



MESSAGE FROM *joni mitchell*

Jean Grand-Maitre approached me with a selection of my songs, which he wanted to choreograph and present as a ballet, tentatively entitled *Dancing Joni*. He came to visit me, and invited my participation, just as I was preparing a mixed-media show of 64 large canvases – triptychs – depicting various wars and revolutions. The images had been collected from a dying flat screen TV and were a combination of dramatizations and documentary images – the dominating colours being green and pink – an odd palate for depicting death and destruction. Marching through the canvases are a chorus line of green flag bearing girls.

When Jean saw the images he wished to include them in the presentation. I suggested that I prepare a selection of songs that would be more compatible with the war images. We worked together through technical and

budget limitations and came up with a ballet entitled *The Fiddle and The Drum*. I designed and prepared an accompanying installation of the art, which would be suspended over the dancers.

I've included two new songs in the ballet but most of the material comes from an album called *Dog Eat Dog*, which was poorly received in the '80s, and was almost immediately repressed for more than 20 years. The set also includes two poems, which I set to music but did not write. One is Rudyard Kipling's *if*, and the other a song I call *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*, which was adapted from the Yates' poem *The Second Coming*.

With our situation for all earthlings – man and animals – becoming so dire, I felt that it was frivolous to present a lighter fare – like "fiddling while Rome burned".

JONI MITCHELL, Songwriter



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