

WHAT GOES ON!

JONI MITCHELL HEJIRA



Last Night **A RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE**

Chaka Khan

**SOUL-JAZZ QUEEN
SALUTES JONI
MITCHELL'S HEJIRA**

I think I must have heard it

when it first came out in the late '70s [1976], or maybe a bit later. I was doing a bunch of tours of the States, on a bus, and it was a pretty stressful time. I was 'self medicating' a lot then, and I'd get it on in the back room on the bus, get blasted and put on *Hejira* and look out the window and see some of the very things that she'd be singing about. I saw the farmhouse burning down in the middle of nowhere in the middle of the night. Things like that seemed to keep happening to me when I was listening to that record.

Coyote is one of my favourites. It's talking about guys on the road – like a guy's trying to chat a woman up in a bar and, "He's got a woman at home and another woman down the hall, but he seems to want me anyway." And *Refuge Of The Roads*, that's my all-time favourite: "I met a friend of spirit, he drank and womanised, and we laughed how our perfection, would always be denied." Brilliant lines, beautiful wording. She's got an amazing body of work. I love her, I wanna grow up to be like her!



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Joni's my friend, and we've talked about many, many things, but I don't think we've talked much about this album. I can't recall where we first met, probably at a show back in the fuzzy days. Now I'll sing her songs to her and she'll be (very close Joni impersonation), "Wow, I forgot I did that one."

She got inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Canada and after we hung out and I told her I was planning to cover *Two Grey Rooms*. She said, "No, no, you've got to do *Ladies Man*, it was written for you." So I did it on *Funk This*. It talks about players and almost every woman has had contact with a player or two, especially if they're on the road. Some marry 'em!

Hejira is about running away and finding refuge in the road. And I did. I still do. I bitch about it but sometimes I'm very happy to get on that plane. I've been touring pretty much my entire adult life. I missed dating, proms, all that stuff, a lot of life really. Sometimes it really feels like my suitcase is my home. I do my show, get back to the hotel, see if there's anything on the telly... I'm a grandmother now! But that doesn't mean I don't like to party and have fun, I go out... but I've seen it all, y'know?

As told to Dave Oliver

Chaka Khan's Funk This is out on Burgundy/Sony BMG