



Where all the kidz wanna do is -hey, we're back!...Rock'n'Roll!!!!!!

Volume one, Number six

The Shakin' Street "Evade thee" Issue

COURT AND SPARK

Joni Mitchell

Asylum

PLANET WAVES

Bob Dylan

Asylum

Less than a month into the year and already we have what will probably be two of the biggest albums of 1974; featuring a new Joni Mitchell, and Bob Dylan with the Band.

One would think that Joni's new album released on the same day as the long awaited Dylan LP (coming in the middle of his first tour in seven years) would be sort of over shadowed. Not this one.

Joni, who is also doing concerts for the first time in a long time, (including one at Kleinhans on February 11, courtesy of Festival East) has changed her style a little. Her voice has improved a bit and she has tightened up her singing style. In addition, the arrangements are full, often lush, and very listenable. All of this may distress some of her old fans who preferred her musically simple and lyrically complex, but it will also attract some new fans.

Court and Spark is Joni Mitchell at her most accessible, and most commercial. The single from the album, "Raised on Robbery," is one of her tightest pop compositions and sports the ever popular Andrews sisters harmonies and a genuine rock 'n' roll arrangement with some Robbie Robertson tasty-licks guitar. It's a hit, and the album will doubtless follow it.

Side one of "Court and Spark" is a suite of five songs with a basic theme of social life and the love involved. It starts with the title cut which is a song about courting, sparking, and related pastimes. But there is a problem expressed which comes out in the second track "Help Me" which presents a love versus freedom conflict by balancing the good times of

the present moment against the fears and hopes of the past and future. It also has a catchy tune which fades into "Free Man in Paris," a song about getting away from it all again:

You know I'd go back there tomorrow
But for the work I've taken on
Stoking the star maker machine
Behind the popular song

The cut features double electric lead guitars (Jose Feliciano and Larry Carlton) on top of a light acoustic rhythm. "People's Parties" follows, again balancing diversionary pastimes (people's parties) against the underlying sigh of repressed despair in this song and the longing request for release in the final cut "Same Situation" which ends:

I called out to be released
Caught in my struggle for higher
achievement,
And my search for love
That don't seem to cease

Side two is a mixture, including a little rock and roll ("Raised on Robbery" and to a lesser extent "Car on a Hill") and some more standard Joni Mitchell things. "Troubled Child" and "Just Like This Train," ("Counting lovers like railroad cars") are metaphoric picture/poems set to music. "Down on You" is a long and pleasant piano and orchestra song with impressionistic lyrics on what it's like when "love is gone."

The surprise cut comes at the end. If the Andrews sisters harmonies on "Raised on Robbery" don't cause a few people to wonder what Joni is up to, her rendition of Ross & Grey's "Twisted" will. The song is a jazz vocalese number which can

For a change here's a concert you can't go to (Judy Kaye . . .?) Joni Mitchell won't be here on February 11 at Kleinhans, tickets aren't sold out, they aren't \$6.50, \$5.50 and \$4.50, Festival East is not sponsoring it, and we lie thru our teeth.

also be found on Bette Midler's latest album. However, where Midler has garish horns and an affected hot 'n' heavy vocal delivery, Joni sings sweet and smiling over a cool string bass and drums arrangement with a muted trumpet doing the breaks. She has also replaced Bette's needless between verse chatter with a couple of throw away lines from (are you ready for this?) Cheech & Chong. Exactly what the purpose of the cut is, I couldn't say. Perhaps she is asking her fans not to take her too seriously anymore. What ever the reason, it is very well done, it sounds like she had fun doing it, it's fun to listen to, and it's an interesting way to top off a very enjoyable album.

As for Bob Dylan's "Planet Waves," I have to admit I'm a real dyed-in-the-denim Dylan disciple. (I liked "Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid" and even "Dylan") (poor Kid-Ed.) so anything I could say would not be very objective. With this in mind, I'll just try to give you an idea what it's like in case you haven't heard it yet.

Over all, it sounds pretty much like you'd expect Dylan and the Band to sound. (For reference, see the four Isle of Wight cuts on *Self Portrait* and their three songs on the Columbia half of the "Tribute to Woody Guthrie" recordings, or some of the available bootlegs.) The production is simple with a sort of homemade basement quality which seems to fit the performers well.

"On a Night Like This" is a "Nashville Skyline" type song with a loose, rollicking arrangement and an accordion/organ which blends nicely with Bob's harmonica in the end. "Going Going Gone" is a slower, more flowing number with some excellent Robbie Robertson guitar. "Tough Mama" relies heavily on the Band's distinctive sound. On this one Dylan is singing with the Band, instead of them accompanying

him. "Hazel" is a slow beautiful ballad and "Something There is About You" is a love song with a sort of sentimental, nostalgic lyric ("Something about you that brings back a long forgotten truth"). Again Robertson displays virtuosity and imagination with a swirling, dreamy guitar.

The last song on the first side, "Forever Young," also kicks off the side two. The first version is slow and thoughtful, a la the sound track album. The second is double timed and is reminiscent of "The Mighty Quinn." The optimistic lyrics simply wish every one (no doubt Bob included) good fortune and "May you stay forever young."

"Dirge" is some old fashioned Dylan poetry with sparse, stark images and an appropriately dirgy piano balanced with some rather nice acoustic guitar. "You Angel You" is another up-tempo Band number with Garth Hudson's nicely controlled organ bouncing off still more of Robertson's great plunky guitar. "Never Say Goodbye" is a sentimental poem with a convenient melody.

The final tune, "Wedding Song" is a Dylan solo (vocal, guitar, and harmonica), and probably has the most significant lyrics, including the lines:

The tune that is yours and mine
To play upon this earth
We'll play it out the best we know
What ever it is worth
What's lost is lost
We can't regain
What went down in the flood
The happiness to me is you
And I love you more than blood

and:

It's never been my duty
To remake the world at large
Nor is it my intention
To sound the battle charge

So while Bob Dylan is reminiscing about the past and expressing optimism about the future, Joni Mitchell is examining facets of social life and reaching for an even larger audience with what will probably be her best selling album yet. With these two to start with, things look pretty good for '74.

-Dave Meinzer

Welcome...

With this issue, *Shakin' St.* welcomes the Masterful Doctor of Soul, Cornelius Johnson and James Braun, who doesn't even know it yet, to the arms of rock 'n' roll.



This group is gonna Rock your Sox off!!! Chrysalis recording artists, Black Sheep will have their first album released in March, and the single from it, "Stick Around," is destined to be a hit in the fine old Rock 'n' Roll tradition left for lost by groups like Free, Spooky Tooth, Trapeze. And the fact that they're from

this area makes it all more important. Fri., Feb. 8 Black Sheep will be at the Niagara Falls Canada Union Center. Tickets are \$2 at the door and don't complain to us a year from now that you missed 'em when you had the chance. *Shakin' St.* sends its congratulations to Black Sheep.



Jan Akkerman

TABERNAKEL

Jan Akkerman
(Atco/Atlantic)

What could be wrong? There is no question of Jan Akkerman's sincerity towards his music. The accuracy he displays on his guitar is dynamic. His execution is nearly flawless. He performs with a clear sense of direction. What is wrong with Jan Akkerman is that he is too serious. It is a rare dedicated musician who is willing to sacrifice unit sales for the sake of laying down the music that he genuinely loves.

On his new album, *Tabernakel* (Atco SD 7032), Akkerman plays galliards, pavans, and corantos. These are melodies that were used to accompany dances in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. More than three quarters of *Tabernakel* is filled with this kind of composition. The obvious question is "Why?" Why does the premier guitarist of Focus (a solid contemporary band) revert back to music that was popular three or four centuries ago?

There is no simple answer. In Focus, Akkerman has to contend with Thijs Van Leer, who is a creator himself. Therefore his music is never purely expressed. On the Peter Banks solo album (*Two Sides of Peter Banks; Sovereign*), Akkerman contributes an instrumental entitled *Beyond the Loneliest Sea* that is very artistic. On his second solo album, *Profile* (Sire), Akkerman utilized the commercially successful idea of mixing in imaginative rock guitar styles with acoustic ballads and jigs. On *Profile* he kept the attention span of the present day listener by providing an album of mostly current styled compositions (some will go as far as to say that Akkerman plays a JAZZ guitar; in reality he generally falls back on his choppy rock chords). A well versed jazz guitarist improvises. Akkerman is comparable to a young child who is first learning how to walk alone. After a few short lively riffs, which some interpret as improvisational, he runs back to mother rock. This makes for an album that flows smoother, that the consumer can enjoy easier. By comparison, *Tabernakel* contains an overabundance of sixteenth and seventeenth tunes. For example, a tedious fourteen minutes and six seconds of the second side is taken up by an Akkerman "musical idea" entitled *Lammy*. This begins with a heavy church organ (played by Akkerman) backed by a medieval oriented chorus. The melody drifts into some decent guitar work, where upon we are met by the biggest joke of all. Imagine this; through out a good portion of the album Akkerman and producer Geoffrey Haslam retain the services of a full orchestra (conducted by George Flynn) to add richness to the atmosphere of the finished product. In the midst of all this