

arts



Music

by merril greene

Eric Kaz: *Cul-De-Sac*: Atlantic SD7290

Eric Kaz, with his second solo album for Atlantic Records, has what is a nearly faultless pair of sides. I say "nearly" to allow for marginal errors according to personal taste. Without going to the extreme of a concept album, *Cul-De-Sac* hangs together with the stubbornness and spontaneity of a Sunday-mornin'-in-church outburst.

Kaz' strengths as a songwriter lie, in part, in his impeccable sense of melody: that is, the certainty with which he chooses the notes and the economy with which he welds them together. This album has mostly to do with the power and grace and emotional energies bound inextricably to the simple repetitions and variations of gospel music in its form and performance. Kaz seizes the cadential sequences and builds them into powerfully linear musical structures that swell and subside in natural, dramatic waves. Rhythmic structures are uncomplicated but so thoroughly understood that they function from the inside out, holding melody and lyrics in a firm but dynamic consonance.

Kaz is something of a one-man musical wizard, authoring all of the songs, doing the arrangements, which are excellent, and handling vocals, acoustic guitar, piano, electric piano, clavinet, harmonica, Moog bass and synthesizer. He does get some help from a few of the finest sidemen in the business: Booker T. Jones, Jim Keltner, and Sneaky Pete. His back-up group, the Waters, carry half the musical weight without hesitation in these call-and-response formats. The album,

summarily, is strengthened by its singularity of purpose and its joyful musical directness.

Joni Mitchell: *Court and Spark*; Asylum Records 7E-1001

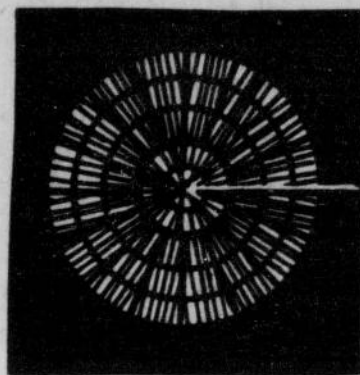
The difficulty in speaking of Joni Mitchell's music is that her work seems only relative to itself. It is the exception to the rule, the instance that perplexes and humbles an otherwise ready critic. Its membership in the genre of popular music is tenuous—that is fact, indisputably and happily so.

Her music has grown and I say this without the pejorative connotations of out-sized sophistication or creative fatigue. I do mean that she has found her way out of the exclusiveness of personal confessional lyrics and now seems capable of a rounder, fuller expression; the compromise does not reduce either component—the personal and the popularly comprehensible imagism in the lyrics now are mutually strengthened by the fact of their co-existence.

Joni Mitchell possesses the extraordinary ability to make lyric and music, for all intents and purposes, indistinguishable; in most popular music, the antiquarian separation (in many cases, even alienation) of form from content is denied consciously and indefatigably. Both are mutually inclusive, the processes of creating both are intertwined, bonded as in a chemical reaction. But the science, here, is the science of alchemy and magic, where lead is turned to gold.

Akin to the sensibilities involved in writing a viable opera, where the spoken line must sound as if it can only properly be understood if it is sung, Joni Mitchell writes songs filled with dialogue that sounds right when it's spoken, but makes more sense, in the purest meaning of that word, when she sings it. She now has the firmest grip on her metaphors, when she chooses to use them, and can, without losing sight of object or goal, put them through a complex and subtle series of transformations that reveal the intended multiplicity of meanings. She forgoes the smugness of creating coyly kept meaning-secrets and instead allows a careful listener the delight and satisfaction of relishing each turn and fluxuation planted so carefully in her musical substance.

That *Court and Spark* is so solidly a work of art, without the customary concessions to a prospective mass audience, that none of the intelligence is bled from it, that it is performed and orchestrated with the generally unidealistic goal of perfection, which is, as near as humanly possible, reached, is enough to confirm not only my pleasure, but the absolute artistic necessity of Joni Mitchell's musical existence.



FILM

by holly hughes

The Beatles and the Three Musketeers have more in common than long hair, amorous adventures, and a capacity for getting into trouble. Both have been celebrated on film by director Richard Lester—the Beatles in *A Hard Day's Night* and the Three Musketeers in a new film called, appropriately enough, *The Three Musketeers*.

Lester's versatility as a director enables him to make *The Three Musketeers* as redolent of the spirit of Dumas' 17th-century France as the Beatles film was of grimy post-industrial England. *A Hard Day's Night* demanded the drabness of black-and-white film, just as *The Three Musketeers* demands rich, well-lit color. But Lester never permits this film to idealize that brilliant pre-Revolutionary France, and with surprising economy of footage he surrounds his dashing heroes with visual reminders of the dust and the dung-heaps, the poverty and the shabbiness of their era, against which the glittering pomp of Louis XIII's court contrasts significantly.

Lester is not, however, making a heavy-handed political statement in this film: *The Three Musketeers* is nothing if not good entertainment. Subtitled "The Queen's Diamonds," this movie is actually the first half of a longer film which seemed so uneditably delightful to Lester that he simply cut it in two. The second half, which will be called *The Four Musketeers*, picks up the tale after D'Artagnan, played by Michael York, has been made a full-fledged member of the King's Musketeers.

In many aspects, this movie returns to traditional adventure-film style, with plenty of swash-buckling swordplay and suspenseful near-disasters that are averted in the nick of time as the heroes burst in to save the day. At all times a clear-cut polarization between the good guys and the bad guys sees poetic justice executed, and the audience is made to anticipate that the forces of good will triumph. Yet an odd tone of farce permeates the picture as well, with a recklessly comic vitality.

Dilettantes of the cinema may object to the triteness of such neo-Errol Flynn antics, but there is a superb control of dramatic energy throughout that indicates just how seriously one has to take this movie. An edge of conscious theatricality to each actor's performance, a hint of stylization and exaggeration throughout, never loses the knowledge that this film is a product of 1974 film-making.

York's D'Artagnan is an endearingly clumsy hero, whose youthful exuberance in trying to prove himself worthy of becoming a Musketeer is recognized as over-zealous even by the other characters in the movie. Nevertheless, the Three Musketeers who involve themselves in his adventures go along with his intrigues, out of boredom and a crazy sense of honor. Oliver Reed, Richard Chamberlain, and a third actor who is never properly identified in the credits neatly distinguish among themselves the characteristics of Athos, the drinker, Aramis, the lover, and Porthos, the fop, each clinging to his self-image with a casual love of fun.

The frequent sword-fights in the movie are by no means polished duels; a genuine desire to win the contest suspends fencing conventions and resorts to kicking, hat-pulling, and stick-wielding when all else fails. One of the most delightful scenes occurs in a tavern when the Musketeers, being hungry and temporarily penniless, stage a quarrel in order to divert attention from their thievery, and ingeniously provide themselves with a feast right under the innkeeper's eye.

The main plot of the film is a court intrigue in which D'Artagnan is inadvertently involved because of his adoration of a lady-in-waiting (Raquel Welch). D'Artagnan's mad chase to England to recover the Queen's diamonds from her lover, the Duke of Buckingham (Simon Ward) foils the political machinations of Cardinal Richelieu, played with splendid malevolence by Charlton Heston. Geraldine Chaplin is lively as Queen Anne, and Faye Dunaway is equally lovely but dangerous as Milady, an English courtesan in league with the Cardinal.

The comedy in this film is supplied by slapstick and an outrageous sense of incongruity, both played up with modern sophistication. Although each performance is full of spirit (yes, even Raquel does herself credit), no actor involves himself so totally in his role that the twentieth-century recognition of farce is lost.

This is a big film, with many well-known actors, lavish sets and costumes, and a horde of extras hovering in the background as washerwoman, beggars, and bystanders. But just as the little people in the streets turn for a moment to watch the Musketeers thrash it out with the Cardinal's guards, then shrug and turn back to their daily routines, so the audience must watch the film, taking all the color and excitement as a momentary, diverting change of pace, all taken with a grain of cinematic salt for what it is worth—entertainment.

Chamber Music and Champagne

by adrienne cook

The Mount Holyoke Chamber Music Society will present on Sunday, 21 April, "Champagne and Chamber Music" in MacGregor at 4:00 p.m. Five short chamber works will be performed: "Chiodoro" by Claudio Monteverdi, an early piece for two sopranos, two violins and a harpsichord; a Bach cantata for alto with violin obbligato; "Entr'acte," a duo for flute and guitar by Francois Ibert; a Schubert quartet for viola, flute, guitar and cello; "Preludio," a guitar piece by Frederico Mompou; and the premiere of a recently completed work, "Duet No. 1," for violin and guitar by Jeffrey Steel.

The Monteverdi work will be performed by soprano Barbara Bigelow, alto Desinee Monee, violinists Deborah Adamo and Hollis Velinsky. The continuo part will be played by Cathy Scarborough.

"Preludio" by Frederico Mompou will be played by guitarist Beth Brode. Ms. Brode's interpretation of this composition is based upon her work with guitarist Oscan Ghilia and Phillip DeFremery, both proteges of the composer.

Jeffrey Steel's "Duet No. 1" is a short melodic work completed only a few days ago. Violinist

Jeanne Windsor will premier this work with the composer.

The second half of the program will feature Schubert's "Quartet in G Major D. 96 for Guitar, Flute, Viola and Cello." Actually, the work was an arrangement by Schubert of Matiegker's Nocturne, op. 21, originally for flute, cello and guitar. The piece was lost for many years, but was found in an attic shortly after the end of World War I. It is a light-hearted, almost frivolous piece which Schubert completed when he was eighteen years old. The "Guitar Quartet" will be performed by flutist Alison Hale, violinist Jeanne Rosenthal, Amherst cellist Tom Bondello and guitarist Beth Brode.

Champagne will accompany the chamber music.

THE

THE REPRODUCTION

THE REPRODUCTION EXHIBITION

April 19 - 27 2:00 - 5:00

Dwight Hall Gallery

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Folk and blues guitarist Leo Kottke will perform a solo concert at 8 p.m. Sunday, April 21 in the Amherst College Alumni Gymnasium.

Reviewing Kottke's most recent album, "Ice Water," music critic Coleman Andrews writes that the rising guitarist's music "seems to get better, richer, more complex, but more directly exhilarating with each new album." He goes on to say that "Ice Water" echoes with the sadness not of sorrow, but of introspection.

Tickets for the concert are \$3.50 and are available at the door or in advance at Uroboros Bookstore, Hampshire College; For the Record, Faces of Earth, and the New Record Shop, all in the Town of Amherst; the Campus Center, University of Massachusetts; and Del Padre Music in Northampton.

The Deadline for the Phi Beta Kappa competition is tomorrow Friday, 19 April