

Joni Mitchell's 'Court & Spark'

Latest LP follows pattern

By Mike Tkach
FN Music Critic



Joni Mitchell's "Court & Spark" fits logically in the evolutionary pattern of her career. Hopefully, though, she'll soon evolve into something more extraordinary.

One progression in Ms. Mitchell's career has been the steady inclusion of more and more back-up. Her first and second works, "Songs To A Seagull" and "Clouds," were simple in terms of extra instrumentation. The only added touches (Stills' guitar, Crosby's voice, her own chorus...) were used slightly. "Ladies of the Canyon" added more piano, some woodwinds, and kept Crosby, Stills, and Nash as resident choirboys. "Blue" utilized a full band on some tracks and a unique dulcimer here and there. "For the Roses" was heavily packed—few songs (if any) were simple guitar-voice numbers. Now "Court & Spark" uses strings, the L. A. Express (supermarket-muzak) jazz band, Robbie Robertson Cheech & Chong, and Jose Feliciano.

FIRST WAS BEST

Her first album was her best. It showcased the songs that passed the test of playing before club audiences while she was scuttling for a living. After she rose to stardom, she coasted downhill until her most boring waste, "Ladies." With "Blue" she picked up some funk to charge her style (thankfully), put out "Roses" with good arrangements and performances but poor materials and finally hit stride with this one.

Side one suffers from her usual shortage of spice. The title song, like the entrees on "Sgt. Peppers" or "Magical Mystery Year" serves a thematic opener for the rest of her album. But it's

too solemn. Her preoccupation is with the measurement of the painful distances from the perfect point of love.

'TOO STUFFY'

Two songs pick up the pace of the album. The bouncy rhythms and hooker's melodies of "Help Me" and "Free Man In Paris" move as if trying to shake off some of the tenacious necessities of life. Their spunkiness makes them the only good songs on side one. "People's Parties," a typically arranged affair, doesn't concern me. Who cares about record executives and their dead-head New York snob-bashes? It connects with "The Same Situation," nothing too outstanding either and the last song on a cheatingly short side of five.

Side two opens as "Car On The Hill" fetches your mind back to the title song with its reference to "so much spark. . ." and "sweetness in the dark. . ." It's the third good song but dully trailed by a drab clinker, "Down To You." The strings, clavinet and classical arrangement here are just too stuffy for Joni's good.

"Raised on Robbery" is one drinker's invite to another. It's got a great beginning but sounds too much like Joni Mitchell executing rock for authenticity's sake.

"Trouble Child" is too long and too wordy to appreciate its own jazzy arrangement which folds

into "Twisted," the fifth good shot. The song sounds great if only because of its humor ("I heard little children were supposed to sleep tight, that's why I got into the vodka one night. . ."), or its winding arrangement or simply because it was written by someone else (Ross & Grey, 1965).

JUST BEGUN

That's five good songs out of eleven. Not as bad as it sounds. The bright moments mark the death of one somber stage of her career and the beginning of something better. She could be on her way to the attainment of real quality.

Steve Miller signed for April 21 concert

The notorious "Gangster of Love," Steve Miller and his band will be making a concert appearance at the Fieldhouse Sunday, April 21 at 8 p.m.

Miller has churned out nine consistently varied and innovative discs since 1967 when his first album, "Children of the Future," was released. But he did not achieve national popularity until just a few months ago when "The

Joker" peaked to the Top 40 charts.

The diversity in Steve Miller's songs is indicative of the span of his talents and concerns. He writes, sings and plays blues, rock and roll, ballad and country music.

Several major artists have played on his albums including Nicky Hopkins, Lee Michaels and Paul McCartney.

Fans who have followed the Steve Miller Band from its beginning may really get their money's worth. Boz Scaggs, an influential force in the original Steve Miller Band, may be the opening act, according to John Fullam, SG vice-president of concerts. Scaggs wrote and sang a few of the songs on Miller's first two albums.

Fullam said, "The James Cotton Blues Band" is also being considered as a lead-in act.

Since arrangements for the concert were just completed, tickets should be on sale around April 5. Distribution outlets will be announced later this week. All seats are general admission.

PAC

Students and any interested persons are invited to come out to the Arena tonight at 7:30 p.m. to witness a presentation on the proposed Physical Activities Center.

Films of the Notre Dame and UCLA basketball games are expected to be shown.

Alumni of UD living in Dayton, about 10,000 strong, are also being invited, to encourage contributions toward construction of the building.

The PAC will accommodate the present 34 intramural activities at the University and additional activities in the future.

BILL O'NEILL CARES.

In every person's life a pattern develops. . . that recurring theme which is found in countless different, unrelated actions.

In Bill O'Neill's life that theme is "caring about people."

Starting back in the 1960's as a student at Ohio University, Bill O'Neill cared enough to be a "big brother" at the Athens County Children's Home. For three years, he brought that little extra interest into the lives of the children who found themselves abandoned, lost, and in need of a friend. Bill O'Neill watched helplessly as several different levels of government, through inaction, allowed a freeway to replace the Children's Home, leaving the kids with even less than before. . . and he knew there had to be a better way.

As a U.S. Army Officer in Vietnam, Bill O'Neill saw firsthand the tragic results of men not communicating with each other in government. He watched with increasing anxiety as the politicians debated while thousands were dying.

As a newsman on a small Ohio daily paper, Bill O'Neill watched the local communities grope aimlessly for a solution to a burgeoning drug problem in the schools. As a reporter, he dared to write the stories that brought the facts to light.

As a television reporter for Channel 4 in Columbus, Bill O'Neill saw the political jealousies and partisan squabbling which can so tragically stall the most worthwhile legislation.

When Bill was 25, he was appointed Director of Communications for the largest organization of non-teaching public employees in the State of Ohio. In that role he found himself in daily contact with State government, from the House of Representatives to the Governor's Office, fighting to improve the quality of public employment in Ohio.

Having experienced the frustration of seeing legislation fail because of inaction by some insincere elected officials, he realized how much more could be done by someone who really cared.

He was shocked to see how the taxpayers of Ohio could actually find themselves as the largest minority in the State . . . without a voice to effect the changes they so vitally needed. Bill O'Neill cared enough to leave a promising career in communications to try and improve his State.

Bill O'Neill still cares. We need a voice in the Lieutenant Governor's office who will speak out for all the people of Ohio. Bill O'Neill will be that voice with your help. He cares.



WILLIAM M. O'NEILL
DEMOCRAT FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

As you may have heard from the Dayton news media, the Montgomery County Democratic Party is coming under attack from several different sources because of its backward stand on open primaries.

The issues at stake are really quite simple. The entrenched leaders in Dayton, led by County Chairman Paul Tipps do not believe in open primaries. In other words, rather than let every candidate have a fair chance to get elected, the leaders prefer to decide behind closed doors who the "favorites" are going to be . . . and then lock everyone else out.

There is one candidate who thinks there is a better way to do things. His name is William O'Neill, and he's running for Lieutenant Governor.

Bill O'Neill has had the opportunity to be considered for endorsements by many counties, and even by the state party. He has turned them all down, explaining that "endorsements by Democratic organizations in open primaries are neither in the interest of the candidate nor the Party."

Bill O'Neill is a leading candidate for the nomination. In the COLUMBUS EVENING DISPATCH poll completed this week, he fell seven votes short of having double the number of votes as his nearest competition. He is not a voice in the wilderness . . . HE IS THE FRONTRUNNING CANDIDATE.

Now Bill O'Neill needs your help. The boss politicians must be shown that the people will be heard.

The next meeting of the Montgomery County Democratic Party is at 7 p.m. on THURSDAY, MARCH 28. We're all going to be there. And heard.

Do you have an interest in seeing government returned to the people? Or would you rather sit back and watch as the boss politicians continue to manipulate the elections. The choice is yours.

The question you should be asking yourself, though, is "WHY ARE THEY AFRAID TO LET BILL O'NEILL SPEAK?"

The meeting is at Democratic Headquarters, on South Wilkinson Street, downtown Dayton. Bill O'Neill will be there. You should be too.

YOU SHOULD TOO.

Paid For By The Committee To Elect William O'Neill, Fr. Bernard L. Horst, S.M., Montgomery County Representative

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