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## Joni Mitchell comes home on new album

By CLIFF RADEL  
Gannett News Service

Joni Mitchell has returned to earth. After more than a decade of making albums only a space cadet could love, she has both feet on the ground for her new recording, *Chalk Mark In A Rain Storm* (Gaffin Records).

Mitchell marked her 20th anniversary as a recording artist on March 22 with the perfect gift, the release of *Chalk Mark*.

The album — Mitchell's first in nearly three years — shows where the willowy voiced singer-songwriter has been and where she is going. It also shows how far ahead of her time she has been for the last 13 years and how popular music is finally catching up to her.

All of the above is evidenced in the album's first song, *My Secret Place*. At first impression, Mitchell sounds like Suzanne Vega, deep and noncommittal. Then, the dawn breaks.

Vega sounds like Mitchell. She stole Mitchell's trademarks while the veteran singer was out playing in the ozone on the series of spaced-out, art-song albums that began in 1975 with *The Hissing Of Summer Lawns*.

As *My Secret Place* progresses, its rhythm and melody — sung with Peter Gabriel — sound very current. The angular melody, shifting vocals, crisp acoustic guitar, lilting synthesized sounds and drum beats that take turns being brash and subdued would be just as at home on Gabriel's recent award-winning album, *So*, as they would on Mitchell's 1976 LP, *Hejira*.

*My Secret Place* is just one of three notable duets on the album. Mitchell pits her vocal cords against Billy Idol's black leather voice on the mini rock opera, *Dancin' Clown*. For the timeless Western number, *Cool Water*, she saddles up with an unlikely sidekick, Willie Nelson. This pairing seems strange. Nevertheless, their odd harmonies make beautiful music as the lady of the canyon rides off into the sunset with Willie the sidewinder.

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age Limited to open for its U.S. tour. One wonders how peppy kids on all those college look to Monsieur Rotten.

watched a bit of their first Pengilly admits. "We were g around to see how they'd er. They're going over fantas- He's been on his best or. He's an enigma."

current tour has been a long t started last October in East g, Mich.

e wanted to do a college tour se we started there," Pengilly ns. "College radio has jumped erylhing we did straight away. ough we'd warm up in the e towns."