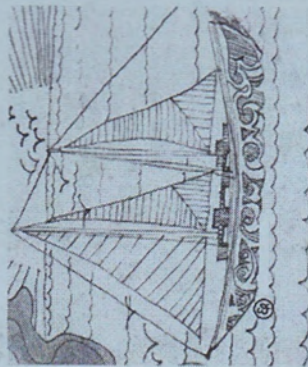


Joni Mitchell

Shadows & Light



Issue 5

July 1997

Editor's Note

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I've never known anyone who tunes a guitar the way Joni does!

Not content to use conventional chords, she makes the strings do the work, creating vast intervals between them to create that unique Mitchell orchestral backing. With a new found enthusiasm for acoustic music, the faders on the desk have pushed her guitar towards the forefront of the mix on recent albums. Many fans yearn for a Joni to be featured in the "Unplugged" series, an opportunity to hear her guitar playing free of studio sheen. This month sees the release of a new songbook to accompany the "Hits" CD.

In this issue we feature interviews with Joni Mitchell from 1988, David Crosby, and review a Jaco Pastorius biography. There's all the latest news from Wally Breese, and a chance to test your JM knowledge in Ian Caskie's Joni-versity Challenge!

Alan Beadle

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Shadows & Light

103 Boxgrove, Goring-by-Sea

WORTHING

West Sussex BN12 6LX

email : beadlea@clara.net



All the way from America

The latest news from Wally Breese in San Francisco.

NEWPORT: NO, TV: YES

I regret to report that rumours about Joni performing at the Newport Folk Festival this coming August are untrue. This is probably a case of that tired old mix-up of mistaking Joni for Joan Baez, who IS appearing at the festival. There are currently no set plans for any live concerts for Joni this summer, although requests come in all the time.

Once she's completed polishing her new album, Joni does have a very full menu for the rest of 1997, including finishing the artwork for "Taming the Tiger," writing and preparing three books (lyrics and poems, paintings, and memoirs), and beginning work on three TV specials.

These specials are being produced with Eagle Rock Entertainment of London, England for worldwide broadcast in 1998. The first is a biography of her career in music, and will include interviews and archival footage. The second is a live compilation from throughout the last 30 years and will include a new performance segment that'll be filmed before the end of this year. The third of these specials is a segment for Classic Albums and will have Joni discussing the making of one of her most popular albums, most likely "Court and Spark."

'TAMING THE TIGER'

Joni is currently still putting the finishing

touches on her next album "Taming the Tiger," which sources say she feels is her best album ever. She wants to do everything perfectly and carefully for this release and therefore it will not be in stores until February 1998. This delay will allow Joni to spend the holidays with her family, and then release the album after the new year to co-incide with one of the three TV specials mentioned above.

Here are the titles of the ten tracks on "Taming the Tiger". (The sequence has not yet been determined.)

- Lead Balloon
- Love's Cries
- Love Puts on a New Face
- Happiness is the Best Facelift
- Taming the Tiger
- Harlem in Havana
- No Apologies
- Stay in Touch
- Man from Mars
- Here's to You (My Best to You)

A SONGWRITERS AWARD

On June 10th in New York City, Joni was honored with yet another award - The Songwriters Hall of Fame. At the organization's award dinner, Joni was celebrated in the category of "international" songwriter, and joined Phil Spector, Harlan Howard, Ernesto Lecuona and Jimmie Kennedy as the 28th annual inductees. Due to Joni's near-completed work on her next album, she did not attend.

ACOUSTIC GUITAR MAGAZINE

In the June issue of "Acoustic Guitar" magazine is an article called "Awesome Artist Web Sites" written by Elizabeth Papapetrou. I quote; "Probably the best fan site on the internet is 'The Joni Mitchell Homepage', a massive labour of love offered by mega Joni Mitchell Fan, Wally Breese..."

Thanks for the compliments, Elizabeth!

SONGBOOKS FOR "HITS" & "MISSES"

The Warner Brothers Publications "authentic guitar-tab edition" for "HITS" is now in stores. It contains complete guitar and dulcimer transcriptions for every song on the album (in standard notation and tablature) as well as lyrics and extensive information on Joni's often unusual tunings.

Tablature directions for both instruments are also included, with illuminating information from Joel Bernstein on "Joni Mitchell and The Guitar", and from Joellen Lapidus and Ruth Barrett on "Joni Mitchell and The Dulcimer".

Arrangers Hemme Lutjeboer and Dylan Schorer based the book on guitar transcriptions by Joel Bernstein, and on dulcimer transcriptions by Joellen Lapidus and Ruth Barrett.

The book for the album "Misses" will follow on it's heels as soon as it's been approved by Joni's guitar-technician Joel Bernstein.

The 2 songbooks were delayed due to a last minute addition of the 3 dulcimer songs from the album "Blue." They will now include all 29 songs from "Hits" and

"Misses." The songbooks will have complete transcriptions in both standard notation and tablature. Each of Joni's tunings are also noted. The song folios will be listed for \$21.95 each.

"VANITY FAIR" MAGAZINE

June's issue of "Vanity Fair" (with Arnold Schwarzenegger on the cover) has an article written by Bill Flanagan and features photographs taken by Herb Ritts, Mark Lipson, and others. In the article, Joni talks about her new album which she says is finished except for some overdubs, she raves about John Kelly's Fez show, and she even casually refers to the Joni Mitchell Homepage as "my website." The article, is called "Lady of the Canyon" (don't they ever get tired of variations on that title?).

VH-1'S "1997 ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME" SPECIAL

On May 9, I watched VH-1's coverage of the 1997 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony and jam. As I predicted, Joni's award presentation received less airtime than most of the other major inductees - only about 7 minutes. James Taylor performing Joni's song "Woodstock" was also shown, so I'll count that as another 4 minutes of Joni-related time. Total: 11 minutes. The Jackson 5 got about that much time just for their lengthy acceptance speeches!

Shawn Colvin's version of Joni's "Free Man in Paris" was irritatingly cut up into segments with portions of her presentation speech intercut between the verses. Unless I missed it, no other performance was cut like this one. Shawn's speech was rather disjointed but I

think VH-1 should have shown the entire performance in total and uncut.

All in all though, I did enjoy the show which ran about 2 hrs. 36 min. (which is exactly 2 hours of material if you don't tape the commercials). David Crosby gave a moving speech that was probably the best of the night. The Bee Gees were funny and self-deprecating, and generally the performances by the inductees and their presenters throughout the program were stellar.

If you look real close at the end of the credits that roll as the last song finishes, you'll see I received an on-screen credit for my consultant work on Joni's induction film. You'll have to be fast to catch it though, as it appears right as the names become about 1/4 of the size of the ones preceding and their roll up the screen doubles in speed. If they could only

remember how to spell my name - it's Wally, not Walley. Oh, well.

{POST-SCRIPT} - Upon seeing the final version of Joni's induction film, all I can say is "No songs after 1975!!!" VH-1, in their final cut, drastically changed the feel of the film. The version I saw a few days ago at least had held on to a few post-1980 songs such as "My Secret Place" and "How Do You Stop?"

Most of my memorabilia survived VH-1's scissors, but they popped in photos from god knows where, and deleted some of Joel Bernstein's moody shots of Joni from throughout the years that he's photographed her. That's a real shame!

Later

Wally Breese

Joni Mitchell on the Internet

Visit the Joni Mitchell Homepage

News, Photos, Biographies, Discography, Lyrics, Paintings

and much, much, more.

<http://www.jonimitchell.com>

NEW *** NEW *** NEW

"HITS" SONGBOOK - SAMPLE PAGES

NEW *** NEW *** NEW

FENER BROADSHEET - GUITAR TEACHING AID

JoniMitchell.com is maintained by Wally Breese

Our Lady Of Sorrows

With the kind permission of Barney Hoskyns, this month we re-print an article that originally appeared in the December 1994 issue of Mojo magazine.

The former paragon of purity and introspection sailed into the 90's supremely intact. But the road had been rough and the view fit to wither the soul. Joni Mitchell by Barney Hoskyns. Photography by Jon Ragel

She almost bounds into the room, this dowager duchess of American rock, fresh from whooping it up for Mojo's photographer on the street outside manager Peter Asher's West Hollywood offices. Where lesser mortals would have been wiped out by the session, she seems to have found it positively rejuvenating.

After this exuberant entrance, however, Joni Mitchell plunks herself down at a substantial oak table and proceeds to fire up the first of the many cigarettes she will have on the go through the course of our conversation. I'd heard whisperings that she was seriously ill, possibly even dying of lung cancer; if there's any truth to them they've made little difference to her prodigious intake of nicotine.

She's just released Turbulent Indigo, the seventeenth album in a career that surely stands as one of the most distinguished (and diverse) in the whole rock canon. As Mojo reviewer Charlotte Grieg pointed out last month, it's been a very long journey from Blue (1971) to Indigo - the indigo of the tormented



Vincent Van Gogh, a Mitchell pastiche of whose famous self-portrait *sans* ear graces the album's cover. But the woman is still making music of great authority, still writing songs full of beguiling beauty and trenchant indignation.

If occasionally she oversteps the mark and strays into the self-righteousness that made early champion David Crosby say she was "as humble as Mussolini", the best of the album's songs - Sunny Sunday, Sex Kills, The Magdalene Laundries, Not To Blame, The Sire Of Sorrow - rank with the most compelling and compassionate musical statements ever made about the things human beings do to themselves and to each other.

Recorded at her Bel Air home with her

husband Larry Klein - from whom, in rather typical Mitchell style, she separated the day before the sessions for the album began - Turbulent Indigo was, for a moment at least, conceived as a virtual swansong to her entire career. Released on Reprise, the label to which she was first signed back in 1967, it is an even sparser affair than her last album, *Night Ride Home*. It also boasts fewer of the guests to which we became accustomed with her '80s records: only guitarist Bill Dillon, sax god Wayne Shorter and backing vocalist Seal (on a cover of James Brown's *How Do You Stop?*) got the call this time...

The album finishes with *The Sire Of Sorrow* (Job's Sad Song), an astonishing distillation of *The Book Of Job* which literally raised the hairs on the back of my neck the first time I heard it...

Sire Of Sorrow must be one of the most harrowing things you've ever recorded.

Well, in a lifetime, I think everyone thinks to the pits, and without that you don't really have powers of empathy. You may have powers of sympathy, but if you've been to the bottom you have an opportunity to be a more compassionate person. I have had a difficult life, as most people have - no more difficult than anyone else's but peculiarly difficult all the same. A life of very good luck and very bad luck, with a lot of health problems and therefore a lot of contact with medical carelessness. But I don't think I've ever become faithless; I've never been an atheist, although I can't say that orthodoxy I belong to. Many of the memes and images on this album have been with me for a long time, but it wasn't until now that I was cheerful enough to

tackle *The Book Of Job*.

The line about spitting out bitterness made me remember things you said at the time of *Blue* about perceiving that you had a lot of hate in your heart.

Oh yeah, you've got to cleanse yourself. Krishnamurti said an interesting thing, which was that the man who hates his boss hates his wife, and I think that's true. If you're holding dark feelings about anyone, they carry over into your relationship; you burden them with your bitterness. The '80s were very difficult for me, physically and emotionally. A lot of financial betrayal, a lot of health problems. My housekeeper sued in a version of the new palimony; simultaneously I was butchered by a dentist. I don't want to get into the 'poor me' syndrome, but the '80s for me were like being a prisoner of war, what with the physical and mental pain and general climate of mistrust.

Have the '90s been better so far?

Oh yeah. Even the yuppies seem to have noticed that goodies only make you so happy! All human relationships are so malformed at this point, especially heterosexual relationships. Every other woman is raped in her lifetime, and generally if she's raped once she's raped many times because it's by a man who has repeated access to her, either a father or a brother or a priest. And if she's raped as a child she will not be a well-formed adult woman. You have to wonder why it is that men are so frustrated that they're beating on women, and feel they have the license to do so. Contemporary music is full of woman-hatred. Rap grew out of the pimp tradition "My bitch is badder than yours."

There does seem to be a new note of

compassion for your sex sounded on this record, particularly on *Not To Blame* and *The Magdalene Laundries*.

I've never been a feminist - I've always been a tomboy, a companion to men - but as I get older I have more women friends. Also, things between men and women have gotten so out of line in America. Wife-battering is now a national pastime.

As regards *Not To Blame*, we don't know if O.J. Simpson killed his wife but we do know that he battered her frequently and was kind of smug about it, like he was above the law. So the precariousness of my gender at this particular time was something that was hard for me to sidestep: precariousness in the office, in the streets, even in public swimming pools, which I talk about on *Sex Kills*.

That song takes one back to the rage and despair of *Dog Eat Dog*.

Yes, but no-one was ready for that at the time. They were all into ra-ra Ronnie Reagan, whereas I was one of 12 artists in the state who had 85 per cent of our income taxed in a kind of experimental levy. Maybe the greed of that decade was supposed to descend on me more heavily, or more irrationally, than on other people. But I did feel like Alice with the Red Queen; I felt I was in a world where irrational low was coming at me from all directions.

There's a new huskiness and vulnerability about your voice on this record.

I'm finally developing enough character in my voice, I think, to play the roles I write for myself. A song like *Cold Blue Steel* and *Sweet Fire* (from *For The*

Roses) should have been sung by a man, but I think I could probably sing it better now. That was a song about the seduction of heroin, which I never did but which I was around. There are other songs in which I think I was miscast, songs I performed as an ingenue - even *Both Sides Now*, which I wrote when I was 21 and which I think is better sung by a person in their fifties or sixties reflecting back on their life.

Sinatra did it, didn't he?

Poor Frank, though, they gave him this folk-pop arrangement that was all wrong for him. I would love for him to have been able to really stretch out and sing the song.

You sang *Woodstock* at the Edmonton Folk Festival. What were your thoughts about *Woodstock II*?

Oh, the whole thing was just silly.

That's it?

Uh huh.

You said before the Edmonton festival that you didn't want people to use you as 'a sentimental journey'. Have you always tried to resist the nostalgia of your fans?

I understand how people's memories - particularly of their youth and their best years - are wrapped up with the music they listened to then. They also tend to listen to music less and less as they get older. But I'm a maker of music, and I have a painter's spirit even more than a musician's, and I like to keep moving forward. I don't like to get stuck in regurgitative situations. I don't want to become a "duty player", as Miles Davis would have said.

What did you feel about, say, *The Eagles*' so-called 'Greed' tour?

I don't know, it's hard for me to imagine a 'Greed' tour. People think we make a lot of money out there, but they forget that the artist is the last to get paid. By the time you've paid all the people who have a piece of you, there isn't a lot left. Unless you get some kind of sponsorship. And who's gonna sponsor me apart from tobacco companies, right? [raucous laugh]

John Martyn says the problem with folk was that it didn't 'swing'. When you look back on the folkie days, would you agree with that?

Yes, but you have to remember that I was born in a swing era. When I got my legs back after I had polio, I rock'n'roll-danced my way through my teens. My music was always very rhythmic, it just had no drums. But as I began to write my first songs, they were quite intricate and classical, so they went back to my first roots, which were classical. My friends, who only knew me as a party doll thought, 'What is this and where is it coming from?' My music started off as folk music because that was a good place to get in on the guitar, but then it got more Celtic, and even like German lieder when I added the piano. Only then did it really begin to swing. Sometimes it takes a long time for your influences to show up.

Do you ever look on songs such as 'The Circle Game' and think, 'God, how unmanly and virginal that girl sounds now'?

I sang Circle Game as an encore in Edmonton, but I usually try to avoid it. What I realise now is that songs like Circle Game and Big Yellow Taxi have almost become nursery rhymes, they've become part of the culture. I didn't write

Circle Game as a children's song, but I'm very pleased to see it go into the culture in that way. Anyway, I'll sing those songs, but I'm more tempted to run by the songs that no-one ever seemed to notice. Moon At The Window was one I did in Edmonton, and it was very well received, despite the fact no-one noticed it on Wild Things Run Fast.

The conflict between the temptation of fame and 'the fear of the crowd' was a preoccupation of yours through the '70s. When did it stop troubling you?

At the time of For The Roses I was really mad at show business. I realise now that I'd entered into show business with a bad idea of what it was all about. To give you some idea of how I saw show business, I wrote a poem when I was 16 called The Fishbowl, based on my perception of what the press were doing to Sandra Dee and James Darren at a time when they were having marital difficulties. It went like this:

*The fishbowl is a world reversed,
Where fishermen with hooks
That dangle from the bottom up
Reel down their catch on gilded bait
Without a fight.*

*Pike, pickerel, bass, the common fish
Ogle through distorting glass,
See only glitter, glamour, gaiety,
Lunge towards the bait
And miss and weep for fortune's loss.
Envy the goldfish? Why?*

*His bubbles breaking round the rim
While silly fishes faint for him and say,
'Oh look, I think he winked at me?'*

So now, with that insight, why in blazes would you go into this business? I've always been somewhat reluctant. I liked small clubs, I am a ham and I am an enjoyer. But on the big stage you get sonic distortion, and my open tunings are a pain in the butt, so it's not very enjoyable.

Yes, at a certain point I became contemptuous of my audience. Critics seemed to praise me when I felt I was poor and slam me when I felt I was at my peak, so that also fed my bad attitude to the business. I've always loved making



the albums and the writing, because that's more like the painting process. The self-promotion used to be distasteful; now it's just kind of funny to me. I guess that's one of the beauties of getting older.

You've said at various points in your career that you regard yourself as a painter first and foremost. Is that true?
Oh yes.

In which case, what tipped you over

into becoming a songwriter and performer?

Art school. I wrote poems which I didn't show to people, and like most poets I was a bad learner. I was always very involved with music, not as a career direction but as a spirit-lifter, so the irony of my becoming a confessional poet was very great to anyone who knew me in my teens. Anyway, just before I went to art school I picked up a ukelele with the intention of accompanying dirty drinking songs at wiener roasts. It was no more than that. When I got to art college there was a coffeehouse there, and I went down to see if I could pick up some pin money, and it turned out they were willing to pay me \$15 for a weekend.

Meanwhile the art education was extremely disappointing to me, because all the professors were fans of De Kooning and Barnett Newman and the Abstractionists, and I wanted classical knowledge. Then when I went East to hear the Mariposa Folk Festival, I discovered the whole Yorkville coffeehouse scene in Toronto and decided to stay. But Canada has a tendency to eat its young, and most of the coffeehouses preferred to hire mediocre Americans over talented Canadians. That's the unfortunate mental sickness of my people.

Once I crossed the border I began to write, and I began to find my real voice. From the first album, it was no longer really folk music. It was just a girl with a guitar, which made it look that way.

So if the profs at Calgary Art College had given you the knowledge you wanted, would you have become a singer?

Absolutely not, I would have devoted

myself to painting. But then if I hadn't had polio when I was a kid I might have been an athlete! It wasn't until Dylan wrote Positively Fourth Street that a light bulb went on in my head. I thought, Oh my God, we can write about anything now. Prior to that song, anger was a kind of closeted emotion, it just never went into songs. But then, "You gotta lotta nerve to say you're my friend..."

David Geffen said you were the only artist he'd ever worked with who wanted to be ordinary. Does that seem a little disingenuous now?

In New York strangers used to holler at me across the street like someone in your class at school, like, "Hey, Joni, when you gonna do a concert?!" That's extraordinary, but it's ordinary. They didn't suck in their breath when they saw me. In the folk clubs you could finish a set and go down and have a drink with people and maybe even go listen to music at their houses. That's the kind of ordinary I'm talking about: you haven't lost your access to life. Once you're trapped in your hotel room, it's all over.

Tell me about leaving Geffen and moving back to Reprise after 23 years.

I had the choice to give this record to

Geffen and call it my swansong, to head up into the Canadian backbush and get on with my painting. But because Geffen hadn't done much with me in the time I was with them - I was just kind of hired and forgotten, on a lot of levels - the feedback from everyone around was that that would be a shame. And Mo Ostin at Warners was very enthusiastic about having me back.

See, in my entire career there hasn't been a lot of excitement about my albums coming out. There is excitement about this one, for some reason. People are ready to listen, they're more ready to take something a little more to heart and to mind than they have in the past. And unlike some of my peers I haven't hit a writer's block: when I hit a block I just paint, which is an old crop-rotation trick. So since I haven't lost my voice, and since I'm over the middle-age hump and at peace with becoming an elder ... although, of course, I did ask myself whether a woman of my age could continue in this youth-oriented genre. As a painter you're just beginning to ripen at 50, but as a musician there's a lot of scrutiny as to how you look and so forth. It's such a shallow and fickle business.

Part two of Barney Hoskyns' interview with Joni will appear in the next issue of "Shadows & Light".

Copies previous issues of "Shadows & Light" are still available
Price £1.75 (including postage))

JONI VERSITY CHALLENGE

Do you consider yourself to be a Joni expert? How well do you know her songs? Ian Caskie challenges you to test yourself. Answers on page 19. No cheating now!!!

1. What did she go to Staten Island to buy?
2. How much do they charge for "youth secrets of the stars"?
3. How many:
 - a. Skaters on Wollman rink?
 - b. "clear frozen streams" did the child skate over?
 - c. Oranges, lemons, cherries and plums?
 - d. Doctors putting on rubber gloves?
 - e. Glasses of Rhine wine?
4. Who had her tea-leaves read?
5. Who was selling Superman balloons?
6. Which songs reveal these items of lingerie:
 - a. "Mama's nylons underneath my cowgirl jeans"?
 - b. "Pack your suspenders"?
 - c. "Long silk stockings"?
 - d. "Push up brassieres"?
 - e. "With runs in her nylons"?
 - f. "Wreck my stockings"?
7. Who witnessed the meeting between the Dancer and the Pirate?
8. Name the three Ladies of the Canyon?
9. In which songs do these personalities appear:
 - a. Michaelangelo
 - b. Botticelli
 - c. Blanche du Bois
 - d. Picasso
 - e. Nat King Cole

A CONVERSATION WITH DAVID CROSBY

(Part One)

by Wally Breese

On March 15 1997, Wally Breese, (creator of the Joni Mitchell Homepage on the Internet) had the opportunity to interview an all time legend. We are grateful to him for allowing us to re-print the article in "Shadows & Light".



David Crosby - Santa Cruz, Ca., January 20, 1997

This month, in Part One of my conversation with David Crosby, we talk of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction, the recording of Joni's first album in 1968, and many other subjects. David was very forthcoming, even when his answers put him in a less than perfect light; I appreciate his candor. He seemed keen on airing his views about his history with Joni, and I was, of course, eager to help him do so.

I'll begin with a brief bio :

David Crosby was born in L.A. on 14/8/41. His father, Floyd, was an Academy Award winning cinematographer. As a child, he was encouraged to play musical instruments, and along with his father and his brother Ethan, they would perform family concerts. Growing up, his musical love was not early rock and roll like the

other kids around him, but jazz and classical music.

In his early 20's, he developed an interest in folk music and joined a Kingston Trio-like group called Les Baxter's Balladeers. While travelling with this group he met Cass Elliot, later of The Mamas & The Papas, who at that time was

- f. Gable and Flynn
- g. "Willy the Shake"
- h. Walter Raleigh and Chris Columbus
- i. Dorothy Lamour
- j. Pagliacci

10. Which song is based on a poem by W. B. Yeats?
11. On which song do Cheech and Chong perform?
12. Which songs mention these places to stay:
 - a. Cactus Tree Motel
 - b. Empire Hotel
 - c. Miami Royal
13. In which song did she relieve herself by pissing "a tequila-anaconda"?
14. Which song tells us what O.T.B. stands for?
15. Each of these live/compilation albums include a track which does not appear on any other album. What are they?
 - a. Miles of Aisles
 - b. Hits
 - c. Shadows and Light
16. Which song includes Rod Steiger as an Evangelist?
17. Which song uses Corinthians 11 : 13?
18. On which songs are these unusual instruments used:
 - a. Dobro
 - b. Coffee cans
 - c. Arp-Farfisa
 - d. Warrior Drums of Burundi
 - e. Cigarette Machine
19. Where and when did she last see Richard?
20. What time does her train leave ("you're darn right")?

Well, how did you do? Turn to page 19 for the answers.

a member of a group called The Big Three. Cass would introduce him to a significant figure in his future, Graham Nash of the British group The Hollies. Nash, of course, would join with David and Stephen Stills in 1969 to form the legendary group Crosby, Stills & Nash.

In 1964 Crosby formed the folk-rock group The Byrds with Jim (later changed to Roger) McGuinn, Gene Clark, Chris Hillman and Michael Clarke. They became the premiere folk-rock group when their version of Bob Dylan's song "Mr Tambourine Man" became the summer hit of 1965.

David's association with the Byrds ended during the recording of their sixth album in August 1967, when escalating tensions drove him from the group and he sought refuge in Florida. One evening he went to a local club, "The Gaslight South," and saw a beautiful, unique-sounding singer-songwriter. He immediately became infatuated with both the woman and her music. That singer was Joni Mitchell.

David told me:

DC: I went looking for a sailboat to live on. I wanted to do something else. Find another way to be. I was pretty disillusioned. I walked into a coffee house and was just completely smitten. She was standing there singing all those songs ... "Michael from Mountains," "Both Sides Now," and I was just floored. I couldn't believe that there was anybody that good. And I also fell ... I loved her, as it were.

WB: So you introduced yourself to her that first night. She knew who you were, of course?

DC: Yeah, sure. We became fairly fast friends, you might say. I was extremely

fascinated with the quality of the music and the quality of the girl. She was such an unusual, passionate and powerful woman. I was fascinated by her tunings because I had started working in tunings, and I was writing things like "Guinevere." So things like that made me very, very attracted to her.

WB: Did you share alternate tunings?

DC: Oh, I'm sure we learned things off each other. We used to play songs to each other all the time. But I think she just outgrew me.

WB: So you were both experimenting with alternate tunings?

DC: Yes, but she has since gone further with it than I have. I think she's gone further with it than anyone.

WB: She's developed over 50 tunings over the years, which is truly incredible.

DC: Well, it's either her or Michael Hedges, I think they're the two reigning kings of tunings.

WB: He's from the San Francisco Bay Area. Are you a friend of his?

DC: Yes.

WB: He's a wonderful guitarist. I was introduced to his music a few years ago by my best friend, Jim, who is also a guitarist. Someone told me that Hedges was influenced by Joni.

DC: I'm sure he was. I don't know of any singer/songwriter who wasn't. How could you not be?

WB: That's true, she's definitely the best lyricist, and her melodies are so distinctive. I think she's incredible! Of course, that's why I started the Joni Mitchell Homepage. I didn't think she was getting the recognition she deserved. There wasn't anything out there on the web about her, so I figured if her record

company wasn't going to promote her this way, then I'd better do it.

DC: Well, the record companies never know what they've got, especially not when it comes to a singer/songwriter. They wouldn't know songs if they flew up their nose and died. They haven't yet got a clue what or who Joni is. In a hundred years when they look back and say, "Who was the best?" - it's going to be her.

WB: I agree. Probably her and Dylan.

DC: It's going to be her. She's a better poet than Dylan and without question a far better musician. I don't think there's anybody who can touch her. James Taylor comes close, but I think it's her, and I don't think the record companies ever realized that or have known what the story was.

WB: Well, she's rarely been a big seller, and the record companies are about making more money.

DC: Yes, I've noticed.

When David returned to Los Angeles in late 1967, Joni came along and moved into his Hollywood house. He enthusiastically presented her to his musician friends, and to influential people in the music business. She was soon noticed by the media, including well-known radio personality B. Mitchell Reed, who wrote and spoke of her talent. She played the Troubadour club during this period, and faced packed houses for three nights in a row.

David related the following:

DC: We came back to LA together and yeah, I did bring her around to everyone I knew ... my favorite trick at the time was to invite everyone over, get a joint of dope that was stronger than they could possibly smoke and get her to play and they would

walk out stupefied. They'd never heard anything like her and it was a lot of fun. It only stopped being fun when I started producing her first record. Joni is not a person that you stay in a relationship with. It always goes awry, no matter who you are. It's an inevitable thing. We were starting to have friction and at the same time I was starting to produce her record and I didn't really know how.

Reprise Records was interested in signing Joni but they wanted to have her album produced by someone who would give her the folk-rock sound that was the rage at that time. However, both David and Joni were intent on presenting her music as it was performed - simply, mostly just guitar and vocal. David told Reprise that he would take the production reins on Joni's first record, and the company agreed. They presumably thought "Who better to get the current sound than a former member of the group that started it?" By the time the company heard the session tapes, it was too late to go back and re-record. I think that this is a great debt that Joni owes to David. As she has stated in the past, the manner in which an artist is initially presented heavily influences the way they're perceived from then on.

I asked David about the sessions for the first album:

WB: Did you spend a long time on Joni's first album or was it done in just a few quick weeks?

DC: It was a fairly long process, as I remember.

WB: By the way, do you call the first album "Song to a Seagull" or "Joni Mitchell"?

DC: She originally called it "Song to a

Seagull," which some people think is what she called it when she was still in love with me. I don't know. There are references to me on the album ... like "Dawntreader."

WB: Oh, "Dawntreader" is definitely about you, I would think, with its references to sailing ships and seabirds.
DC: But I think most people referred to the album as "Joni Mitchell."

WB: In addition to the ten songs that made it onto the first album, were other songs also recorded? As an archivist, I know that there are a number of songs that never made it to any of Joni's albums. "Urge for Going," for example. Was that from the sessions for the first album?

DC: No, I think that came later, but I'm sure there were more songs than we ended up putting on the record.

WB: Do you remember any of those songs, like "Eastern Rain," "Carnival in Kenora," or "Just Like Me?"

DC: I don't, man, it's been so long.
WB: There are existing tapes of some of these songs from WDAS and WHAT, two Philadelphia FM stations popular in the late 1960's. They taped a bunch of shows with Joni at a club called the Second Fret, and also a few in-station appearances. Another Philly station, WMMR, rebroadcast them a few times in the '70's. For collectors like me, these unavailable-on-album songs are almost as familiar as the officially released songs.

DC: Yeah, she wrote some beautiful things back then.

WB: Yes, I've read that she was just bursting with creativity then, writing 5 or 6 songs a week sometimes. When she was with you was it like that?

DC: Yes, it was very difficult for me. I'd

sit there and struggle over one song, like "Guinevere" for a month, and she would have written 5 songs that week.

WB: After you and Joni stopped being a couple, she moved in with Graham (Nash), and they wrote all those songs about their relationship like "Our House," "Willie," etc. It seemed as if you all were writing about and to each other.

DC: You know, we did write a lot to each other back then. She was one of the three women I wrote "Guinevere" about.

WB: I guess another was Christine Hinton? (Christine was David's lover who was tragically killed in an auto accident in 1969).

DC: Uh-huh.

WB: And who would the third one be?

DC: Oh, someone that nobody knows.

WB: Keeping that fact to yourself, David?

DC: Yeah.

Although David was happy with the conception and performance on Joni's first album, he was dissatisfied with some technical aspects of the recording, and the resulting lack of clarity.

David commented on the sound quality of the album:

WB: Can we talk a little bit more about Joni's first album? I've read that there was some kind of a problem with the master tape. It had a buzz or high-pitched hum or something on it?

DC: Yeah, I hadn't recorded it well enough. I had allowed too much noise - too much signal-to-noise ratio - too much hiss.

WB: Was that because, as I understand, you miked the piano strings as well as her vocals?

DC: Yes. I wanted to try and get the overtones that happen from the resonating

of the piano and, of course, it recorded at way too low a level. If you use those mikes at all you get a hiss, so we had to go in and take those things out. It was just an idea and it didn't work. It shows you that I really didn't know enough to do it.

WB: So how did you take out the hiss? Did you just turn it down?

DC: We went back in and remixed it without all those tracks.

WB: I understand that now there are better processes available for remastering the tapes. When they reissue the album, which Reprise is planning to do, it shouldn't sound so much like it's "under a bell jar" as it's been referred to.

DC: Yeah, I'm sure they can make it better now. Like I said, I didn't know enough to know what I was doing but we did get the actual songs down without a bunch of other crud on it and that made me happy.

WB: Well, it's a wonderful album, and a very intimate experience. I think the production served the material well.

DC: It could have served it better. But it's what happened.

WB: The greatest thing about you producing her is that it allowed you both to do exactly what you wanted to do, which was to present Joni's music just as it was performed live.

DC: That's the thing I'm proudest of. With the exception of the one song that Stephen (Stills) played bass on. That's the only track anybody else played on.

WB: That would be "Night in the City."

The Byrds were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in January 1991. This May's ceremony will be David's second induction into the Hall. This time, he goes in as a member of

Crosby, Stills and Nash. The very short list of two-time inductees also includes John Lennon and Eric Clapton.

I asked David about his upcoming induction:

WB: You're already in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame for the Byrds. Are you the first person inducted for a second time?

DC: No, I think there are a couple others, I think, maybe Clapton.

WB: Stephen (Stills) will be going in twice this year (for Buffalo Springfield & Crosby, Stills & Nash).

DC: Yes, he will be the only guy to ever get it twice in one night, I'm sure.

WB: And of course, Neil's involved because of Buffalo Springfield, although it's only Crosby, Stills & Nash this time, not Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, right?

(This year will also be Neil Young's second induction. He went in as a solo act last year and this time it's for his membership in Buffalo Springfield).

DC: I don't think they will give it to CSNY separately.

WB: Well, if they did, you could have three of them! Now that would be a record, huh?

DC: I don't think they would do that.

Next issue, in Part Two of my conversation with David Crosby, we touch on subjects such as his co-writing of the song "Yvette In English," his favorite Joni songs, his new group with his son, his latest songs, and his appraisal of the all-important issue of Joni Vs. Shakespeare.

Visit the Joni Mitchell Homepage on the Internet to see this interview with some more fab pictures (<http://www.jonimitchell.com/Croz97A.html>).

Reviews...Reviews...

The following review originally appeared in Issue 11 of 'Bassist' magazine.

Jaco : The Extraordinary and Tragic Life of Jaco Pastorius by Bill Milkowski (Miller Freeman Books) - Paperback with 3 track CD - £9.95

Jaco's story could also have been subtitled 'a modern tragedy' as the leader is led through the meteoric rise of a true musical innovator, followed, of course, by an even more meteoric fall. Most people know bits of the Jaco story; the poor upbringing, the unstoppable pursuit of the bass groove, the battered de-fretted 62 Fender Jazz, the post-hippy anti-materialistic vibe, Weather Report, finally the chemically blitzed chaos which ended in Jaco's violent death after being badly beaten up by an over-zealous bouncer at a Miami night club. This being the case, it's good to have the whole story laid out in compellingly readable style.



The life story is almost classic 'victim' in its development, typical of the pioneering jazz musicians of earlier decades whose stars at once burned brightly then waned, effectively killed off by their adopted lifestyle. Jaco's early life was a veritable thirst for bass knowledge, driven by a need to gain the experience which would allow him to experiment with the ideas in his head. Interestingly, whilst touring with early 'old hand' showbands, Jaco was quite vehemently anti drink and drugs, living solely for the music, and with a quite irrepressible

energy which allowed frequent all-night sessions, jamming out new ideas, learning different techniques and so on. He was never a shrinking violet though, and wore his favourite statement "I'm the world's greatest bass player" like a badge as a taunt to other musicians, bandleaders, singer/frontmen and anybody else in the vicinity, which would occasionally (and predictably) provoke a very hostile reaction. His blinding talent allowed people to be far more tolerant of his physical and psychological game-like histrionics, and he undeniably got away with far more and used up more favours than any human being has a right to expect - a situation which would only be tolerated for so long.

The tragedies which awaited him seemed inevitable, and his eventual drug and alcohol dependency cloaked him in a useless numbed fatalism, further hastening the painful personal demise as fragments of past glories and taunts at others would return to haunt to his progressively deranged state of mind.

We can still celebrate his talent however, a talent that redefined the role of bass guitar in modern music, and whilst there aren't many laughs in 'Jaco', the musical energy so inherent in his character does act as a something of an antidote to the agenda of waste, destruction and excess.

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FOR SALE/WANTED

Joni Mitchell live music - I would be pleased to trade tape copies of my Joni recordings for tapes of other artists. Don Saul, 37 Hill Drive, High Ackworth, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF7 7LQ Tel (01977) 703580

Wanted - David Crosby biography "Long Time Gone". Alan Beadle, 103 Boxgrove, Goring-by-Sea, Worthing, West Sussex, BN12 6LX.

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AND FINALLY ...

I would like to thank the following people for their help with this issue: Wally Breese, Barney Hoskyns, Jenny Bulley (Mojo magazine), Gibson Keddie (Bassist magazine), Leslie Mixon, and Ian Caskie for the quiz.

Alan Beadle

YOUR LETTERS

I read with interest that the Elektra/Asylum albums are being reissued with deluxe packaging and, in the case of *Miles Of Aisles*, segments of Joni chatting to the audience restored. This is great..... but why do record companies always do things like this after I've already bought the CD?!!

On a similar subject, I've got the 24kt gold CD of *Court & Spark*. I must say that, although the CD booklet is obviously far superior to the standard mid-price version, I can't notice any difference in the actual sound quality! Perhaps you need incredibly expensive Hi-Fi equipment to reap any benefit. I just wondered if anyone else had noticed this.

Graham Donaldson
Glasgow

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"Shadows & Light"

Next issue due out

October 1997

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