

A Mingus commemorative

Tribute is 'new direction' for Mitchell

By SCOTT KRANSTUBER

A joint venture between singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell and jazz great Charlie Mingus, which began in early 1978, was released this summer and marks yet another direction for the ever-changing, ever-flexible Mitchell.

This collaboration turned into a commemorative when Mingus died in January from a heart attack after losing a one-year battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

The album, simply titled "Mingus," is a six-song package. Two songs were written totally by Mitchell, and the rest are remakes of old Mingus classics with Mitchell lyrics.

INCLUDED ON the album are conversations with Mingus inter-

spersed between the tracks. Mitchell wrote on the album cover that these "add pertinent resonance and preserve fragments of a large and colorful soul."

Joni again shows her artistic talents on the cover and inside sleeve of the album which she painted with various impressions of Mingus.

As the liner notes say, each song was cut several times with several different musicians. The early cuts, which do not appear on the final album, include such musicians as Phil Woods (who appeared at the Jazz Festival here last winter), John McLaughlin (founder of the Mahavishnu Orchestra) and Stanley Clarke (member of Return to Forever and later of the New

Barbarians). These musicians helped Joni search for the sounds that she and Charlie had intended for the album.

THE FINAL band includes three members of Weather Report: bass player Jaco Pastorius (who does some amazing solos on Joni's current tour, which came to Blossom Music Center Aug. 14), saxophonist Wayne Shorter and drummer Peter Erskine. Other members include pianist Herbie Hancock and percussionists Don Alias and Emil Richards. Local favorite and rising young guitarist Pat Metheny was included in Joni's touring group.

In the course of Joni's long career, she has played to many different types of audiences. She began as a poet and with the help of David Crosby and Bob Dylan began putting her poetry to music. She soon found herself in the middle of the Woodstock era as one of its leaders, and one of the leading ladies of rock.

In 1974, she released her classic album, Court and Spark. After this, her commercial as well as critical success ended. In 1975, with the release of The Hissing of Summer Lawns, she first introduced jazz overtones to her songwriting. She furthered this direction and nearly severed herself from pop music with the 1977 release of Don Juan's Reckless Daughter.

SINCE THIS new-found interest in serious jazz, she has received little critical acclaim, yet has reached a new audience, which is

one of her goals. She continues to progress and rather than have overwhelming commercial success, chooses her own musical directions.

In an interview with **Rolling Stone**, she said, "They're going to crucify you for staying the same. If you change, they're going to crucify you for changing. Staying the same is boring. Change is interesting."

This new album, Mingus, is certainly a change from the image Joni has projected to the general rock public.

The album opens with "God Must Be a Boogie Man," the only song that Mingus never saw completed. Joni's jagged, harsh guitar chords introduce this song that gives Joni's personal impression of Mingus.

Her colorful images describe him as three men in one: an attacker, a lover and the third somewhere in the middle, unmoved.

ANOTHER HIGHLIGHT of side one is "The Wolf that Lives in Lindsey." This is the one song on the album that may not exactly fit. It actually sounds like the Joni Mitchell many of us are used to... a bit more cerebral perhaps, but a good song on its own. It opens with more of Joni's rough, hard-strumming guitar and closes with a haunting series of wolf howls and barks.

Side two is highlighted by "The Dry Cleaner from Des Moines," a boogie tune reminiscent of the Andrews sisters' "Boogie Woogie

Bugle Boy." Pastorius does a good job with the horn arrangement giving it a big band feel with Shorter's alto sax finally spotlighted. Overall, this is the best cut on the album.

The album finishes with "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat." Revamping Mingus' classic tribute to Lester Young, Mitchell takes the old Mingus lyrics and turns the song into a tribute to Mingus.

Joni Mitchell's latest direction is refreshing. Her cool, crystal clear voice and her ability to quickly change its tone and intensify gives her a head-start on the road to becoming a successful jazz vocalist. This first total jazz effort, with the help of the world's finest jazz musicians, is a success, and pays a needed tribute to the great Charlie Mingus. Joni should continue in this direction and polish it before continuing on to another style.



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LP'S

1. "In Through The Out Door" Led Zeppelin Swan Song
2. "Get The Knack" The Knack Capitol
3. "Slow Train Coming" Bob Dylan Columbia
4. "Breakfast In America" Supertramp A&M
5. "Risque" Chic Atlantic

Billboard's Top 5

By the Associated Press

The following are Billboard's hit records for the week ending Sept. 22 as they appear in next week's issue of **Billboard** magazine.

SINGLES

1. "My Sharona" The Knack Capitol
2. "After The Love Has Gone" Earth, Wind & fire Arc.
3. "The Devil Went Down To Georgia" Charlie Daniels Band Epic
4. "Rise" Herb Alpert A&M
5. "Lead Me On" Maxine Atlantic



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