

POTTSVILLE (PA.) REPUBLICAN SATURDAY

YOUTH BEAT

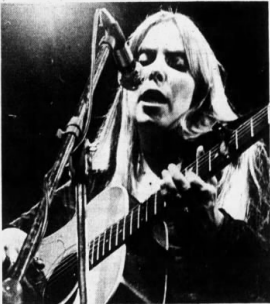
By SALLY LINDSAY

THE MUSIC OF JONI MITCHELL, PART I

Roberta Joan Anderson left Canada to begin her odyssey a few years ago. She began to relate to us her visions, experiences, and relationships through her four albums, each one a small masterpiece in its own right.

We know her, though, as Joni Mitchell (she was married to Chuck Mitchell, later divorced), and within her are many Jonis. There is Joni, of "Song to a Seagull," leaving Canada for fame and fortune, and coming to the city

"Night in the city looks pretty to me
Night in the City looks fine
Music comes spilling out into the streets
Colors go flashing in time."
—Joni Mitchell, Squamish Music



JONI MITCHELL

and going down to the sea

"Out of the city
and down to the seaside
To sun on my shoulders
And wind in my hair."

Joni in the clouds, hanging around with Crosby and Nash, Collins, Guthrie, and Sebastian and Stills, being a free spirit and writing and touring and doing Newport and Big Sur, creating more images and more pictures and happy with relationships, even doing some political protesting, no matter how mild. She received a little bit of wide notice as the author behind the hit in the fall of '68. A song, she said at a recent concert in Philadelphia, that was written, half in an airplane, and half in Philadelphia. . . .

"I've looked at life from both sides now
From up and down, and still somehow,
It's life's illusions I recall
I really don't know life at all."

And, there is Joni, the canyon dweller, aching for Willy, torn between fame and fortune and the simpler things, now lost in the midst of black limousines, fancy hotels, and the whole star trip

"Now me, I play for fortunes
And those velvet curtain calls
I got a black limousine
And two gentlemen
Escorting me to the halls.
And I'll play if you have the money
Or if you're a friend to me
But, the one man band
By the quick lunch stand,
He was playing real good for free."

Her tunes on "Ladies of the Canyon" range from lightness, like "Morning, Morgantown," to more seriousness and points like "The Arrangement." It is during this period in her life she felt she should record "The Circle Game," a beautiful song about coming of age

"So the years spin by and now the boy is twenty
Though his dreams have lost some grandeur coming true
There'll be new dreams, maybe better dreams and plenty
Before the last revolving year is through."

And two songs that became well-known via the am waves, "Big Yellow Taxi," a social comment on the times

"They took all the trees
And put them in a tree museum
And they charged all the people
A dollar and a half just to see 'em
Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
'Til it's gone
They paved paradise, put up a parking lot."

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The other was "Woodstock," made popular by a few rock groups, but, on "Canyon" a very poetic sensitive look at Woodstock through Joni's eyes

"Well, I came upon a child of God
He was walkin' along the road
And I asked him, where are you going
And this he told me
I'm going down to Yasgur's Farm, gonna join in a rock 'n' roll band
Gonna camp out on the land, try and get my soul free."

It was a long time before we heard from her after that third L.P. "Blue" was released, and we saw another Joni. Following the theme of the title of that album to the finish. Each song really had some sort of aching or yearning to it. She had been with James Taylor for awhile, and he plays some things on her album. That really didn't seem to work out, because she's not singing words of praise for a new old man. The songs on "Blue" are really beautiful. Joni as mistress of the dulcimer is fully brought to light. She longs for "California" in her song of the same name, and she longs for somebody, when she sings . . .
"Oh I am a lonely painter, I live in a box of paints
I'm frightened by the devil, and drawn to those ones that ain't
I remember that you told me, you said
'Loving is Touching Souls'
Well, you surely touched mine, 'cause
part of you pours out of me in these lines from time to time
Oh, you're in my blood like holy wine, you taste so bitter and so sweet
I could drink a case of you, darling
And I would still be on my feet, I would still be on my feet."

And, there are other songs — "River," "The Last Time I Saw Richard," and "This Flight Tonight," which show the singer's incompleteness and her changes process. "Blue," however, seems to be her deepest L.P. with almost a reverent tone.

As an introduction to "The Music of Joni Mitchell," her first four L.P.s (a new one is to be released very soon, her first on Asylum) serve as good chronological pieces to pick apart from the surface. Next week, a deeper look will be taken inside the music and mind's eye of Joni Mitchell.