

Joni Mitchell tries change of pace

by DON SHEWEY

Ever since the first unimpressive listening, I've liked Joni Mitchell's new album *Court and Spark* (Asylum Records) more every time I play it. There's less and less of the recognizable style of her early albums; up through *Blue* Joni Mitchell's format was based almost totally on her beautiful and lyrical folk-type songs. For *the Roses* was more poetry than lyrics and introduced a lot of tasteful strings and woodwinds, which was pretty weird for Joni Mitchell.

Now on *Court and Spark* she's got horns and jazz and (if you can believe it) rock and roll ("Raised on Robbery" is maybe the best song on the album with a tight rock band — with Robbie Robertson on guitar—crazy harmonies, and a superloose vocal by Joni). Once the surface surprises have worn off, most of the cuts emerge as fine exhibitions of a new, musically-expanding Joni Mitchell.

Most of the best songs ("Help Me," "Free Man in Paris," "Car on a Hill," "Peo-

ple's Parties") make it because of the well-integrated composition and effective use of both words and music, which is new for Joni. It doesn't always work — despite the fine sax at the end of "Trouble Child," it still seems like a throwaway cut, and "The Same Situation" and "Court and Spark" are also nearly forgettable, but these are easily overcome by the rest of the album, which will hopefully bring Joni out of the for-folkies-only cate-

gory.

His new album *Saints and Sinners* finds Johnny Winter in fine shape; an outstanding choice of songs suits Winter's fiery guitar style well. He tears through both oldies like "Riot in Cellblock No. 9" and Chuck Berry's "Thirty Days" and blues like "Blinded by Love" with equal skill. He's always done good things with old Stones numbers and "Stray Cat Blues" included here is no exception.

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