

# Feminine Statements by Joni Mitchell

It had been a long round of hard, driving rock on the opening day of last summer's Atlantic City Pop Festival, and it was good to see Joni Mitchell arrive to slow down the pace with a session of that sweet music she produces so superbly.

But instead of being a high spot of the festival, it was the event's biggest disappointment. Joni is a sensitive young woman — which is evident in many of the songs she writes — and she obviously felt the crowd was not "into" her low-key music.

She was singing "Cactus Flower" and mid-way through she broke off to quietly chastise her audience — "I sang that verse twice and nobody noticed." Joni concluded her performance after about 15 minutes and left.

Several days later it was announced that Joni Mitchell was cancelling all of her scheduled concerts for an indefinite period to work on material for a new album.

The Reprise album, "Ladies of the Canyon," is now out, and it is a lovely sampler of the many moods of Joni Mitchell.

Joni could sing a copy of the New York Telegraph and make it sound like poetry. She has that kind of voice. Give her a song with substance and she is among the most beautiful creatures alive.

As a song writer, she is



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among the brightest young talents of this era. And the beauty is that she will get even better as her talent expands with experience and philosophical growth.

For the time being, Joni is at her best poetically when her mood is whimsical or sentimental, the flavor on many of the numbers in "Ladies of the Canyon." The lyrics do not stagger you with profundity, but they are pretty.

And when Joni has a statement to make, it is made quietly. It is a feminine statement. She can be singing a song of the "revolution" and you do not realize it until the song is over.

There are also flashes of the Laura Nyro influence in "Ladies of the Canyon." And on at least one song, "The Arrangement," the similarity in piano and vocal styles is striking, with melodic gymnastics that run rampant throughout.

While this technique jells nicely with the harsher style of Laura Nyro, it is somewhat less palatable when blended with the fundamental gentleness of a Joni Mitchell.

But then the young lady is still growing.

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**DEIRDRE WILSON TABAC** (RCA Records): This is a fine album of good-time music that really stars Sonny Casella, who functioned in the role of producer, arranger and drummer. The approach varies, but it is basically heavy blues.


The instrumental work, featuring a strong horn section, is excellent and there is plenty of vocal flexibility with the songs handled alternately by Miss Wilson and two other singers identified on the album only as Barbara and Stu.

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**MORE LPs:** One of the better rock releases to come along in several weeks is the product of a group called Redbone, featured on a new two-record album for Epic Records, "Redbone." The group serves up strong melodies, some fine funky guitar work, a strong beat and tight harmonies. The material is occasionally dull, but "Redbone" is still an above-average release . . . Ed Sanders grinds out a session of

music that is presumably "hip" pure country in a new Reprise album titled "Sanders Truckstop." It begins badly with a cut called "Hippie-billy Boy" and goes downhill from there . . . One of the more promising new teams of last year, Zager and Evans, come off badly with their latest RCA album, "Zager & Evans." The material is generally drab and the special effects in the production of the album are just too, too much.

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