

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Mitchell, Browne Release Quality Albums

by Anthony Costanzo  
As that catch-all musical category we call rock catapulta successfully, at least moneywise, into its third decade, all rock connoisseurs must begin to wonder if any artist will survive this century and beyond, merit a position of worth for musical and lyrical accomplishments which ranks favorably with the masters and thus achieve immortality (which in comparison to musical geniuses such as Beethoven, Bach, Verdi, etc., may seem pompous; it must be remembered that rock is one of the initial utilizations and expressions of a new vehicle of music — electronic). Recently, two artists who possess the potential and ability to reach this Valhalla released new albums. Joni Mitchell and Jackson Browne, who record for the prestigious Asylum label, are known for poetic sensitivity and expression combined with musical ingenuity.

Joni Mitchell's eclectic musical nature is well established. The early Folkie known for her open tunings and vibrato, assumed a pop stance with the wonderfully accessible *Court and Spark* (as its three hit singles indicated), and a progressively exotic jazz inspired mannerism in *Hejira*. During the same 10 album period, her lyrical approach has also been altered. The poetic vulnerability of the hopeless romantic seen for example in the lamentable "Blue" was developed through time and success into the construction and

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telling of verbal fantasies such as those on *The Hissing of Summer Lawns*. Presently, however, Mitchell has made the greatest metamorphosis of her career and simultaneously risked a great portion of her monstrous following. The product of this ambitious new venture is a two record set entitled *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter*. It is an avant garde exploration of stylized jazz combined with the artist's folk oriented roots. It is easily Mitchell's most inaccessible album and will require long and intense listening to be appreciated. The side long "Parker Plains" for example, is a brooding, rambling piano dominated sonata highlighted by a shifting melodic approach. And contrary to past works the lyrical venue of the album is escapism exemplified by the percussion directed and dominated "Otis and Marlena" and the rhythmic "Dreamland" (what with a different arrangement would make an excellent hooked filled single, as Roger McGuinn's version illustrated). These observations are not meant to portray that *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter* is void of pop like stylizing. With a catchy beat, "Cotton Fields" and *Off Night Back Street* would hold the attention of the most staunch easy listening fan. The most fascinating

cut of all though is the title track. It more than anything, represents the finished canvas of where Joni Mitchell has come from, is, and will be going. Featuring open tuned electric guitar, Jaco Pastorius' obligato bass, masterful harmonies and Mitchell's wonderfully controlled voice, it is a gem which backs the aforementioned connotation that Joni Mitchell is an artist to be reckoned with.

Jackson Browne must be placed above the first rank of recording artists. He, unlike the majority of contemporary artists, lives his music. Browne's vocal style, lyricism and melodies reflect an endearing, innocent earnest intensity that reveals him as a classic romanticist of immense sensibility. No album mirrors these revelations more than *The Pretender*, in which Browne agonizes heart, mind, and soul



Joni Mitchell

with the suicide of his wife (why is it that the most horrible always happens to the most vulnerable) and himself. It is a monumental work of which there is no comparison.

Yet from a different point of view Browne's new album *Running on Empty* is just as valuable. An ambitious recording, it is unique in many ways. It is a live album containing entirely new material recorded, onstage, in hotel rooms and unbelievably as it may seem, on a bus (one can actually hear the motor humming in

the background on the song entitled "Nothing But Time"). This record is sociologically indispensable, for it supplies the listener with the true portrait of the performer on tour. And as *Rolling Stone Magazine* remarked, it is "an aura equivalent of film director Robert Altman's work." It lyrically possesses tunes dealing with boredom ("Nothing But Time," "The Road"), how some deal with the boredom ("Cocaine", "Rosie"), the endless lineup of cities ("Shaky Town"), exhaustion ("Running on Empty"), the roadies ("The Load-Out") and the fans ("Stay"). Musically, it is excellent, featuring fine performances by the best backup musicians America has to offer and the ever improving Browne vocals. Most importantly though, it reveals that Browne has finally come to grips with the death of his wife and his depression. For unlike "The Pretender" many of the tunes are upbeat and possess hints of humor. But probably the greatest demonstration that life must go on is the picture on the back of the accompanying booklet.

## Simon Strikes Gold Again

by Beth Janke

If Neil Simon doesn't get an Oscar for his exceptional screenplay, then the Academy Awards are surely fixed. Although it would have taken a moron not to see the ending long before it happened.

the plot was slightly off-the-wall humour. A single woman (Marsha Mason) with a 10 year old daughter (Quinn Cummings) had been living with a guy who split for Italy, finds out he has sublet the apartment they shared to an actor friend (Richard Dreyfuss) without letting her know it. Due to the fact that they are both broke and want the apartment, they compromise and share it. Mason decides to lay down some ground rules, but Dreyfuss says no way, considering it's legally his apartment. Arguments of this type continue for half the movie, when a sudden, yet unavoidable switch occurs with the couple falling in love for the final half.

However, this film is far from your typical love story. Very far from it. The comedy jumps out right away and doesn't hesitate, no matter how serious the scene is. From arguments and purse snatching to less than solemn drama and romance, the humor never takes a breather. Most of the scenes (for example, Shakespeare's Richard the III presented as a gay in an eccentrically directed off-Broadway flop) were funny, but the real credit belongs to the one-liners. The lines come at the audience so fast that if you laugh too long at one sentence, you'd miss the sarcastic reply.

A great number of quips come from Quinn Cummings. Even those conservatives who might be tempted to consider her a fresh brat, couldn't help but love her and laugh at this comedy prodigy. Talent-wise, she's got an edge on

stars with forty years experience. Provided Cummings doesn't lose her talent (personally I don't see how she can), the kid has an award-studded future.

I think this is Dreyfuss' best endeavor, however where other girls prefer romance movies, I'm a sucker for humor, particularly the zany type inherent to this flick. His talent encompasses the viewer so everything from yoga exercises to a queer Richard the III become so believable that you sympathize with the nice guy he plays. After he gets his woman, there is no longer any reason to feel sorry for Dreyfuss, so you can appreciate his goofy antics even more.

Mason was good, but far from lovable. She's so rigid that she can't be pitied despite her bad luck. Even Dreyfuss says her daughter is his only asset. I tend to agree. If we were supposed to like her when she softened from a bitch to a human, her acting leaves something to be desired. She's excellent as a self-pitying, unemployed single parent, but when she turns into a feeling woman, Mason falls somewhat short of her role.

In my opinion we've been long overdue in receiving a comic movie with the rare combination of a funny plot and witty lines. *The Goodbye Girl* appeals to all kinds of viewers, whereas many movies today cater to a particular breed of audience (for example, recent space and disco shows only captivate those viewers who can fully relate to their themes). Simon's merely seeks to entertain and it succeeds only too well.

## Town House Rates "Good"

by Joe Welsh

There are neighborhood bars and there are neighborhood bars. A bad neighborhood bar contains one television set (blaring Highway Patrol reruns), one brand of beer (minus a head), and seven former security guards (customers). A good bar, on the contrary, is full of lively people, cold beer and features entertainment. Sometimes this entertainment is spontaneous — the police call this assault and battery.

An example of a good bar is the Town House Tavern located on Frankford Avenue in the North-

east slums of Philadelphia. Established as a middle age hang-out, the Town House eventually made the progression to a rock and roll bar. It features live entertainment administered by top area groups (Jasper). It also features a large crowd which sometimes takes on the nature of a Ben Hur mob scene. All in all it's not a bad place to ogle the crop and quench a thirst.

Prices are reasonable. On Monday nights \$5 at the door allows you to drink free until 1 a.m. The normal cover charge is \$2 (or your first born child).

What makes this place interesting are the people. They are real. Unlike a disco in which you must avoid a swirling melee of uniformly dressed robots the crowd at the Town House is full of normal people doing what comes natural in a bar: drinking, dancing, laughing, fighting, sweating — and talking.

In a world of lavish dance floors and light shows the Town House survives quite admirably on its own austerity. If you're in the mood to drink, talk or dance without dressing for a state occasion, the Town House is probably your kind of place. Bruce Springsteen would be uncomfortably overdressed for the Town House.

My only complaint was overcrowding and loud music. The overcrowding was due to the holiday crush. The decibel level made conversation difficult, so come equipped with megaphones.

Basically the Town House is informal, you can wear what you like and do what you wish (with some exceptions). The Town House is not a disco and not a bar. What it is, is a perfect example of how a good bar should be run. Check it out.

## Weekend Action

by Barbara Harrison

The Brandywine River Museum, Route 1 in Chadds Ford, Pa., is a marvelous tribute to arts and crafts native to the Philadelphia area. Works by the famous Wyeth family as well as those by Howard Pyle and the McCoy and Hurd families represent more than a century of important contributions to American art. Set on the banks of the Brandywine River, the glassed walls of this music three-story museum offer a breathtaking view. For the ambitious, a mile-long trail winding along the river bank reveals some of the beautiful countryside so vividly depicted by the local artists.

Now through May, the Brandywine museum will feature "American Art and Illustration," an exhibition which includes three generations of Wyeths, Maxfield Parrish and George Coe. A selection of sculpture by Parks and Harvey will also be on display. Well worth the visit and well worth the price, admission to the Brandywine River Museum is \$1.50 for adults, .75 for students and hours are from 9:30 to 4:30 daily.

While in the Chadds Ford area, make sure to pay a visit to the Chadds Ford Barn Shops which are also located on Route 1. Housed in quaint wooden buildings, the Barn Shops offer a variety of handmade crafts anywhere from handwoven quilts to homemade fudge. Visitors may choose to window-shop or barter for the beautiful locally-made items which may be found in the Collector's Cabinet, the Mushroom Cave, The Wooden Shoe or The General's Lady, just to name a few.

Nostalgia buffs may be interested in Friday night's scheduled appearance of the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra at Philadelphia's Sheraton Hotel, 18th and JFK Blvd.

Also on Friday night, the jazz Charles Fambrough Quintet will open a weekend engagement at The Hot Club.

For those who missed him the last time around, comedian David Brenner will play at the Villanova Fieldhouse Feb. 10th at 8 p.m. Tickets are available through all Ticketron outlets and are \$4.00 for students, \$5.00 for the public.

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