

Joni Mitchell

Shadows & Light



Issue 6

October 1997

Editor's Note

Issue 6 - October 1997

Confusion reigns in the UK over the release date of new projects from Joni.

Press adverts have appeared for Mitchell's new CD, "Taming Of The Tiger" as well as her various book ventures, with retailers even going as far as accepting orders for these items. Luckily *Shadows & Light* readers can rely upon Wally Breese in San Francisco for all the latest news.

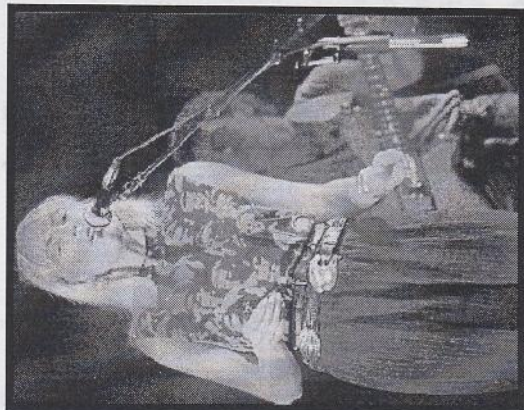
In this issue we conclude interviews with David Crosby, and Joni from 1988. Dieter Paul Rudolph compares the emerging talent of Ani DiFranco with La Mitch. Don Saul travels back to 1969 to review a bootleg recording of "sixty minutes of magic".

Shadows & Light relies upon contributions from readers, so if you would like to contribute an article or review to the fanzine, please write to me at the address below.

Alan Beadle

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All the way from America

The latest news from Wally Breese in San Francisco.

RANDOM RUMOURS

(12 July 97)

There have been reports that Joni's book of lyrics and poetry due from Random House will be available in 2 or 3 weeks; this is not the case. The book is still scheduled for October and will certainly not be in stores before then. It does appear that some on-line bookstores are offering advance sale opportunities, and while reserving a copy now will probably get you a discount and a copy in your hands on release day, be aware that since the book has not yet been approved by Joni, it may not make that October release date.

There is another rumour in the press that Joni will be appearing at Wembley Stadium on August 16 at an all-star celebration of rock history which is also a tribute to Elvis Presley. (This is the 20 year anniversary of the day he died.) All performers are scheduled to sing one classic rock era tune and then join together in a finale of Presley covers. Others mentioned to be performing at this event are Neil Young, k.d. lang, David Bowie, Steve Winwood and others. Joni's managers claim to know nothing about the show but Joni could be trying to not publicize this performance just in case she decides not to do it at the last minute. You never know - Joni just might show at Wembley. So, all of you U. K. concert goers, keep your ears open, and send me a report!

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

(9 August 97)

The August 15th issue of Entertainment Weekly has a column called "In the Works" which talks about upcoming albums from both Joni and Nine Inch Nails. Under the title "Saint Joni; Trent Strike," ET talked with both Reprise Record's Julie Larson (about the Joni tribute album which is about half finished) and with NIN frontman, Trent Reznor. Remember that NIN was on the cover of last March's Rolling Stone issue which featured the Joni interview by Morrissey. I understand the double link as both of them are iconoclastic and authentic artists.

The article states that so many singers wanted to be included on the Joni Mitchell tribute album, that many had to be turned down. Some of the artists who have already contributed songs are Chaka Khan, Annie Lennox, Sarah McLachlan, Etta James, and k.d. lang. Elvis Costello and Janet Jackson have also been inked in to contribute cover versions. Joni herself put in a request for the Rolling Stones to record "Cold Blue Steel & Sweet Fire," but they may not be able to work it into their schedule because they have a new album and tour beginning soon. This album will not be in stores until late 1998 so as not to conflict with the release of Joni's new album which is due out in February.

LILITH FAIR TRIBUTE

(10 August 97)

In from Bruce Hoffman
Bloomington, Indiana

Here's some Joni news for you: I went to see the Lilith Fair last night at Deer Creek, Indiana - not at all a bad show: Mary Black, Lisa Loeb, Emmylou Harris, and the Indigo Girls were really outstanding. Anyhow, after fatalistically grumbling to my friends that even a festival devoted to female musicians overlooked Joni - not a single one of her songs was covered - as a first-ever "finale," closing the concert, all the artists present performed "Big Yellow Taxi". I was thrilled, of course - how fitting, that the so-called "Lilith" fest close with a tribute to the original and greatest musician of them all!

The Lilith Fair website says: "It was perhaps the most special moment thus far in a tour that has been filled with them. At the end of Sarah's set she invited everyone that was around to come up on stage with her and sing Joni Mitchell's "Big Yellow Taxi". The Indigos, Jewel, Emmylou, Lisa, Kelly Willis, Michelle...they were all there along with various band members. Joni should be proud. Here's hoping this won't be the last time we see this happen."

SUMMER OF LOVE AUCTION

(19 August 97)

On October 4th, Butterfield & Butterfield is auctioning memorabilia from the "Summer of Love," with portions of the proceeds to be donated to various charities. Among the 300 items up for bid are a handwritten note from John Lennon and Yoko Ono to Black Panther leader

Huey Newton, contracts from a couple of 1960's musicians, and get this - the house that the Grateful Dead owned at the time on Ashbury Street in San Francisco. The minimum bid for the Dead house is \$900,000.00.

The item that relates to you and me is a love letter from Joni to David Crosby (this has to be from the last four months of 1967) that includes a watercolor that Joni painted of him. If anyone bids and wins the letter, it'd be a wonderful (and greatly appreciated) display piece on the homepage. :-) I'd put a bid on it myself, but word is that the auction house is expecting a minimum bid of \$3,000.00.

IS JONI A JACKSON?

(1 September 97)

There are two bits of Joni news and each of them has a Jackson Family connection.

First: Janet Jackson has a new single entitled "Got 'Til It's Gone", and it samples Joni's song "Big Yellow Taxi". A UK fan wrote me that "There's a bit of rapping by this bloke who says intermittently 'Joni Mitchell never lies, uh huh, uh huh'. At intervals throughout the song we hear a sample of 'don't it always seem to go.....that you don't know what you've got till it's gone'..."

A few years ago, Janet was outed as a Joni Mitchell fan in Rolling Stone magazine when she insisted that her interviewer listen to the lyrics of Joni's song "The Beat of Black Wings".

On September 4th, tune into the MTV Music Awards and see Janet sing her new single "Got Till It's Gone".

Second: Sony/ATV Music Publishing, a joint venture between Sony and Michael Jackson, has entered into a contract with

Joni for worldwide administration of her entire catalogue plus all songs written during the term of the agreement. The firm will handle requests to license Mitchell's songs for use in various outlets, including film and television.

The deal became effective July 1st, is global in scope (not including the UK, Australia and Italy) and is the first time that Joni has had worldwide representation by one company.

"This agreement is a milestone", remarked Sony Executive Vice President Jody Graham Dunitz. "Joni Mitchell is simply one of the most important and influential songwriters in the history of popular music, and to represent her catalogue is an honor. We intend to actively seek uses of Joni's compositions where the fit is right and the integrity of her overall catalogue is preserved."

"From the ever increasing number of requests to license Joni Mitchell's music, it's clear that the time is right to involve a publisher with a worldwide presence," commented Sam Feldman, Ms. Mitchell's manager. "More than just a 'catalogue,' Joni's music is a significant part of our culture and its handling requires a special balance of art and commerce. We believe Sony/ATV Music Publishing is best suited to fulfill that role."

Don't forget another connection between Joni and The Jacksons. They

were both inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame this year. What's next? Mrs. Joni Jackson? *-) I'm kidding!

MORE ON JANET JACKSON SINGLE

(3 September 97)

The September 6th issue of Billboard Magazine has an article about Janet Jackson's upcoming album *The Velvet Rope*, which is due in stores on October 7th. The track "Got 'Til It's Gone" includes a loop of Joni's 1970 classic "Big Yellow Taxi", and a rap by Q-Tip of A Tribe Called Quest, which mentions Joni by name. The magazine says that "the new single is a catchy midtempo song about taking nothing for granted".

Janet told Billboard: "I've always been a fan of Joni's because of my brother Randy, who was always playing her when we were growing up, and it rubbed off. But it was (Jimmy Jam's) idea to use the loop, and it worked out great."

Virgin Records execs describe the video for "Got 'Til It's Gone" as "a period-piece clip...and it and the single have the potential to attract fans of '70s music". Janet is scheduled to perform the song on *The MTV Video Music Awards* on Thursday evening, September 4th, at 8PM and the video is set to premiere directly preceding the program.

"GOT 'TIL IT'S GONE" SINGLE

(9 September 97)

Janet Jackson's new single, "Got 'Til It's Gone", whose video premiered on MTV last week just prior to their Video Music Awards, snagged the #38 position on Billboard magazine's "Hot 100 Airplay" chart this week. However, since there is no scheduled commercial release of the song, it won't qualify for inclusion on the "Hot 100 Singles" chart where the positions are measured by combined airplay and sales of the single. Virgin Records obviously hopes that the airplay will promote quick sales of Janet's new album, *The Velvet Rope*, when it's

released on October 7th. And, of course, each play also promotes Joni due to the single's repeated loop from her song, "Big Yellow Taxi."

JOHN KELLY: FOR FREE

(10 September 97)

John Kelly is doing his show "Paved Paradise" in Bryant Park this evening (the 10th) at 6pm as part of a concert series, and admission is free! John is also scheduled to take his tribute to Joni to the Arts Festival of Atlanta on the weekend of the 18th of September, then 2 weekends soon after at Real Artways in Hartford, Conn.

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**

THE DETROIT NEWS - Jeff Samoray's interview from 1966 - with exclusive pictures!

NEW * NEW *** NEW**

"MISSES" SONGBOOK - plus an interview with Hemme Lattgebor

(the guitarist who transcribed Joni's songs)

JoniMitchell.com is maintained by Wally Breeze

**Copies of previous issues of
"Shadows & Light" are still available**

Our Lady Of Sorrows

In this issue, we conclude an interview with Joni by Barney Hoskyns, which originally appeared in the December 1994 issue of Mojo magazine.

Is it true that David Crosby used to show you off to his superstar cronies - bring you out to play a few songs?

David was very enthusiastic about the music - he was twinkly about it! His instincts were correct: he was going to protect the music and pretend to produce me. So we just went for the performance, with a tiny bit of sweetening. I think perhaps without David's protection the record company might have set some kind of producer on me who'd have tried to turn an apple into an orange. And I don't think I would have survived that. The net result of that was that [engineer] Henry Lewy and I made 13 albums together without a producer.

You were never really a hippy, were you?

I was the queen of the hippies, but in a way I wasn't really a hippy at all. I was always looking at it for its upsides and its downsides, balancing it and thinking, Here's the beauty of it and here's the exploitative quality of it and here's the silliness of it. I could never buy into it totally as an orthodoxy.

Do you feel your earliest fans had you pegged as a paragon of purity and introspection and then found it hard to adjust to the chic, jazzy Joni of the '70s?

I can't speak for how you're perceived. I can only say that you write about that which you have access to. So if you go from the hippy thing to more of a

a time when nobody noticed how culturally peculiar it was. People sometimes don't know what's happening under their noses.

Do you find Los Angeles inspires the kind of apocalyptic ruminations that other songwriters do?

Well, Sex Kills was written on the last night of the riots. To see a license plate with 'JUST ICE' on it at that time was so poignant. I mean, did you ever think of 'justice' as two words? From the rappers, maybe ...

There was an early gangsta rapper called Just Ice, as it happens.

Maybe that was his car! Anyway, it got me writing.

Has it been strange watching your rock contemporaries turn into virtual Hollywood deities over the course of 25 years?

I'll tell you a funny tale, and then we'll think about whether we should print it or not. I don't like raggin' on people and makin' 'em look bad. This makes [Don] Henley look kinda like a jerk, but shall I tell you it anyway? OK, to me this is kind of funny.

I go to see Sting because my beloved Winnie [Coluita] is drumming with him, but poor Winnie's all alone up there, there's no-one with him. So it put me in kind of a bad mood, this show. I kept going out and smoking in the wings. Anyway, afterwards there was a party and I was the first to get there. By now I was real cranky. I see Henley sitting by himself in a long, long, long booth. So I walk over as if to sit down with him and I say, "Hi, Henley", and he does this thing where he looks left and right, with a very worried look on his face. And I know

exactly what that means, that he's saving the place for Sting. So I say something casual and go sit at another table with Winnie and Bruce Springsteen and his wife.

Finally, Sting comes in and sits next to Henley and the room fills up with people. At that point, Henley sends an emissary, a woman, to my table who says, "You can come and sit with Sting and Henley now". So, I launch myself into the air and I yell at Henley over at the end of the room: "Never!"

I mean, the whole idea of that kind of political lamination, frankly, gags me with a spoon. It's so tragically hip, and I think it's the enemy of art. I'm not impressed by stars, you know? I never was as a kid. I'm impressed by heart, and fun, and a lot of things, but stardom in and of itself?

How have your world view and standpoint changed since Dog Eat Dog?

I'm more comfortable in my own skin than I've been in my entire life: I wouldn't trade my fifties for my twenties for anything in the world. No way. In fact, I probably went through most of my fear in my twenties, and I'm a good deal more fearless today as a result. There are things I have to work on, like I get pugnacious and impatient. I'm impatient with human beings for being stupid assholes.

I'm an elder now! I should still be swinging at things to a certain degree, but you need to serene on down a little bit. So I would say that nothing much about the world shocks me as much as it used to. I was enraged at the time I wrote Dog Eat Dog, but I'm very cheerful now. I think I'm in a good place in my own spirit, even if I still get mad in traffic. But I still think you have to tackle the deeper topics.

They say that as a writer you're a lyric poet in your youth, in your thirties epic poetry appears because you're going over changes repeatedly. In your fifties, so the theory goes, you become a tragedian. Many of the themes 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*.

Have you been disappointed by the sales of your albums since Mingus? You've described yourself as a 'radio orphan'.

I was completely out of whack with public taste throughout the late '70s and the '80s. People aren't always going through changes at the same time as me, and sometimes I get so far ahead I look like I'm behind. The warp with public taste on *Wild Things*, for instance, was two-fold. I loved the band on that record, we were all in love with each other, but that was the beginning of drum machines, so no-one wanted to hear live playing. Now it's just the opposite. If you put on *Hissing now*, the playing is beautiful.

With *Dog Eat Dog*, the press went to sleep en masse: Ronnie Reagan could do no wrong. It took a few years for the press to wake up. This Japanese interviewer said to me, "Joni-san, you used to be a poet and now you're a journalist". And I said, "That's because America is a land of ostriches and somebody's gotta be Paul Revere". People didn't like the politics on that album. *Time* magazine called it an adolescent work, yet it contained two of their subsequent cover stories.

How did you feel when Rolling Stone dubbed you 'Old Lady Of The Year' back in 1972?

Oh, it was a low blow, and it was

unfair. I was not abnormally promiscuous, especially within the context of the free love experiment, so to be turned on by my peer group and made an example made me aware that the Whore/Madonna thing had not been abolished by that experiment. People who were legitimately on that list, like Graham Nash, were gonna call and complain, but then they figured it would fan the flame. There were people on that list like B. Mitchell Reed, whose radio show I'd done and that was all. Assumptions were made in interpreting the lyrics, as they always were, that this was about so-and-so ... all that nonsense that destroys the ability of the listener to identify with a song. Plus they were misinterpretations. So that was painful and unnecessary, and Rolling Stone had a policy for years after that to get me.

Still, you have to admit the irony of a song like Man To Man [Wild Things Run Fast], a song about serial monogamy which features not only your husband but two ex-lovers [James Taylor and drummer John Guerin]..

Oh, I always do that, I'm terrible at that! I've got a new boyfriend now, and John played some drums on one song on the record, and Klein was the producer! And they're all looking at me like, "You asshole", because the boyfriend and I wrote the song, and the old boyfriend who introduced me to Klein is on the drums ... I don't know, artists are a strange lot.

But you clearly stay friends with these guys.

Whenever possible. See, my mother says things to me like, "Ducks mate for life", but I guess I am a serial monogamist. Klein and I spent 12 years

together. We were good friends in the beginning, then we were lovers, then we were husband and wife. I love Klein: there's a mutual affection there and I can't imagine what would destroy it.

Is there a fundamental frustration about creating art - a restlessness, as you've described it - which makes it hard to live with people?

My main criterion is: am I good for this man? If at a certain point I feel I'm causing him more problems than growth, then if he doesn't have the sense to get out I have to kick him out! The "Mr Mitchell" thing, of course, is prevalent. I was in New Orleans one night and we were partying, and this Greek guy came up and asked me to dance. And he said to me, "in Greece they say Joni Mitchell, she doesn't need a man". I said, "Oh, is that right? All of Greece says this?"

I started in the business kinda ultra-feminine, but as I went along I had to handle so many tough situations for myself - had to be both male and female to myself.

So it takes a specific kind of man who wants a strong and independent woman. Klein did, but at the same time there were things about living with 'Joni Mitchell' - not with me - that pinched on his life in a certain way that made me think he needed a break. Our separation, I think, was wholesome - painful and occasionally a little mean, but never nasty or ugly. There was a certain amount of normal separation perversity - he'd spent a third of his life with me, after all, and I'd spent a quarter of mine with him - but for the most part it was a wonderful growth experience for both of us. Klein would say the friction created a pearl.

Listening to Free Man In Paris [Court And Spark] again made me think of Dylan saying that you weren't really a woman.

Yeah, they asked him about women in the business and he said, "Oh, they all tart themselves up". And the interviewer said, "Even Joni Mitchell?" And he said, "I love Joni Mitchell, but she's" ... how did he put it? ... "kinda like a man", or something. It was a backhanded compliment, I think, because I'm probably one of Bobby's best pace-runners ... you know what I mean, as a poet? There aren't that many good writers. There are a lot that are touted as good, but they're not literature, they're just pretty good for a songwriter.

What was it like singing with Dylan at the Great Music Experience in Japan?

Oh, he's such a little brat, you know. He really is. He's never been very complimentary to my face - most of the boys haven't. But he loved Sex Kills, and was very effusive about it. Anyway, we played three concerts, and they kept shifting my position on the mics and which verses of the songs I was going to sing. On the third night they stuck Bob at the mic with me, and that's the one that went out on tape. And if you look closely at it, you can see the little brat, he's up in my face - and he never brushes his teeth, so his breath was like ... right in my face - and he's mouthing the words at me like a prompter, and he's pushing me off the mic. It's like he's basically dipping my pigtail in ink. The press picked up on it and said, "Bobby Smiles!" Yeah sure, because he was having a go at me out there.

Talking of brats, did you ever actually work with Prince?

No. He sent me a song once called You Are My Emotional Pump, You Make My Body Jump. I called him up and said, "I can't sing this". He's a strange little duck, but I like him.

There are far less of the guest appearances on the last two albums than we're used to seeing. Is there any reason for that?

One of the reasons for that is that I put a studio in my house. I used to drag those guys in when they were recording across the hall. Billy Idol I cast as the bully in Dancin' Clown because his voice was right, although it was viewed in England as a political and opportunistic move because he was big at the time and my stock was down. Which was so stupid. Even Prince called me up and said, "Who is that guy whooping an hollering all over your record?" And I said it was Billy Idol. "Oh, that's good idea," he said.

What do you consider the most neglected or underrated music of your career?

I would say Hejira. Court And Spark was about as popular as it got although with Asylum it got lost because Geffen had just signed Dylan for Planet Waves. Everything after that was compared unfavourably to it. Hissing Of Summer Lawns was felt to be too jazzy, and the drums on it were misunderstood. Hejira was not understood at all, but that was a really well-written album. Basically it was kinda kissed off. It's a travelling album, it was written driving from New York to Los Angeles over period of time, and people who take it with them, especially if they're driving across America, really find

last time she cried in her life she was 14, and she was crying because she knew she would never have a piano. And she became a stoic. She had a miserable, nasty life. She had 11 kids and married a mean, poor drunk, but she never wept through all the hardship in all her adult life that anyone knows of.

My maternal grandmother, on the other hand, was a classical musician who came East when the Prairies opened up by train. She was Scottish-French, and they brought an organ in for her and a gramophone. She was a poet and musician, but she still kicked the kitchen door off its hinges out of her frustration at being trapped in the role of a housewife.

So the creative gene then fell upon me,

in a woman's form, and in a way you have to safeguard that and do it for them, because after 1965 it was really the first opportunity that women had had in history. There were the George Sands and Georgia O'Keefe who ploughed against the grain. But even Georgia said to me, "Well, I would like to have been a painter and a musician, but you can't do both". I said "Oh yes, you can!" In the end, I'm happier and better off with cats and godchildren. I have a lot of godchildren.

Twenty years after writing People's Parties [Court And Spark] are you still "living on nerves and feelings"?

No. I still swing by them, but I don't live there.

JO-(A)-NI

Dieter Paul Rudolph compares the backgrounds of the mature artist with an emerging talent

When reading about female singer/songwriters there is a 99% chance that you'll reach a point when the artist in question is compared to Joni Mitchell. It's the same old story: Springsteen is the new Dylan, Oasis sound like Kinks-meet-Beatles, Tori Amos has to be Kate Bush's illegitimate sister - but who cares? So Ani Di Franco isn't a 90's Joni Mitchell. She's Ani. But they are both prototypes of a quite rare species, led only by the power of their artistry and not by the power of money and fame.

Although not being willing to make a comparison between Ani to Joni - I still

have to compare them. They both went to art school and left without finishing the course. They both like to dance. They prefer open guitar tunings. They played in coffee houses and clubs - but when Ani (born in Buffalo/New York) was 19 years old she began releasing her own cassettes and later founded her own label "Righteous Babe Records". Now she's 27 and has eleven albums under her belt! When Joni was this age, she was busy on her second one...

Both women aren't just singers with a voice like a bell and a face that makes you forget about the music. They are

musicians, playing guitar not in the normal way as a mere background to accompany the lyrics. The way in which the instrument is played is vital, and influences the words. The first song on Ani's debut "Both Hands" will give you an example of what I mean. It's a song about sharing a room with a lover and making all the things lovers do if they share a room and a bed. The guitar sounds like a constant repeat of that up and down, come and go, loud and low which characterises the relationship between a man and woman in this situation. Ani sings "So I'm recording our history now on the bedroom wall and when we leave the landlord will come and paint over it all". It will come to an end (because it's monotonous) and it will continue forever (with another lover) - and that's what the guitar is saying.

It would be ridiculous to search for a Joni Mitchell song with such a synthesis of words and music because (almost) all of her songs have that magic. In order to make it possible, Joni left the narrow road of folk, and travelled on the more expressive highways of Rock, Jazz, and what we now call "World Music". Having heard *Mingus* or *Hissing Of Summer Lawns* one might ask "Is she folk? Is she Jazz? Is she ...".



And that's exactly what happens to Ani: "Is she folk? Is she punk? A rocker? A singer/songwriter?" (from the "Women in (E)motion" booklet). No, sir, she's a musician and a poet. She plays acoustic and electric guitar, she has a Canadian drummer working with her now (just like Joni's American drummer), producing performances that go well beyond being words with a message supported by a nice melody.

So then, how do we compare Joni and Ani? Why shouldn't we compare them? The answer is simple. In Dylan's words: The times they are a-changing. When Joni became part of the folk rock circuit, and later, part of the music business, women in rock were puppets on a string. They had a good press after leaving a lover and finding another one (remember the "Old Woman Of The Year" campaign!).

The late sixties, now glorified as a time of love, peace and freedom, were also male years: men made art and women were giggling in the background. Some people (e.g. Dylan) called Joni Mitchell "a man" - not a wrong description because serious artship was men's work (in this sense Joni worked as an undercover agent for women's rights).

Commercially, women were objects

like most of the male musicians at this time. Okay, the Beatles founded their own label, Led Zeppelin did - but Janis, Joan or Sandy? Impossible! Joni had to make her way through prejudices, self-reflection, pain and trouble. She couldn't say "fuck" on stage, and couldn't sing about her period. She had to sing about herself in a very painful "Freudian" way. Not so Ani. She sings "fuck" and "I ask her if she's got a tampon I can use", words and themes one cannot imagine sung by Joni Mitchell.

So the main difference between Joni and Ani might be a sociological one. It's the difference between Lord Byron and James Joyce, William Turner and Pablo Picasso, Janis Joplin and Courtney Love. Every time has its taboos, its experiences and a very special social frame. Great artists destroy that frame and develop new practises to describe the world. They establish a wider frame for their successors who destroy it again - and so on. In this sense, without Joni there would be no Ani.

Mitchell and DiFranco have one thing in common. They are superb artists, not corrupted by the MTV-clip culture, writing songs that mean more than a line of words on a string of sound. There are very few artists like this, most of them women: Shawn Colvin, Maria McKee, the great June Tabor, the late Sandy Denny, Laura Nyro, Laurie Anderson, Lal and

Norma Watson, and a few others, none of which should be ignored.

For years, Ani's records were hard to get in Europe with the exception of a live radio performance released on a German label. Since then Ani has made a deal with the fine English *Cooking Vinyl* label to distribute the albums - so look out! Maybe you saw Ani as supporting act on the Oyster Band tour in 1995. However, you didn't see the new Joni Mitchell - you saw a great new artist.

Discography: Ani DiFranco (1990) / Not So Soft (1991) / Imperfectly (1992) / Puddle Drive (1993) / Like I Said (1993) / Out Of Range (1994) / Women in (E)motion (1994) / Not A Pretty Girl (1995) / Dilate (1996) / The Past Didn't Go Anywhere (1996) with Utah Phillips) / Living In Clip (live double CD 1997) - all released by Righteous Babe Records except Women In (E)motion released by T&M.



Note 1: "Women In (E)motion is the title of a series of live concerts organised by Radio Bremen, Germany and available on CD.

Note 2: All albums will be released in the UK by Cooking Vinyl. As at April 97 there are five albums available, Ani DiFranco, and Not A Pretty Girl, both with a 7 track bonus CD containing songs from the other albums Dilate, Living In Clip and The Past Didn't Go Anywhere.

A CONVERSATION WITH DAVID CROSBY

(Part Two)

by Wally Breese

On March 15 1997, Wally Breese, (creator of the Joni Mitchell Homepage on the Internet) interviewed the man who helped Joni to make her first album. Here's part two of their conversation:

In Part 1 of my conversation with David Crosby, we talked about many things including his induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Joni and David's first meeting in 1967, his work on her first album, and the writing of the song "Guinevere." Here in Part 2, we'll discuss the co-writing of the song "Yvette in English" with Joni, his recent reunion with the son he gave up for adoption in the early 1960's, his new band/new songs, the state of CSN, and other subjects of interest.

In Part 1, David and I discussed two momentous events that occurred in southern Florida in late summer/early fall of 1967: His buying of "The Mayan" (a boat that he stills owns today), and meeting Joni.

I asked him about the atmosphere of those early days:

WB: After you met Joni in Florida, you mentioned that you took her out sailing. That must've been very romantic, I would imagine, being out there on the ocean, playing guitars together?

DC: Yes, it turned out that way. We had some wonderful times together early on, when she went sailing with me. (He pauses) ...You have to understand, Wally, I still love her. She's the best, and if you quote anything from me, say that I said she was the best and I've always said that.

WB: And what is she best at, David?

DC: She's the best singer/songwriter there is, man. There isn't anybody close, I don't think.

WB: Do you like the later material as well as the early stuff?

DC: Oh, yes. I didn't enjoy some of the "Mingus"-era stuff as much as some of the others, but I don't think there's ever been a time when she's stopped being a complete master of her craft.

WB: I agree, that's why I've been trying to give her her due on the Web, and I've worked very hard to build a quality homepage worthy of Joni's talent. The approving e-mails I receive mean a great deal to me personally, as this project is a part of my heart, you know, it's full of my love for Joni's music. She's the subject of the homepage, but there's a lot of me in it, too. My hope is that it helps to secure her the position that she deserves in music

history. I mean, I'm not sure if most of the general public even knows who she is.

DC: I think in the long run when they look back and say who really did it, it will be her.

WB: Well, I agree with you on that, but I don't know how it's going to be for her in the next five, ten years or so.

DC: Well, you know Shakespeare probably wasn't the most popular guy in England at the time that he was writing the stuff.

WB: I get what you mean, David.

In the summer of 1991, David contacted Joni and asked her if she'd consider producing a track on a solo album he was putting together. Joni responded that she had no interest in producing; she wasn't even sure what that term meant. David says that she then countered with "Let's write one together." So they did.

Their collaboration on the song "Yvette In English" appeared on David's 1993 album "Thousand Roads." Joni's version was released a year and a half later on her 1994 album "Turbulent Indigo."

I asked David about the song:

WB: In 1991, you co-wrote "Yvette in English" with Joni.

DC: I think that's the only time that's ever happened with her. Has she ever written a song with anyone else?

WB: Let me think... There are tracks she co-wrote with drummer, John Guerin. He wrote the background track to "The Hissing of Summer Lawns" song, for example, but Joni set the lyrics and melody on top of what he did, so that's a different kind of thing than what you two did together. She also co-wrote a couple of songs from tracks written by Larry Klein, such as "Fiction" off of the album

"Dog Eat Dog." But co-writing lyrics and melody, no. Did you co-write the melody as well as the lyrics?

DC: The lyrics mostly, although I contributed to the melody.

WB: How did the process start?

DC: I asked Joni if she would produce or write a song for my album "Thousand Roads" and she said "Oh ... let's write one together." So I sent her a set of lyrics that I thought she would like, and she did, oddly enough, and she pretty much took it from there. I changed the song again when she sang it back to me, in the way that I did it. I guess she changed it some in the way she did it, too. The two versions are quite different.

WB: I do love the rhythm of your version. It's just great.

DC: Yes, it lends itself to a Brazilian type of treatment, very naturally.

WB: Joni's version is much more acoustic.

DC: Yes. I'm very grateful to her for doing this with me. It was kind of her.

WB: I thought it was wonderful to have you two working together again. It was a full circle kind of thing. For the fans, to hear you two working on something together again was very satisfying.

DC: If you mention it, tell her that I'm very grateful to her for doing that.

WB: Absolutely. I think it's a wonderful song, too. So it was your idea and she took it and then she'd would call you up and sing parts to you as she was writing it?

DC: Yeah.

WB: And I guess you got a final tape when she recorded it for you, and then you changed it from there.

DC: I changed it only very slightly, just in

treating the melody. Only what you would normally do in interpreting a song. I would only take credit for having written some of the words.

WB: It's a great song, David, I really love it. Joni and you did a wonderful job.

DC: Yeah, I love it too.

Crosby went through a life-saving and much-publicized liver transplant in November 1994. Joni was in England on the day he had the operation, performing a rare show for press and record folks, and she told the gathered group: "Let's all pray for Crosby. That Leo's already used up seven of his nine lives."

During his stay at UCLA Medical Center, David received two pieces of startling but wonderful news: He found out that his wife, Jan was pregnant, and he got a letter from the adoptive father of the son that David had given up for adoption in the early 1960's.

During his recovery, David set up a meeting with this son whom he'd never met and both men felt quickly connected. They talked about music within the first few minutes of their meeting, and they're now working together as a band named CPR (Crosby, Pevar, & Raymond).

I asked David about meeting and working with his newly found son (BTW this interview took place before the word got out about Joni and her daughter, Kilauren being re-united):

WB: You've just found out that you have a grown son.

DC: Yes.

WB: How's that for you?

DC: Quite wonderful. He's a fantastic musician.

WB: And you guys have been playing gigs together?

DC: Yes. He's a keyboard player and a singer/songwriter. His name is James Raymond and he's absolutely fantastic. He and a guitar player named Jeff Pevar, who I've been working with for quite a while, and who I think is the best in the world. The three of us have been playing as Crosby, Pevar & Raymond which is CPR, naturally.

WB: We all need a little CPR every once in a while (Laughs).

DC: It's music for the heart (Laughs).

Over the last 25 years, David has both recorded and performed various Joni Mitchell compositions, including a version of "For Free" which he released on the 1973 Byrds reunion album and a take on "Urge for Going" recorded with Graham Nash in 1971, which was finally released on the CSN boxset in 1991.

I asked him about his favorites:

WB: Over the years you've recorded and featured live a few of Joni's songs. You and Nash recorded "Urge for Going," for example, and that made it to your box set. Do you like that version?

DC: Yes, I do, in particular. My favorite one of hers to sing though, and I still do it all the time, is "For Free." I'm doing it now with my new band. We do a version that is probably the best ever.

WB: With CPR?

DC: Yeah.

WB: I'll have to hear that. Are you performing right now, or are you between gigs?

DC: Next time we play is at the Telluride Festival. Then in the fall we're going to go out and do about a month or two of work.

WB: Are you writing new songs, David?

DC: Mmm-hmm, a lot!

WB: Is it true that you're generally not very prolific?

DC: Well, I've been given a wonderful shot in the arm by my son, who is more prolific than I and kickeeth my butt!

WB: (Laughs) Have you written anything together?

DC: Yeah.

WB: Great. So will we next see a CPR album or another solo album by you?

DC: Oh, no, it will be a CPR album.

WB: I read that you're not on the Atlantic label anymore with CSN. Is that good?

DC: Very!

WB: Were they holding you guys back from doing other projects?

DC: Yeah, we

would've never recorded another record for them.

WB: So CPR will be looking for another label deal then?

DC: We'll be looking for something. You don't always have to have a label.

WB: Meaning you can just do it live?

DC: Meaning you can be Ani DiFranco, too.

WB: ...and release things independently, you mean?

DC: Yeah.

WB: I've been hearing a lot of good things about her but I haven't actually heard her music yet.

DC: She's very stylized and you might be offended at how stylized she is, at first. But if you listen to the poetry it will knock your socks off.

WB: Kind of like Kate Bush?

DC: No, I think this is a different bird.

WB: Well, musicians are all different birds and that's what makes it such a rich world. I'll have to listen to Ani DiFranco sometime soon.

DC: I think you'll like her.

{Note from Wally - I recently purchased Ani's live double album "Living in Clip" and she is certainly an emotional vocalist and a muscular, inventive guitarist.}

David and I talked briefly about a few other points including the 1969 and 1974 tours where Joni was the opening act for CSN headliners (David said: "Those were



Son, James Raymond & Father, David Crosby

turbulent times but the music was very high grade"), his liver health ("From the time you get it, you are constantly in treatment to keep it working, but I feel great!"), the reasons that the Byrds split up ("It was just egos. You know, I wanted my songs in there, rather than just to be Roger's wing man, and I wanted more than I was getting. That band had pretty much used up its fun. We just weren't getting along. I was the odd man out, so they decided to toss me out.").

My conversation with David Crosby concludes with this short but satisfying exchange:

WB: Let me ask you a bit more about how it is to have a grown son come into your life.

DC: It's absolutely wonderful!

WB: And you have a new baby boy, too?

DC: Yes, his name's Django.

WB: And how old is he?

DC: 2 years old.

WB: This must be a magical time for you.

DC: Yes it is. I'm a very happy man.

WB: Well, your music is a part of the soundtrack to so many people's lives. I was going back this week and listening to stuff I hadn't heard in years and it's just

incredible the amount of wonderful music that you've made, David. I want to thank you for that.

DC: It's my pleasure, man.

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...

CASTING A WIDER NET

by Don Saul

This is a recording on tape from a bootleg LP from a television studio concert broadcast on NET TV, Los Angeles in 1969. The recording is of very good quality, although there is a little tape hiss.

I believe this to be sixty minutes of magic, catching Joni after her first two albums, and her success as a songwriter being covered by many artists, but before her success with 'Big Yellow Taxi' and big selling albums. In fact the concert is a mix of the old and the new, with songs from the yet to be released *Ladies Of The Canyon*. It finds Joni starting to think of herself as a Californian rather than a pre Canadian; thinking which would expose itself on her parochial and intimate next album.

Joni describes the first song in the performance as being about a New York

street musician in the style of funky Gene Autry, then after prefacing it with a chorus of 'Happy Trails To You' decides that it must be Roy Rogers. She performs 'Real Good For Free' solo at the piano. This is a much livelier version than on the album.

Next up, a song by Dino Valente 'Come On People, Let's Get Together and Love One Another', which is preceded by about twenty seconds of guitar tuning. The extended guitar tuning would later become a feature of Joni's concerts in which she would explain the song / her life / politics / or goof around. There is none of that for today, one of her first television concerts, it's much too important to get it correct! The theme of the song is self-explanatory, it is a 'feel good' song, really 'hip'. Joni asks the

audience to sing along with the chorus, and gets a good response, although thankfully the sound balance allows her clear tones to rise above the audiences out of tune singing. Joni is much enthused by the audience, and she ingratiates herself by saying how she appreciates being an honorary American. Joni claims to be non-political - as she is a Canadian! She tells awful Canadian jokes (a variation on Irish jokes) and the self-mockery works well. I wouldn't have believed that in 1969 Joni was apolitical. However, the following song seems to support her position.

An a capella 'Fiddle And The Drum'. Although sung beautifully, there is little emotion in Joni's voice, indicating that this may be a 'protest by numbers' song. It is beyond doubt her worst song until *Mingus*.

Although I have always been aware of Joni's literary influences, I hadn't thought of Tolkein as one of them. Joni explains how the metaphor of Tolkein's Galadriel and Wilderland led her to write a metaphorical song. The metaphor appears to be between the wilderland, and nasty places that we go to in our minds. I may be wrong. The song is 'I think I understand' (fear is like a wilderland), which she sings accompanying herself on a guitar, after much retuning.

'Both Sides Now' is greeted like an old friend by the audience, as she again performs enthusiastically alone with her guitar.

A bright and breezy 'Chelsea Morning' including a wordless coda is simply sensational. However, it is an unacknowledged triumph as rather than

glory in then audiences appreciation, she quickly moves into 'Cactus Tree' and then 'Night In The City'. All three songs receive magnificent performances.

After two very positive city songs, Joni talks about the downside of city life, for city people and outsiders. Loneliness for 'Marcie' and insularity for 'Nathan La Frenier'. The two songs are performed as bookends on the desperation life in the city can produce.

Joni then introduces two piano songs which she feels fit together as 'two houses', they are 'Rainy Night House' and 'Blue Boy'. They close an intimate and much appreciated concert.

I return to my theme from "Dissing Of The Summer Lawns" - less is more with Joni Mitchell. Apart from some of the fast songs from *Court And Spark* I contend that backing musicians act as aural clutter, distracting rather than enhancing Joni's songs and her singing. The simple self accompaniment on guitar, piano or Appalachian dulcimer shows off the songs best, especially with a small, intimate and appreciative audience. Is it significant that Joni tended to shun stadia concerts? Her *Isle Of Wight* experience was hardly a happy one.

The NET TV concert shows Joni in transition with songs from the first two albums and some, recently written for the soon to be released *Ladies Of The Canyon*, which marked a quantum leap in songwriting style. In transition from folk singer-songwriter to confessional singer-songwriter, at the change between the 60s and the 70s. In short, it is an important career document, as well as being involving and enjoyable listening.

FOR SALE

Joni Mitchell - *Hits* CD, as new £7.50 including postage and packaging.

The Best Of Joni Mitchell For Guitar - Ten song book £5.00 including postage and packaging

Please ring 01977 703580 to check availability. Don Saul, 37 Hill Drive, High Ackworth, Pontefract, WF7 7LQ

Blue (LP) Czech - different cover m/m £12.00 inc p&p by cheque payable to Jozef Norocky, Nastreimici 19, 010 01 ZILINA, SLOVAKIA

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Every effort has been made to obtain the copyright owner of every photograph used in this issue, but apologies to those who we were unable to trace.

AND FINALLY...

I would like to thank the following people for their help with this issue: Wally Breese, Peter Lewry, Barney Hoskyns, Don Saul, Dieter Paul Rudolph, Leslie Mixon, and Jenny Bulley (Mojo magazine).

Alan Bandle

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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