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# Rising folk singer from Saskatoon discusses career

By LLOYD LANDA  
Staff Reporter

It's a long way from a bungalow in southeast Nutana to stinging engagements in Detroit coffeehouses and performances at Boston's Town Hall, but Joni Mitchell, a former Saskatoonian, appears to have adjusted smoothly to her rising career as a folk entertainer.

Mrs. Mitchell, formerly Joni Anderson, was in Saskatoon Tuesday with her husband, Chuck, visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Anderson, of 1865 Hanover Avenue.

Chuck and Joni sign bookings as a duo, but found they perform best as singles, although they save a joint effort for the last number of their set.

Mrs. Anderson, as proud as a mother could be of her daughter's success, gave details of Joni's career, while we thumbed through a scrapbook filled with press notices of her performances in several major North American cities. Critics in Toronto, Detroit, and Calgary (where she first started to sing) had nothing but praise for her ability and originality as a folk performer.

Mrs. Anderson said Joni was deeply interested in art throughout her high school years at Nutana and Bowman colleges. Some of her work still adorns the walls in the Anderson household.

A love and appreciation for folk music possessed Joni to buy a ukulele, on which she practiced fervently day and night, her mother recalled.

Her accompaniment, while still elementary at this time,

and her clear, beautiful voice (Mrs. Anderson said reporters used to compare her to American folk celebrity Joan Baez) impressed television staffers at Prince Albert's CKBI-TV sufficiently to build a one-hour interview show around an interview with her, plus her performance of a few songs.

After her introduction to show business, Joni went to Calgary to study art at Sou-

thern Alberta Institute of Technology, but the call of music continued to haunt her, and soon she graduated to the classical guitar. Stints in Calgary and Edmonton coffeehouses helped to advance her singing career, and she developed a touchingly beautiful guitar style.

Joni, a striking, attractive blonde, and her tall, handsome spouse discussed their careers, the folk scene in general, and experiences they've encountered in their work, frankly, quietly, with charming candor and wit.

They have just completed a circuit involving two-week performances at coffeehouses in Winnipeg and Regina. They leave today for Ontario, where Joni will perform at the Mariposa Folk Festival, the annual showcase of Canadian folk talent, slated for August 5, 6 and 7 at Orillia, Ont.

The couple reminisced a bit about how they met just over a year ago, while Joni and Chuck were doing separate performances at The Penny Farthing in Toronto.

"It was a whirlwind courtship. I met Chuck, and 26 hours later, we decided to get married," Joni laughed.

He said he did not think their marriage had put any damper on Joni's creative ability.

"I think she's written her best material since we've been married," he said.

Joni writes most of her material herself. Some of it is so good that top-ranking American folk singer, Tom Rush, who records under the Elektra label, has included two of her compositions, "Urge For Going" and "The Circle Game", in his latest album.

The conversation turned to the position of folk music as it exists in 1966, three years after it hit its peak of popularity.

"I think most record sales depend on the tastes of young people, and these tastes are dictated, for the most part, by popular magazines and disc jockeys. Today folk music is being played down, and folk-rock is being pushed by magazines and disc jockeys alike," Joni commented.

She said when folk music was at its peak, most major magazines carried elaborate spreads on folk artists, but today most music articles

concentrate on Beatle-oriented music, and on performers such as the Byrds, or the Lovin' Spoonfuls.

But college students and groups of people who were introduced to the folk element, still find deep satisfaction from listening to and performing folk music, Joni said.

"There used to be a time when all different types of music were separate entities. Rock performers, jazz musicians, and blues artists didn't influence each other very much.

"Folk, I think, has broken down these barriers. Musicians are listening to and learning from each other's material," she said.

"Folk has brought back an awareness of good lyrics," she added.

Chuck said several folk performers were now experimenting with orchestral effects, to the horror of ethnic purists.

"Two very good examples are the Canadian folk artists, Ian and Sylvia. They had their roots in country and western music, but have added and developed their own style and sophistication. Some of their new folk-rock is exceptionally good," he said.

Much of Joni's material was inspired by her impressions of life on the prairie. The haunting lyrics of Urge For Going, she explained, stemmed from the effect the bitter western winter has on prairie residents, and their wish to escape the cold.

"Now the warriors of winter give a cold triumphant shout. And all that stays is dying, all that lives is getting said. See the geese in chevron flight, flapping and a'razing, so before the snow. They've got the urge for going, and they've got the wings to go . . ."

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Another song, "What Will You Give Me", describes in nostalgic terms the longing of a prairie native who is far away from home, in a moment of regret.

"What will you give me for one prairie sky. An amethyst sea with cloud galleons sailing by. The north-lights dancing on cold winter nights. All these precious possessions I'll sell for a price . . ."

The Mitchells both agreed Saskatoon and the Prairies contained much that was aesthetically beautiful, and Joni said she hopes to continue writing songs based on her Saskatchewan background, and her love of the flat western landscape.

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Nathan Cohen of the Toronto Daily Star has pointed his pudgy finger at the accumulated debts of the two groups: whether to saddle the new organization with them, whether each group should take care separately of its existing debts or wage a special joint drive to clean up the books.

The choice of a theatre is another problem on which the opponents cannot agree. With each passing day, the problem of finding and contracting actors for several months next year grows more critical.

So, unless there is a breakthrough shortly, Toronto seems destined to enter Canada's 100th anniversary celebration period without any local professional theatre. If some of our own Saskatchewan actors thought that Toronto was a Mecca with professional theatre blooming on every street corner, let them go back and read that last sentence again!

It's where we make it, kids. And from the looks of things, Toronto has split itself from the nave to the chape.

## Type-casting dogs Reynolds, Johnson

By BOB THOMAS

HOLLYWOOD (AP) — "Not until I went off to London and did Music Man did I convince anyone I could do something beside the boy-meister," said he.

"It was How the West Was Won and Molly Brown that did it for me," she said. "But I want to tell you something. It's not too bad to be type-cast young. Because after you've had that experience, you can handle the challenging roles and still look young doing them."

"I still have trouble with this baby-face of mine," said Johnson, who will be 59 next month and looks 35. "You know I've never been able to play a villain until now. I'm going to play a character called Minister on Batman."

The caretaker committee cannot decide what to do with the two groups: whether to saddle the new organization with them, whether each group should take care separately of its existing debts or wage a special joint drive to clean up the books.

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