

Joni Mitchell's first album ["Joni Mitchell," Warner Bros. 7 Arts, etc.] is a effort I admire greatly but don't like very much musically. It is a very personal tale told with an integrity which only seems pretentious because it is sung. Even the cover, which the artist did herself, is something of an enigma and certainly very personal. Is the Real Title to the album "Song to a Seagull?" [It's spelled out in gulls beneath her name.] Let's pretend it is, because the song of the same name within the plastic says "humans are hungry/for worlds they can't share/My dreams with the seagulls fly/out of reach and out of cry."

Don't buy this album UNLESS you are willing to sit back, relax and listen with gentle ears. To her credit, Joni Mitchell's album is not Musak. It irritates me not to listen to it. With a single exception, it is a single voice and a lonely guitar [if you don't include a secondary "ban-shee" riff which may bring you to your window, or sound system, according to your own perverse peculiarity in frightening sound situations.]

The exception I was talking about is "Night in the City," an overdubbed number which shows some beautiful piano riffs by Joni and a bass line by the Buffalo Springfield's Steve Stills. This is the only number which could conceivably reach the Top 40, and Warner Bros. - 7 Arts - etc. deserves a round of applause for releasing this album, especially Ed Thrasher, who is in charge of graphics. This album is aimed at a very specialized audience, one which likes to listen closely, one which enjoys the more delicate personalities among us. If you are within this audience, I think you'll thank them, too.