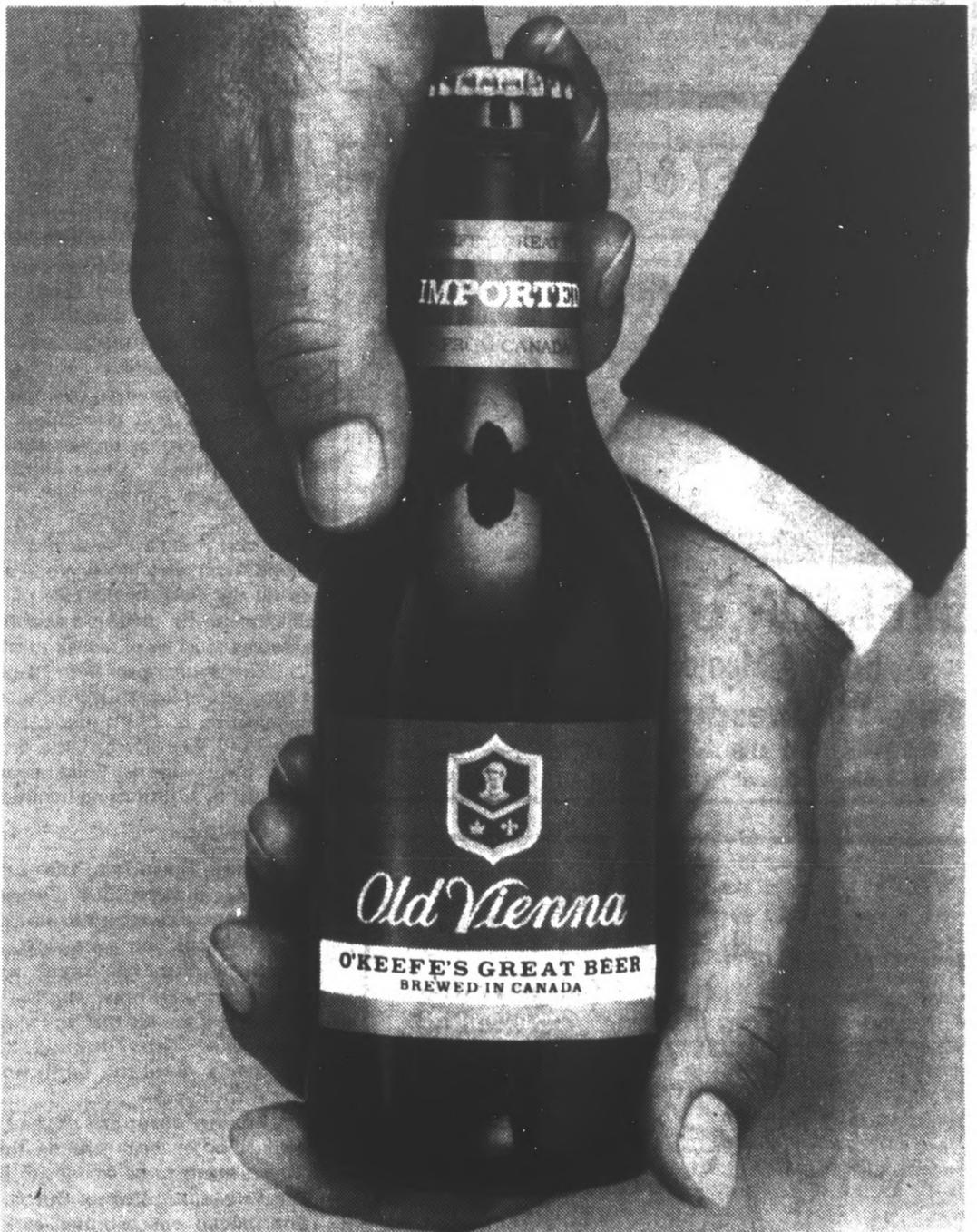
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