

Mitchell, Baez albums get mixed reviews

By J EDDIE FIELD

The Turkey weekend record sales were marked with the appearance of Joni Mitchell's new record titled, "Hejira." Mitchell's nine songs have a pleasant melody with small light progressions that act as the backdrop for her spelling of verbal poetry—that's the summation of this record in a nut.

The album's lead is "Coyote" and is the best of the collection. The song has a swift beat and the words dance with Mitchell's high voice geared in quick delivery. "Coyote" rolls along with little rhyme and a quick two-line refrain: "You just picked up a hitcher./ A prisoner of the white line on the freeway"

Here is the style mastered by Mitchell, but she peaked right off and leveled out to a very even pace; songs like "Amella," "A Strange Boy," and "Hejira" and like the verbal movies found on "The Hissing of Summer Lawn."

The task of weeding through the lyrics will reward a few excited metaphors, but not a total high. Grab what you can,

while most songs will eventually grow on you, the search for favorable ground takes longer with this album.

"Furry Sings the Blues," "Song for Sharon," and "Refuge of the Roads" are lengthy epics, with Mitchell on the prowl. First we meet Old Furry, a blues singer in Memphis, and Mitchell's attempts to relate with her fellow singer fail. Mitchell asks: "Why should I expect that old guy to give it to me true."

In "Song for Sharon" Mitchell questions Sharon endlessly about marriage, and the song is a fine showcase for Mitchell's cynical humor. "There's a gypsy down on Blecker Street/ I went in to see her as a kind of joke/ And she lit a candle for my love luck/ And eighteen bucks went up in smoke."

"Blue Motel Room" offers a sea of sweet sorrow for the diehard Mitchell freak. This seedy smoked-filled night club song is painful. Ooeee weel! The ploy of the love starved singer can be heard so long, and I'm past my limit.

The album is a lyrical travel-

logue that ends with "Refuge of the Roads"—that is a barrage of images from traveling the highways. Like many roads the song is too long and monotonous.

I was warned by the cover of Mitchell as a modern day Garbo with a picture of a rolling highway superimposed in her body, but I still wanted to travel along these songs. The talent of Joni Mitchell is not to be overlooked, and I'm just waiting until her next release.

I wonder what is left for the blonde haired goddess of love songs to do. Why not pack up her guitar and be the guest host of NBC Saturday Night?

By NIKI SWEARINGEN

Joan Baez is still protesting in her new album *Gulf Winds*. But quietly in rhyme, with subtle shadings of personal remembrances and criticisms tempered by compassion for those who fall short of their own standards.

Gulf Winds, released by A&M Records, is a collection of folk music, all lyrics and music written by the queen of sad love songs herself. Baez writes about her life and her two ethnic origins—as a "Mexican-Irish" growing up in the Southwest and as a vagabond of passive resistance from the sixties—and both influences are strong in her music.

Her message is clear, "happiness is temporary," she's always said it. And she sings about the weight of being Mother Earth to a whole generation. Sometimes bitterly realistic ("tragedies happen when you're bored!") she inevitably keeps hoping, and like the seabird she writes about, topples and balances again.

Her rhyming is occasionally forced, and I get the feeling she tries to jam too many words into a line, but the idea comes through, as in "O Brother!" where she says some things that I've often wanted to express to my own kid brother.

Baez' melodies are geometric four-line songs, singable music, and the faint strains of Bob Dylan are probably only imagined from long association. But then, as in "Seabird," her melodies will soar off through

key changes like scale exercises.

It's corny, but I always thought if there were angels they would sing like Joan Baez. Sweet and clear but edged with visions of worldliness, hoarse and gusty in the lower notes.

Baez has some good back-up musicians playing with her in *Gulf Winds*, particularly Larry Knechtel on keyboards and Malcolm Cecil on synthesizer, and percussionist Jim Gordon adds to the sense of Latin or Calypso rhythms in songs like "Seabirds" and "Caruso." With guitarist Dean Parks and Duck Dunn on bass, the band has a rocking folk sound, warm and full.

In "Stephanie's Room" Baez shows that she is more than competent as an instrumentalist, playing piano in graceful arpeggiated chords and a syn-steel guitar. Along with Dean Parks' mandolin, the combination of instruments is haunting

in the style of Neil Young ("Helpless") or even later Beach Boys.

Although the album is good overall, one song irks me because it verges on schmaltz, not in lyrical content but in musical arrangement. It's a long cut, the last on side one, called "Kingdom of Childhood," an it will probably meet its doom by being a hot request on KTSB.

On the other hand "Gulf Winds," the title song is also long, five verses and choruses, but it never gets tiring. Baez' solo singing and guitar is as rich as a whole band. The galloping guitar in "Gulf Winds" makes me want to sing and sway, and the song stays with me long after the record's over. Nodding and humming, it's nice to know there's a real live folksinger plucking off down the road, still singing her songs in my head.

This week's campus films

Boys in the Band

William Friedkin directs the movie adaptation of the hit Broadway play about nine homosexuals at a private birthday party. Their relationship is explored with all of the original stage actors appearing in the film. Friday, Dec. 3, in the M-P Room at 3, 7, and 9:30 p.m. Admission is 75¢ with T.U. I.D.; \$1.25 without. Matinee 25¢

King of Hearts

Go crazy, act like a loony in order to survive finals, but first watch Alan Bates do it in this warm and funny film. The setting is a rural French town taken over by lunatics during WW I. You'll survive even if you still can't find Genevieve Bujold in the dorms Sunday, Dec. 5, in the M-P Room at 3, 7, and 9:30 p.m. Admission is 75¢ with T.U. I.D.; \$1.25 without. Matinee 25¢.

Mickey One

Arthur Penn directs Warren Beatty as a night club entertainer whose future has

been foreclosed by the mob. A classic from 1965. Wednesday, Dec. 8, at 7 p.m. in Chapman Aud. Admission for San Antonio Film Society members, \$1; all others, \$1.50.

The Left Handed Gun

An earlier Arthur Penn film with Paul Newman as Billy the Kid. Real heavy into method acting as Newman gets down as one of the most famous angry young man characters to emerge from the 50's. Wednesday, Dec. 8, in Chapman Aud. Preceding "Mickey One."

Best of the 2nd New York Erotic Film Festival

Keep your TRINITONIAN over your lap and get your rocks off. The spoof is on sex in this collection of short films that has been painstakingly picked for your sensuous enjoyment. Thursday, Dec. 9, in the M-P Room at 7 and 9:30 p.m. Admission 75¢ with T.U. I.D.; \$1.25 without.

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