

Metropolitan production in "Carmen" last season and The program at Wake and Debusay.

## Joni Mitchell Songs to Think About

By Jim Shertzer  
Arts Reporter

JONI MITCHELL: "COURT AND SPARK" (LP, Asylum 7E-100, \$8.98; tapes by Asylum, \$6.98).

With each album, Joni Mitchell has drawn her circle of subjects tighter. On this disk, her sixth and one of her best, she is down to the nub of the problem that has troubled her in so many of her songs: the dilemma of freedom and commitment.

In one way or another, ten of the 11 songs on "Court and Spark" weigh a fierce longing for emotional liberty against an equally strong desire for various attachments. And in none does Miss Mitchell find a balance that gives her any peace.

She pursues personal freedom to its ultimate end and finds insanity. She pursues involvement to its ultimate end and finds slavery. Between the extremes, she discovers only uncertainty, confusion and emotional torment.

She stands afraid of the loneliness within her and the loneliness she sees around her, unable to be entirely herself and unable to be entirely not herself. The songs, though chiefly about men and her music, matters of major concern to her as woman and artist, strike a chillingly universal chord.

The pleasures she wins in selfishness are few and transitory—the "court and spark" of love before it stales, the fleeting thrill of fame, momentarily unnumbered by the enormous personal and social burden fame brings to those it blesses and curses.

Six of the songs examine love from start to end. The tracks are in sequence (although the lineup is broken by two numbers), and they run from "Court and Spark," the opening cut, through "Just Like This Train" on side two.

"And you could complete me / I'd complete you" promises the lover of the first, who asks her to give up everything for him, a demand she refuses for her liberty and her art. In "Help Me," she is falling but fearful of the consequences:

*It's got me hoping for the future  
And worrying about the past  
'Cause I've seen some hot hot places  
Come down to smoke and ash  
We love our lovin'  
But not like we love our freedom.*

By "The Same Situation," those fears are realized, though she prays for some reconciliation between her needs for personal liberty and surrender. "Car on a Hill" finds her waiting for a man who will never be hers again. Bitterness with an old lover and her inability to fulfill conflicting emotional needs in an overnight affair sour "Down to You," one of the album's most brilliant psychodramas.

Finally, in "Just Like This Train" come a few barbed afterthoughts on an ex-lover and self-hatred for losing her goodness and her heart and having suffered so much in trying to find the impossible balance between self and

selflessness in love. She comes to a sad confession: *I used to count lovers like railroad cars  
I counted them on my side  
Lately I don't count on nothing  
I just let things slide.*

"Free Man in Paris" and "People's Parties" are her freedom-commitment songs on music and fame and present the traps of another deep involvement that brings dual torment.

One can not be an artist without an audience, yet one can not be free and be a pop star. Complete surrender, however, kills the artist by destroying his individuality. The struggle leaves her "living on nerves and feelings/With a weak and lazy mind . . . Fumbling dead, dumb and blind."

In the set's final tracks, Miss Mitchell considers the extreme of emotional freedom in "Trouble Child," a compassionate song to a youngster who can not give

anything to anyone and is mad. It is a release that she understands but sees as the horror it is. Having peered into the awful abyss, she counters with an old Lambert-Hendricks-Boss jazz tune—"Twisted"—in which schizophrenia gets comic treatment.

Despite the gravity of the songs, the album's musical style is on the light side, as if in counterpoint to the lyrics. The arrangements, unusually elaborate for Miss Mitchell, are buoyant, and the side men (the all stars include David Crosby, Graham Nash, Robbie Robertson and Jose Feliciano) play brilliantly, with special zest in the set's sole bit of funky fantasy, "Raised on Robbery."

"Court and Spark" is the first really important pop album of this rapidly aging year and reconfirms Joni Mitchell as a woman who feels and thinks as sensitively as she writes. It is a record to be listened to and thought about.

## WSSU Series to Present Gregg Smith Singers

THE GREGG Smith Singers, a professional choral group, will perform at 8:15 p.m. Monday at the Salem College Fine Arts Center.

The concert will be the last attraction in this year's Winston-Salem State University Lyceum Series. Admission will be by season membership or tickets sold at the door.

Smith, the group's leader, formed the group in 1955. The singers have made four European tours and have recorded under the personal direction of the famous composer, Igor Stravinsky.

Included in their program will be works by Charles Ives, T. Frank Allen, Stephen Foster and a number of sacred songs and spirituals.

**TODAY**  
11 to 9... ONLY  
**T-BONE STEAK**  
REG. 3.99 **2.99**  
**BUCKAROO RANCH**  
850 Peters Creek Parkway

**T-BONE STEAK DINNER**  
Delicious, Tender  
15-Oz. T-BONE STEAK  
served with  
Baked Potatoes, Tossed Salad  
and Texas Toast... Only  
**\$3.49**  
Prices from 99¢ to \$3.49  
**FAMILY STEAK PIT**  
REYNOLDA MANOR SHOPPING CENTER  
Carry Outs—Come as You Are—No Tippling—Phone 725-8646  
11:30 to 9:00 Sun thru Thurs.—11:30 to 10:00 Fri. & Sat