

NEW RECORDING

TAMING THE TIGER

Joni Mitchell

Reprise

★★★

The guy sitting next to me nodded off when Joni Mitchell played some of these songs at Vancouver's GM Place, during her tour with Bob Dylan and Van Morrison in the summer. After listening to the album, however, I suspect his sleepiness might have had more to do with the setting than with the songs themselves. What seemed like jazz-fusion noodling in a hockey arena seems shimmering and beautiful in the more intimate confines of a living room.

Mitchell, who produced the record herself, builds a delicate spider web of guitar-synth and keyboards and invites sax player Wayne Shorter and steel guitarist Greg Leisz to decorate it with dancing snippets of melody and haunting grace notes.

While the title track offers a sly swipe at current pop and *No Apologies* touches on corruption and brutality at home and abroad, most of the songs are sharp-tongued, funny musings about love and lust in middle age.

Mitchell's new beau, Saskatoon songwriter Don Freed, contributes lyrics to one song, *The Crazy Cries of Love*, and seems to be the subject of several others. He's undoubtedly the Donald mentioned in the delightfully tart *Face Lift*, in which Mitchell recalls being chewed out by her mother for coming home to Saskatoon with Freed: "She said, 'Did you come home to disgrace us!' / I said, 'Why is this joy not allowed?' / For God's sake! / I'm middle-aged, Mama! / And time moves swift."

Swift though time may be, *Taming the Tiger* finds Mitchell moving along with it gracefully and with humour. With all respect for the snoring gentleman in the next seat, it's anything but a snooze.

— Chris Dafoe

MITCHELL MOMENTS

Born: Roberta Joan Anderson, Nov. 7, 1943, Fort McLeod, Alta.

Education: Alberta College of Art, Calgary (1963-64).

Current home: Los Angeles.

Marriages: To singer Chuck Mitchell, 1965 (divorced, 1967); to bassist/producer Larry Klein, 1982 (divorced, 1994).

Children: One daughter (with photographer Bradley MacMath), Kilauren Gibb of Toronto, born 1965.

Current boyfriend: Saskatoon singer/songwriter Don Freed.

Discography: *Joni Mitchell* (1968), *Clouds* (1969), *Ladies of the Canyon* (1970), *Blue* (1971), *For the Roses* (1972), *Court and Spark* (1974), *Miles of Aisles* (1974), *The Hissing of Summer Lawns* (1975), *Hejira* (1976), *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter* (1977), *Mingus* (1979), *Shadows and Light* (1979), *Wild Things Run Fast* (1982), *Dog Eat Dog* (1985), *Chalk Mark in a Rain Storm* (1988), *Night Ride Home* (1991), *Turbulent Indigo* (1994), *Hits* (1996), *Misses* (1996), *Taming the Tiger* (1998).
