

Joni Mitchell: Back to the Rose Garden

Joni Mitchell is familiar to many as a lyricist rather than as a performer. She managed to do one show at Carnegie Hall last May and even showed up at a McGovern benefit this summer, but lately she has restricted her appearances to that of spectator. On rare occasions, she would be invited up on stage to join a friend like James Taylor or Neil Young, but of a multitude of established solo artists, Joni has the singular distinction of not going "on the road" each year. Her latest album, *For the Roses*, is in part, an explanation why.

For the *Roses*, Joni's fifth album and the first on the Asylum label, reveals a lot of Joni Mitchell—more than any of her earlier albums, though it's just a matter of degree. Where her songs once centered around friends and lovers and the illusory trips they weaved so carefully, *For the Roses* is Joni coming to terms with Joni:

Well I'm learning
It's peaceful
With a good dog and some trees
Out of touch with the breakdown
Of this century

—Electricity

For the roses. *Roses*. That's what they place around a horse's neck after he's won the big race. And more roses and more roses until the horse is played out and then they shoot him.

The rock circuit is too much. It can break your spirit and your heart. Three songs on the album deal with the necessary abuse which accompanies fortune and fame. A sort of anti-Top of the Pops. And Joni Mitchell has been watching it from both sides of the stage. And America's virgin groupies who have been hunting rumors about Joni and Neil or Joni and David or Graham or Steven or Jackson or James now know:

"... You can't hold the hand
Of a Rock and Roll man
Very long
Or count on your plans
With a Rock 'n' Roll man
Very long

—Blond in the Bleachers

Ironically, Steven Stills plays the part of the rock 'n' roll man in this song. But thankfully Joni doesn't lament about broken love. Beneath it she is self-resurrected.

"Let the Wind Carry Me" is Joni's portrait of life at home. It seems some situations can't be resolved. So you eventually leave, but one eye is always on the house. Joni's song is an open letter to Mother, who just couldn't understand what



was happening.

There are songs of love, of love over, of love on the lookout, but mostly of trying to get it together, independently, far from the rock and roll breed.

Don't make the same mistake I did, that is, interpreting this record as a sad record. At first listening it may seem somewhat morose, but the key to the album is in the last crucial cut, "Judgment of the Moon and Stars"—the underlying optimism which follows every bummer. The secret is discovering it before you go under.

Joni sings 12 beautiful songs and the lyrics are printed inside the cover. Her voice is as versatile as it is beautiful. Incidentally, the songs flow very well with the music, as well as with each other. I could discuss the album in empirical terms, track by track, but I've stopped doing that to music. Besides, if you weren't curious, you wouldn't be reading this.

Kenneth Winkoff

Gays' 'Coming Out' in Lounge

The scene is June 27, 1969; men and women, laughing, talking, dancing, touching, happy; when all of a sudden two policemen arrive at the club. It's a raid at a Gay club, the Stonewall on Christopher Street in the Village. The cops are brutal and beat a number and arrest all of the people inside. There are words of bigotry from the cops, "Faggots, queers." A number of people band together, and for three days there is tense confrontation between police and Gays. A new consciousness is being born. The Gays have decided not to take the shit society has been handing them for so long. The oppression by the dominant culture has reached the point where resistance is necessary. The Gay Liberation Movement has begun.

This opening scene sets the tone of the play, "Coming Out," by Jonathan Katz,

which was performed November 17 in Bittenweiser Lounge, and was sponsored by Gay People at City College. A troupe of five men and five women, all members of the Gay Activists Alliance of New York, comprise the cast. The settings are informal with just a backdrop with an American flag and a flag with two conjunct male and two conjunct female symbols hanging from it. There are ten black cubes used as props. The actors dress casually, and the audience sits in couches and on the floor.

The speeches are fiery, and the performers give their all to them. The author, Jonathan Katz, compiled the material from fiction, poetry, autobiographical and historical material. He has chosen incidents and poems that clearly show the cultural fear and prejudice of the society, and also, the loving, aware side of Gay life. The contrast is electric and makes for good theater.

—Richard Goldman

Comin' Down That Road



Happy and Artie Traum, who rate high among the College's all-time favorite folksinging duos, will be making a triumphant return on December 15 to Cafe Finley, where they have performed to resounding huzzahs several times in the past. Tickets for their latest one-night

stand are now on sale at two dollars each in Room 152 Finley. The Friday night concert is scheduled to begin at 8 P.M., and on-campus parking will be available to those who show I.D. cards at the gate. Free coffee and doughnuts will be served.

Audiophilisms

Dear Sir (Sir??),

I read with interest all your record reviews, and, being an audiophile, enjoy them. Do you remember that in a recent issue of OP, you said, "Most obscure English groups are head and shoulders above most American groups?" Well, in addition to that, you wanted to know if anyone found any "particularly interesting" obscure records in a bargain bin, that they should notify you.

Well, here's notice of "Audience," a great (and I mean great) English group that I fell upon about one and a half years ago in WBAI's freebee box. Since then, I noticed another one of their albums in Alexander's record department. I have, of course, since purchased it.

The group is on the Elektra label, and their two albums are called, *The House On The Hill* and *Lunch*. They have a third album, their first, but I have not as yet been able to locate it.

Also, why don't you try to give brief reviews of electronic records? The music world does not belong to rock alone. Rock may be now, but electronics represent the coming now.

I, myself, have a rapidly bulging collection of electronic albums by Walter Carlos (*Clockwork Orange*), Dick Hyman, Walter Searling, Douglas Leedy, and other unsung masters of the electronic medium. And I do not mean to say just senseless beeps and blips! This would be, and is, a common misconception regarding the fine form of music. Most people hear a work by John Cage, who is into avant-garde electronics, and are turned off. These people never heard the beautiful things, like a seven-minute interpretation of Booker T and the MG's "Green Onions." They've never heard the creative adaptation of "Hey Jude" to the Moog syn-

thesizer! All they know is Rod Stewart and his imitators.

It's also a matter of conformity. I consider myself a non-conformist. I consider 90% of rock today a rip-off imitation contest. In a recent article by yourself, you said that Mott the Hoople borrowed many sounds from the Rolling Stones; and a great deal of vocals in rock today, I feel, are alike. The only group, it seems, with a truly beautiful vocalist is Emerson, Lake, and Palmer; all other vocalists seem to have an unnatural accent to them. Remember when the Beatles first came out? Almost all the groups (spineless jewellyfish that they were) seemed to get into bubblegum music with bubblegum vocals.

In closing, I hope that I have made the point that I hate conformity in music (one group "sounding" like another) and that you should try to give your hands on those Audience albums.

Gary Stein

Lyrical and musically, Audience is a very Bizarre group. Unfortunately, they recently split up. Besides the two albums that you mentioned, they released two earlier albums in England only. The only way to get them is through a shop that carries imports. A group with a similar style that is worth listening to is Genesis. Their second album, *Nursery Cryme*, has a very strange tale to it, and their new one, *Foxtrot*, should be released next week.

Also recommended from the bargain bins: Slade's first, *Play It Loud*, anything by the Small Faces on the Immediate label, and *Love Is All Around* by the Troggs.

BT

Yes Roundabout Nassau

The quickest and easiest way to review Yes in concert is to say their show is spectacular and their music is undefinable. But somehow this seems to be journalistically lacking and well below the usual high level of merit most of my reviews retain.

Yes performed Nov. 20 in a misplaced airplane hangar commonly known as the Nassau Coliseum, deep in the heart of a new phenomenon known as "urban suburbia." The show started approximately ten minutes early with the playing of the new rock classic, "The Star Spangled Banner," a tune obviously written by the late, great Francis Scott Hendrix, on the house-organ.

The English group Lindisfarne opened the show and exited early due to an audience which responded only between trips to the Coliseum's modern, clean toilet facilities. Lindisfarne is a top English band, and their agents and managers shouldn't have allowed them the indignity of a trip to Long Island. The group's music is subtly beautiful with many traditional rhythms flowing through their music.

If traditional rhythm flows through

Lindisfarne, then eclectic rhythms seem to flow through Yes. Yes' music is a layered, thematic experience that fills every conceivable space of air. To follow the music of Yes is to see the steady musical development of a group that started in rock and roll and has now become one of the best exponents of a genre of music known as "symphonic rock." Yes' keyboard man Rick Wakeman is extraordinarily competent on organ, piano, harpsichord, synthesizer, mellotron and any combination of the above. His introduction to "Roundabout" is a devastating and almost final use of the synthesizer and mellotron in the context of rock and roll.

While showing a few weak points—particularly some of guitarist Steve Howe's flashier moments and singer Jon Anderson's incredible ability to forget lyrics he himself wrote to the dynamic "Heart of the Sunrise"—the group showed unmatched strength and depth and a strong claim to a spot in the small number of groups whose music is both creative and innovative.

Gregory P. Vovsi