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## A singer who is . . .

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**JONI MITCHELL** by Leonore Fleischer (Flash Books, 79 pages, \$3.95) Reviewed By Bill Lindsay.

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This magazine-style biography of Canadian songstress Joni Mitchell skims across the eddies of her life, loves and music in a breezy portrait showing the relationships between her personal experiences and resulting commercial product.

Songs which fans consider masterpieces gain added meaning when portrayed in the context of her rise from obscurity to stardom. Famous lovers such as James Taylor, Graham Nash and Leonard Cohen are revealed as figures who have inspired or become characters in many of her compositions.

Particularly relevant to Albertans is the evidence that Mitchell's birth in Fort Macleod and growing years in Calgary (as a tot named Joan Anderson and later as a short-term student at Alberta College of Art), North Battleford and Saskatoon, Sask., nurtured the Prairie purity of form and self-taught musical style which has drawn worldwide acclaim and inspired other musicians to record her work. The simple honesty of her upbringing bred a depth of emotional integrity and strength which Mitchell has turned into gold by distilling it for consumption by big-city dwellers from New York to Rome.

Largely culled from previously-published interviews and articles, the text provides a handy compilation of data for Mitchell fans and still manages to provide a few insights into where Joni Mitchell came from, how she evolved and why she is so successful.