

# So Joni misses a note - So who cares?

By PAUL ENNIS

You walk into the Riverboat and this wide-eyed girl with long, soft, blond or blond hair is playing a very conscientious acoustic guitar and sometimes missing a note. And it doesn't bother you.

Because what Joni Mitchell does with her voice is so striking and what she sings so vivid, that you fly right up there with her, lingering in the trail of her highest notes and most lucid images.

Her soprano voice is strong and powerful, growing less breathy every day. So pure, it is almost a distillate, so clear, so exalted and so simple that somewhere along its enchanting, wandering journey it approaches the magical.

It has been said she sounds like Baez but the comparison may soon have to be reversed. Her voice has broken through it all and the clouds that slow or trap most singers have been pushed aside.

Last night, her first of six in Toronto, the songs she sang (with one exception) were her own. They are as filled with wonder as her eyes or her voice, with simple pictures painted wide and true:

"Winter Lady where you going with your hair all soft and loose like snowing . . .

(Eastern Rain) to hang like beaded curtains till the morning sun . . . twinkle, twinkle, water lily all alone on such a pretty . . . night with enchantment on your side.

Urge For Going, the song for which she is best-known (Tom Rush sings it everywhere) remains her favorite:

"I awoke today to find the frost perched on the town . . . It hovered in a frozen sky then gobbled summer down . . . When the sun turns traitor cold and . . . All the trees stand shivering in a naked row . . . I get the

urge for going . . . But I never seem to go."

She does lyrically what Donovan for one, never really succeeds in doing, building idealistic, almost childlike, spaces and making them acoustically profound. Where Dylan gets you inside, she takes you out; where Ocha screams, she sings.

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Alexandre Zelkine, who last night began his week at the Penny Farthing, is a singer of ethnic songs who was born in France of White Russian parents. He now lives in Montreal.

He has a very deep, full bass voice and a spirited, if somewhat inconsistent, way of accompanying himself on

the guitar. His assortment of Russian, French, Israeli and other songs was varied enough to be pleasant,

but lacked the drama that might have given them real drive. It seemed as if he could

never find the right balance between his truly sonorous voice and his often flashy guitar.

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