

THE ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDE

JONI MITCHELL

UPDATED
DELUXE
EDITION

EVERY ALBUM
REVIEWED

CLASSIC
ENCOUNTERS,
REDISCOVERED

A Case Of You
JONI MITCHELL
THE FULL STORY

ARCHIVES
VOL 1:
THE VERDICT

HER 30
GREATEST
SONGS

THE 2020
COMEBACK

FROM THE MAKERS OF **UNCUT**

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Joni at 75: a birthday celebration at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, LA, November 7, 2018



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MISCELLANY

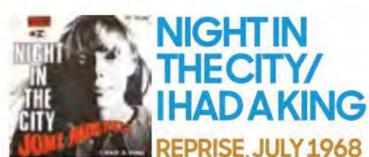
Notebooks out, Joni-ologists: we cast an eye over singles, DVDs, collaborations, collectables, those odd tunings and her other great passion: painting. **BY MARK BENTLEY**

SINGLES DISCOGRAPHY

CALL it the curse of the singer-songwriter. Rather like Van Morrison and Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell is a writer of hit songs, rather than a purveyor of hit singles. Many of her best known songs (“Both Sides, Now”, “Woodstock”, “The Circle Game”) were taken into the mainstream by other artists. So it is that her pop chart CV is surprisingly mediocre. Indeed, that 1996 compilation *Hits* may be optimistically named: over a 50-year career she’s racked up one solitary US Top 10 (“Help Me”) and nothing in the UK Top 20 since “Big Yellow Taxi” in 1970.

The following list of her singles reveals a series of rather contrarian choices. As a standalone single, “Both Sides, Now” languishes unissued; likewise there’s no “The Last Time I Saw Richard”. There are multiple singles where the B-side is more radio-friendly than the A-side. Still, what you get is a fascinating litany of great songs, unlikely mini-hits (“Come In From The Cold”, “Good Friends”) and the story of an ever-changing, ever-growing artist.

To reflect stronger commercial heft in her homeland, we’ve listed UK, US and Canadian chart placings where relevant.



NIGHT IN THE CITY / I HAD A KING

REPRISE, JULY 1968

UK highest chart position: Did not chart US: - Canada: -



CHELSEA MORNING / BOTH SIDES, NOW

REPRISE, AUGUST 1969

UK: - US: - Can: -



BIG YELLOW TAXI / WOODSTOCK

REPRISE, JAN 1970

UK: 11 US: 67 Can: 14



CAREY / THIS FLIGHT TONIGHT

REPRISE, AUGUST 1971

UK: - US 93 Can: 27



CALIFORNIA / A CASE OF YOU

REPRISE, NOVEMBER 1971

UK: Not issued

US: - Can: -



YOU TURN ME ON, I'M A RADIO / URGE FOR GOING

ASYLUM, NOVEMBER 1972

UK: - US: 25 Can: 10



COLD BLUE STEEL AND SWEET FIRE / BLONDE IN THE BLEACHERS

ASYLUM, MARCH 1971

UK: Not issued US: - Can: -



RAISED ON ROBBERY / COURT AND SPARK

ASYLUM, DECEMBER 1973

UK: Not issued

US: 65 Can: 51



HELP ME / JUST LIKE THIS TRAIN

ASYLUM, MARCH 1974

UK: - US: 7 Can: 6



FREE MAN IN PARIS / PEOPLES PARTIES

ASYLUM, JULY 1974

UK: - US: 22 Can: 16



BIG YELLOW TAXI (LIVE) / RAINY NIGHT HOUSE

ASYLUM, JAN 1975

UK: - US: 24 Can: 54



IN FRANCE THEY KISS ON MAIN STREET / BOHO DANCE

ASYLUM, FEB 1976

UK: - US: 66 Can: 19



COYOTE / BLUE MOON HOTEL

ASYLUM, FEB 1977

UK: - US: -

Can: 79



OFF NIGHT BACKSTREET / JERICO

ASYLUM, FEB 1978

UK only issue: -



JERICO / DREAMLAND

ASYLUM, FEB 1978

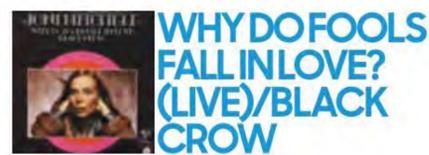
US only: -



THE DRY CLEANER FROM DES MOINES / GOD MUST BE A BOOGIEMAN

ASYLUM, JAN 1979

UK: - US: -



WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE? (LIVE) / BLACK CROW

ASYLUM, OCTOBER 1980

UK: - US: -



(YOU'RE SO SQUARE) BABY I DON'T CARE / LOVE

ASYLUM, NOVEMBER 1982

UK: - US: 47



BE COOL / UNDERNEATH THE STREETLIGHT

ASYLUM, FEB 1983

US: -



CHINESE CAFÉ / LADIES MAN

ASYLUM, FEB 1983

UK: - US: -



GOOD FRIENDS / SMOKIN' (EMPTY, TRY ANOTHER)

ASYLUM, NOVEMBER 1985 US: 85



SHINY TOYS / THREE GREAT STIMULANTS

ASYLUM, APRIL 1986

UK: - US: - Can: -



MY SECRET PLACE / LAKOTA

ASYLUM, MAY 1988

UK: - US: - Can: 44



COME IN FROM THE COLD / RAY'S DAD'S CADILLAC

ASYLUM, JULY 1991

UK: - US: - Can: 27



HOW DO YOU STOP / THE SIRE OF SORROW / MOON AT THE WINDOW

REPRISE, NOVEMBER 1994

UK: - US: - Can: 56



Picture this: Joni with her painting *Malibu Fire*, featuring then-husband Larry Klein, Rotunda Gallery, London, 1990

SHADOWS AND LIGHT

Joni's guitar tunings

LIKE kindred spirits David Crosby and Neil Young, Joni has long used the trick of alternate guitar tunings when composing – that is, moving away from the standard guitar tuning of EADGBE. Many of her songs were written in non-standard tunings, and rather than finger complex chords she would often simply ‘barre’ chords with one finger, on one fret. If you have a guitar and an hour or two spare, it’s well worth exploring her approach. While alternate tunings are a folkie’s trick, in Joni’s hands the effect is distinctly jazzy – and she often used the same tuning more than once, like so:

CGDFBbd – “Edith And The Kingpin”, “Furry Sings The Blues”, “Jericho”, “Harry’s House”

DADF#AD – “Free Man In Paris”, “Big Yellow Taxi”, “Both Sides Now”

DGBGBD – “Morning Morgantown”, “The Circle Game”, “Little Green”



Getting in tune: Joni poses for *Vogue* magazine, 1968

LADY OF THE CANVAS

A brief guide to the art of Joni Mitchell

“PAINTING is a completely different mental process,” Joni told *The New York Times* in 2000. “It completely clears my mind until I get to the point where I have no thoughts. I get the same charge from juxtaposition of colours as I do from juxtaposition of chords.”

You know her painting style intimately, and probably better than you know many 20th-century painters... Joni Mitchell’s art graces many of her albums, from *Song To A Seagull* via *Clouds*, *Ladies Of The Canyon* to *Hissing...*, *Mingus* and *Turbulent Indigo*. The cover to CSN’s *So Far*? That’s a Joni original too, and you’ve probably already heard her famous quote – “I’m a painter first, and a musician second.”

A second, lesser-heard soundbite is more illuminating: “I have always thought of myself as a painter derailed by circumstance,” she said in 2000. Her formal art training at an art school in Calgary, Alberta, lasted only one year, and yet it is circumstance – her status as a world-famous musician – that allowed her access to the subjects that have come to define her style. Her impressive portfolio includes striking, confident portraits of her stellar contemporaries and collaborators, including Graham Nash, Bob Dylan and a stunning neoclassical oil study of Miles Davis, admired by the subject, who would apparently often drop in to chat. (“[Miles] would talk painting, but never music.”) She’s exhibited, too. Her 2000 show at the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, Canada, attracted more than 1,000 visitors a day, and earned her the respect of the notoriously closed-ranks art world. Canadian critic Robert Enright described her work at the time as “a worldly version of a naïve artist, indifferent to art trends and the positioning that has so much to do with contemporary art”. We think that sounds like a compliment.

To get a sense of her range, and the wide variety of styles and media she has worked with, your best port of call is the brilliant official website, jonimitchell.com. As well as providing well-written commentary on many pieces, this showcases some of her artwork dating back to her post-war childhood.

TURN HER ON: SHE'S ON VIDEO

...well, on DVD and Blu-ray at least.
A visual history of Joni Mitchell

WHILE you can happily waste hours on YouTube, picking through grainy footage of our heroine, Joni Mitchell is not well represented by official video product. Her early years are particularly ill-served. There's only a handful of DVD releases out there, but the good news is they are widely available, and can be snapped up cheap. Here's our pick:

THE LAST WALTZ (1976)
Another excuse to buy/dig out the greatest rock movie ever, if only to put Joni in the context of the musicians around her. She features alongside Bob, Van, Neil and more at The Band's farewell gig at San Francisco's Winterland Ballroom on Thanksgiving Day, 1976. Her three solo spots – "Coyote", "Shadows And Light" and "Furry Sings The Blues" (available in full glory on the recent 40th Anniversary edition) – are stunning.

MICHAEL MONTFORT/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

SHADOWS AND LIGHT (1979)
Unquestionably the best live document of Joni at her questing, jazzist peak, this live DVD (issued in 2004 but still out there) is a must-buy. The highlights are many, framed by the telepathic interplay between Joni and the shit-hot musicians in her band (Jaco Pastorius and Pat Metheny in particular are incredible to watch). It does get pretentious, though: ice skating and artful old footage of James Dean make unwelcome appearances, and rather puncture the musical momentum.

REFUGE OF THE ROADS (1983)
A slight 60-minute document of Joni's early-'80s explorations, reissued on DVD in 2008. Very much of its time, you get live-in-the-studio footage, artfully lit and delivered without fuss, alongside interview excerpts. Some on-the-road Super-8-style material adds a sense of

intimacy. The great, intense version of "For Free" is a highlight.

JONI MITCHELL: A LIFESTORY – WOMAN OF HEART AND MIND (2003)
This 120-minute exploration of her story from coffee-bar folkie and beyond is a touch hagiographical, but it's still more than worth your while as a go-to primer. Well paced, featuring tantalising snippets of vintage footage, including a 1970 BBC2 special, and talking heads David Crosby, James Taylor and Herbie Hancock, it paints a great picture of her development as an artist and musician. These are broad strokes, though – don't expect in-depth analysis of every album.

PAINTING WITH WORDS AND MUSIC (2004)
This 1998 concert collects 19 tracks for a brilliant come-one, come-all celebration of her career. Surrounded by her artwork, and in front of a small, select audience, Joni holds court and sparks in stellar fashion – although her vocals can be more scratchy than smooth and smoky. Larry Klein marshals a great band; "The Magdalene Laundries" and "Woodstock" are beautiful.

A CASE OF YOU!

A brief guide to Joni rarities and collectables.
BY MARK BENTLEY

THE one we all want, of course, is **Blue**. Like *Astral Weeks*, *Forever Changes* et al, Joni's fourth LP is a sanctified classic, acknowledged as a must-have for serious record collectors. Finding a copy isn't a problem. It's finding *the* copy. As the discognoscenti put it, finding a 'time machine' version is the holy grail item. One still-sealed version, never disturbed from its plastic shrinkwrap, sold for £300+ in 2018. Down the scale a bit, a very fine first vinyl US 'Santa Maria' pressing, with textured sleeve, deep indigo inner and Blue Note-cool cover photo, will set you back \$60+. Superb UK copies can make similar amounts, and the prized original Japanese version, with the distinctive vertical paper 'obi' strip intact, is priced around \$100+. Not – by the standard of some original vinyl records these days – ridiculously expensive. Why? Joni's stuff isn't as slavishly sought after as The Beatles, the Stones or Dylan. Her collector fan base is probably more like those of

Joni (fourth from left) joins a stellar cast on stage for The Band's 1976 Winterland Ballroom show in San Francisco, as seen in Martin Scorsese's *The Last Waltz*



Steely Dan or her beloved jazz artists, where the music – and the quality of the audio – is far more important than some label error or sleeve misprint.

Joni's an audiophile favourite. Her music has always been expertly recorded and meticulously produced. And so it is that some specialist repressings of old albums are actually more sought after than the originals themselves. *Blue*, *Hissing...* and *Court And Spark* regularly turn up on "best-sounding albums of all time" forums. And these folk want the very finest-sounding products, to play on their very fine-sounding equipment.

It's the reason why the mail-order-only 1983 **Nimbus Supercut** audiophile pressing of *Hissing...* can make £150+ – which is probably 10 times the value of a 1975 original. It's the reason a sealed 180gm 2007 Rhino remaster of *Blue* is regularly listed for sale at \$100+. And it's the logic behind the highest-priced Joni collectables out there: boxset **Clarity Test Pressings** of *Blue* and *Court And Spark*, from the mid-2000s. These sets comprised four single-sided discs, to be played at 45rpm, and on heavyweight 200gm vinyl. Only 40 of each were made, and they were never officially released. They can top \$1,000. The formula is simple: rarity plus quality equals price.

The fact that Joni's back catalogue has been well served by reissues and good-quality repressings has kept the price of originals affordable, particularly that stunning run of '70s stuff. Even from premium retailers you can pick up excellent-condition original UK copies of, say, **For The Roses** or **Ladies Of The Canyon** for £25 or so. A near-mint-condition **Hejira** will push £20, and there are "mint unplayed" originals of **Mingus** available widely for half that. Eighties stuff remains cheapish, and interestingly – with '90s vinyl very much a *thing* – her most valuable original LP pressing is probably 1991's **Night Ride Home**, on Geffen. You'll need at least £75 to catch that.

She's not known as a singles artist, so 7" s make good collectables, too. You can score the UK 45rpm of "**Chelsea Morning**" for £15, while



Woman in black: duetting on *The Johnny Cash Show*, June 1969



Artefacts: recently rediscovered Mitchell originals *Peacock* and *Birds In A Fantasy Landscape*

debut single, 1968's "**Night In The City**", on the steamboat Reprise label, is a lovely £20+ item. (Look out for the French versions, with stunning picture sleeves, which can make £40.)

As always, promo or authenticated autographed versions of all her output will go much, much higher. But if you're in the market for a serious Joni collectable, have you thought about artwork? As Joni herself has said: "I'm a painter first, and a musician second..." Prints are widely available through a number of online galleries and sources, and official website jonimitchell.com regales fans with an exclusive storefront, a searchable archive, and even links to auction listings on third-party sites. Failing that, you could always put one of those beautiful LP covers in a frame...

OTHER SIDES NOW

Joni the collaborator

FROM duetting with Johnny Cash on "Long Black Veil" on TV in 1969 to "Tears Are Not Enough" – the Canadian Allstars' contribution to the 1985 *We Are The World* benefit album – Joni has appeared on some diverse releases. We reckon these are the best Joni 'diaspora' – sundry recordings where she features strongly and that are certainly worth seeking out...



DAVID CROSBY: IF I COULD ONLY REMEMBER MY NAME (1971)

A gloriously airy, meditative, endlessly inventive record, featuring Young, Stills, Jerry Garcia, Jefferson Airplane and more. As a bonus, you get Joni's crystalline backing vocals on two key tracks: "Laughing" and "What Are Their Names".



JAMES TAYLOR: MUD SLIDE SLIM AND THE BLUE HORIZON (1971)

A commercial juggernaut, Taylor's third album was the apogee of the radio-friendly singer-songwriter movement. Alongside The Memphis Horns, you'll find Joni on "Long Ago And Far Away", "Love Has Brought Me Around" and the standard "You've Got A Friend". The Carole King connection goes further: Joni also appears on "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?", as heard on *Tapestry*.



JIMMY WEBB: LETTERS (1972), LAND'S END (1974)

The songwriter's songwriter, Jimmy Webb recorded a clutch of precious solo albums, and Joni features on these two mid-'70s efforts, on "Simile" and "Feet In

The Sunshine". Via her Asylum label connections, Joni also appears on a long-lost effort from the same period. Rod Taylor's self-titled album, released in 1973, stars Bonnie Bramlett, Ry Cooder, Jesse Ed Davis, Andrew Gold and Joni, on backing vocals on "Making A Way" and "Something Old".



ERIC ANDERSEN: BE TRUE TO YOU (1975)

Amid drop-in guest appearances on Graham Nash's *Wild Tales*, Jackson Browne's *For Everyman* and Joan Baez's *Gracias A La Vida*, Joni collaborated on two albums with this well-connected Greenwich Village songwriter, whose songs had been recorded by Dylan and Johnny Cash. She's featured on no less than five tracks here, of comfortable, introspective folk.



INDIO: BIG HARVEST (1989)

Indio is one Gordon Peterson, a native of Hamilton, Ontario, whose environmentally conscious 1989 album was fired by a Top 10 Canadian hit ("Hard Sun"). Joni appears on three tracks: "Big Harvest", "Hard Sun" and "My Eyes". After the album's release, Peterson quit the music business for good, and this became a serious collector's item.



SHAWN COLVIN: FAT CITY (1992)

Colvin's stunning second album of callus-hard Americana was co-produced by Larry Klein, and its cast list of musicians is incredible: Booker T Jones, Bruce Hornsby, Richard Thompson, Jim Keltner, David Lindley and the Hendrix of the banjo, Bela Fleck. Consistently strong throughout, it features Joni on the delicious "Object Of My Affection", playing percussion...



HERBIE HANCOCK: RIVER: THE JONI LETTERS (2007)

Friends and collaborators since *Mingus*, Joni and Herbie go way back. First, check out *Gershwin's World* (1998), the jazz maestro's take on the George and Ira songbook, where Joni contributes vocals to "Summertime" and "The Man I Love". Then drink deep on this sumptuous record, a love letter to Joni's compositional skills. Guest vocalists include Norah Jones, Tina Turner and Leonard Cohen. Joni takes vocal duties herself on "Tea Leaf Prophecy".