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Joni nervous at Greenpeace benefit show

By LLOYD H. DYKKE

"Greenpeace is beautiful and you are beautiful. You want life and you want peace, and you want them now!" exclaimed Irving Stowe of the Don't Make a Wave Committee to the accompaniment of loud cheers at the Pacific National Exhibition Coliseum Friday.

For those who are still unaware of it, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission is planning a second underground explosion of a 3.5 megaton hydrogen bomb — 175

times the strength of the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima — on Amchitka, one of the Aleutian Islands in the North Pacific.

Amchitka is located nearly on top of the Aleutian Thrust Earthquake Fault joining the St. Andreas Fault that passes off Vancouver Island.

The dangers of an earthquake and radiation, should the atomic test take place, are well known. Yet the AEC, who can neither predict nor control the possible consequences, are incredibly enough willing to stake everything on a margin of possibility that nothing will come of the tests, the committee says.

The Don't Make a Wave Committee plans to send a scientifically staffed and equipped ship named Greenpeace to Amchitka to determine and publicize the damage caused by previous blasting there and to protest this next blast and atomic testing anywhere by anyone.

And Greenpeace will get to Amchitka on the money raised by Friday's benefit, for which Joni Mitchell, Phil Ochs, James Taylor and Chilliwack donated their appearances.

The amount of \$30,000 is needed, and from last report, the 10,000 people in attendance nearly supplied that figure in ticket sales, with the remainder to have been made up in donation tin receipts.

After that introduction, it takes a bit of compartmentalizing to submit a review of the performers who made this worthwhile of undertakings possible.

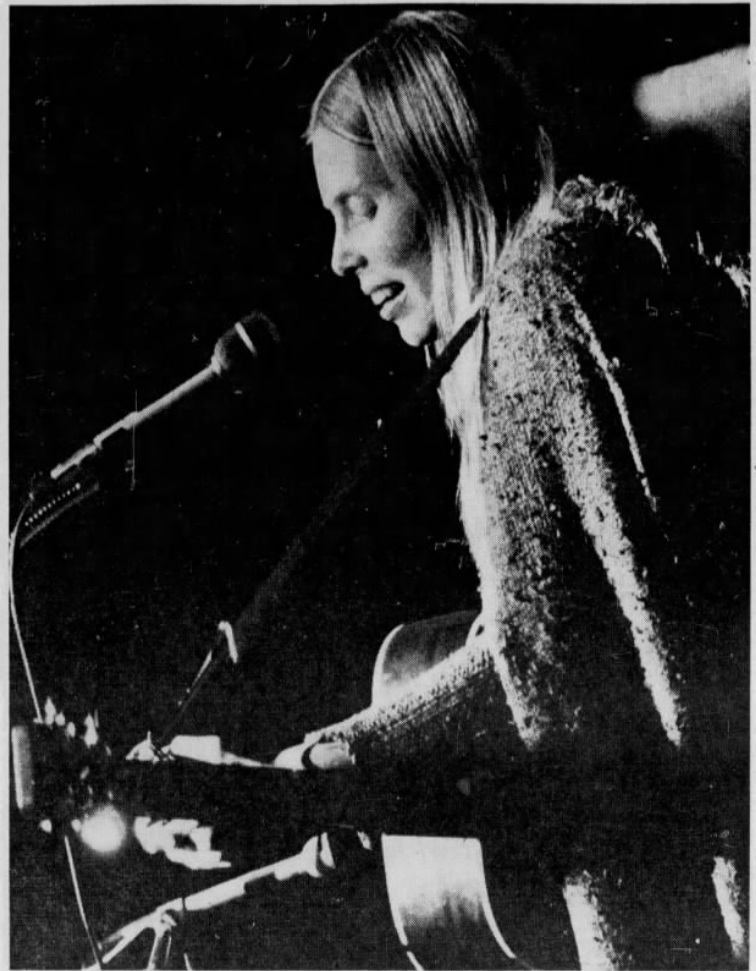
Considering the event purely as a concert, if that is possible, my main criticism revolves around its length — nearly five hours.

But it was a most beneficial benefit concert, and, of course, where else can you hope to accommodate 10,000 people?

The show opened with Phil Ochs, singer, song-writer and musical vanguard of the revolution. It was up to him to create a bistro sort of warmth in a place with all the ambience of a train terminal, but eventually he succeeded.

It was a straight, direct performance — songs for the working (union) man. He sang I'm proud to be an Okie from Muskogee as a satire on "the kind of mentality we have to win over", and the crowd roared for more.

Then it was an abrupt change of pace with the local rock group, Chilliwack. This was a superb excursion into rock lyricism, full of exotic musical oddments and delights. Even at their intrepid heaviest, there was a lyrical sort of joy and exuberance in their playing, as



JONI MITCHELL . . . nervous start then soaring voice

—George Dyck Photos



JAMES TAYLOR . . . unexpected bonus

though they were discovering for the first time the sounds of various permutations of guitar, violin, flute, keyboard and voice.

An unexpected bonus came with the appearance of James Taylor, who partially eclipsed the radiance of Joni Mitchell herself.

Seated before this guitar, his head lowered and seemingly under the influence of the same spell he cast over the crowd, he sang songs of the gentlest persuasion. It was vocal tenderness at its most evocative. In his Feliciano-like voice, he sang Fire and Rain and Goin' to Carolina in My Mind, the song he wrote in Spain in a moment of homesickness.

Finally, much much later, there was a glimpse of that lank cascade of blonde hair and those celebrated sculptural cheekbones. Could it be Joni at last?

Something was clearly amiss with Chelsea Morning, her opening song. She soon regained her confidence, however, and as she went into a few more familiar songs, we were treated to the full effect of her lucid, soaring soprano voice — nearly bordering on shrillness — and the almost impressionistic effect of her haunting, protracted vibrato.

But by then the oppressive reality of just sitting and sitting for hours began to take its toll. Or was it just (dare it be said) boredom as Miss Mitchell sat at

the piano and produced a seemingly endless array of aimless, diffuse and self-indulgent songs?

I began to amuse myself by watching the flickering of cigarettes being lit among the thousands below, and finally joined the stream of people leaving their seats to mill about the perimeter of the arena.

As I was leaving about 12:45, things had picked up. Now playing the zither, Joni was accompanied by Taylor in a fetching rendition of Mr. Tambourine Man.

But I was physically enervated and departed, mentally bidding Joni a fond farewell and good wishes to the Greenpeace.