

Strong Sequel Album From Joni Mitchell

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Joni Mitchell's new album, *Court and Spark*, is an excellent sequel to *For the Roses*, continuing a thematic package that has its roots in the album, *Blue*.

It is Joni's first offering in more than a year.

With each album she releases her songwriting shows greater strength than the album before. The beauty and constant quality of her writing place her in a class with the finest of pop songwriters: Dylan, Lennon and McCartney and Paul Simon. The lyrics are intelligent and evidence more than a little soul-searching by the author, avoiding the superficiality of most contemporary music.

From the somber sobriety of *Blue*, through the sadness and sometimes thinly veiled bitterness of *For the Roses*, we arrive at this album.

The perspective is wider. There is an awareness and acceptance of life's contradictions with no struggle to resolve them.

In "People's Parties," for example, there are a variety of guests: "Some are friendly/Some are cutting/Some are watching from the wings/Some are standing in the center giving to get something." The song is an interesting contrast to "Banquet" from *For the Roses*. "People's Parties" gives a more sympathetic view of the world without losing the lyric power of "Banquet."

Personal sadness has faded enough to allow Joni to take a step back from a situation



and see it with greater detachment. "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," she sings in "Down to You."

Court and Spark balances nicely with *For the Roses*. The music is similar and the songs walk the same thematic ground. The wit displayed in "I'm a Radio" from *For the Roses* is expanded here. There is outright humor on "Raised on Robbery," which features Robbie Robertson of the Band on guitar, and "Twisted," which offers Cheech and Chong in a brief bit of back up vocal.

The modern, technical imagery displayed in "Electricity" and "I'm a Radio" on *For the Roses* is offered again in "Just Like This Train."

The songs here deal with basic, inner conflicts we all face. The effort is to find new, more interesting ways to say what has been said before. Throughout *Court and Spark* this effort is successful, and the lyrics and music blend beautifully.