

A CHANGED JONI MITCHELL

ROCK MUSIC
by LUIS FELIU

DON JUAN'S RECKLESS DAUGHTER. Joni Mitchell, Asylum Records, distributed by WEA.

THE music of Roberta Joan Anderson (alias Joni Mitchell) has always been marked by continual change. Progression has been the key which has kept her music invigorating and interesting.

As with her previous album, "Hejira", this double LP shows a progression in the form of a strong fusion of folk and jazz, with a leaning in this one for Brazilian or Latin-American jazz. I have listened to this one now quite a number of times in the past two weeks but it will probably take much, much longer before I can properly understand it or "get into it", let alone define it.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that the music is of a very high standard. The majority of the people living in my house are Joni Mitchell devotees and their general opinion is that they prefer some of her earlier works. This album is not in the least commercial even though this artist is established. She is not going to sell any more albums and may probably lose a few of her folkier fans, not that it would concern her, she does as she pleases.

To analyse this album, lyrics and all, with the little time I have listened to it

would be too difficult (excuse me). The real impression I had was the sound, crisp and clear. Excellent mixing credit goes to the mixers, Steve Katz and Harris Lewy.

"Don Juan's Reckless Daughter" has, in most parts, depth and intensity, created by dramatic interludes of interwoven percussion and multi-layering. Some familiar musicians, namely premier percussionist Airto Moreira, bassist Jaco Pastorius (Weather Report), drummer John Guerin, sax-player Wayne Shorter, and vocalist Chaka Khan, among others, contribute to the refined core of the album.

The fascinating chemistry which jazz has is that it can accommodate any other form of music and just about do anything with it. Miss Mitchell finds herself just as much at home with these predominantly jazz musicians as she did with the L.A. Express or when solo.

The album begins with an overture, "Cotton Avenue", about being young and dreaming of going off to the exciting, lively part of town to dance. "Talk to Me", one of my favourites, is an anguished introspec-

part of town to dance. "Talk to Me", one of my favourites, is an anguished intropection, yet light and not serious. A new version of "Jericho" closes side one. Throughout that side and on most of the other tracks, a prominent sound is that of Pastorius's fretless bass, which holds the bottom line. His punchy bass lines would easily catch the attention of a musician doing a solo.

Side two is taken up by the one track,

"Pappin' Plains", which did not impress Joni here; she plays the piano as she spins images of Americana with the help of an orchestra. Side three opens with "Ours and Marlena", old-style Joni, about affluent people who visit Miami for body surgery. "The Tenth World" is a high-energy percussion instrumental featuring Manolo Badrena on lead chant, coffee cans and congas, apart from Airto on a Surdo or bass drum, Pastorius on bongos, and others using different percussive instruments or backing vocals; sends you right up the Amazon. "Dreamland" also has a catchy rhythm-beat with a Latin-American feel.

Side four opens with the title track, a more accessible tune with various and repeated allusions to snakes and eagles, in parts or in whole (wings, scales, "split-tongued", feathers, serpents, talon etc). These images crop up in other songs on the album. The lyrics are interesting and give a hint to Joni's alleged split personality: "The eagle and the serpent are at war in me / The Serpent fighting for blind desire / The eagle for clarity". Really displays her fine talent as a poet. The last two tracks, "Off Night Backstreet" and "The Silk Veils of Ardor" are quieter tunes dealing with receiving and giving love.

"Don Juan's Reckless Daughter", I'm sure, has plenty to offer; it may take a while to absorb, but the satisfaction is worth it.

