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once it's over you can't remember a single word or note of it. So you play it again. And again and again and again, hoping, *grasping* for something to stick in your head so you can hum it at work or something, *but it never does!* It's Teflon music, mall-rock to walk in time to just like you're in a movie, except I can *guarantee* you that no matter *how* little you have going on, your life is like *Marquis Gras* compared to the comically paltry, smallfry ideas floating through "Silver Lining." Nils says it best in the middle of the title song: "Each day I'm more amazed, at what a funky haze I live in."

Elvis Costello must be sweating hollow-points.
—Corey Greenberg

JONI MITCHELL: *Night Ride Home*

Geffen GEF/GEFD 24302 (LP/CD). Dan Marnien, Henry Lewy, engs.; Joni Mitchell, Larry Klein, prods. AAA/AAD. TT: 51:43

I know what you're thinking: "Hey, look, Joni Mitchell's so washed up they got the medieval music guy to review her record!" Listen, just because I turn 40 in two days doesn't mean I'm not up to date. I listen to Ferron and Phranc and the Bodeans and the Smithereens and the Replacements and K.T. and k.d. and—I mean, I'm so hip I'm arthritic. So I really dug it when Joni said a couple years ago, "You can't just say, 'I only like the music of the '60s,' and fogey out." Me "fogey out"? No way, lady. The problem was that you were looking for the sound of today in the sterile pop garbage and studio manipulations of Top 40. Thomas Dolby? Willie Nelson? Cut me a break. Maybe the real problem was you were afraid of growing old; well so, by God, am I.

This is the best Joni Mitchell album in a very long time; I heard it for the first time driving to work, and I thought, "My God, it's the real Joni Mitchell." It's as if somewhere between the wretched *Chalk Mark in a Rainstorm* and this release, Mitchell had a good long cleansing laugh at herself, and came to grips with age and aging, with love and politics. The writing on *Night Ride Home* regains the intimate point of view that always characterized the best of Joni Mitchell's work; it's also nearly as unself-consciously poetic as those first miraculous songs of her early period. It's about freedom, God, and the passage of time; it's gently melancholic, like Ray Bradbury when he was good. In an age of instant co-optation, it's the product of a fiercely independent spirit. It's also music for grownups, pure and simple.

Some brief ups and downs: the title track is the only real upbeat tune on the record and I like it, even if the imitation crickets are a drag. "Cherokee Louise" is a nice understated tale of childhood friendship that hides an implied

subtext of abuse and revenge. "Slouching Towards Bethlehem" is Yeats's "Second Coming" with an effective Mitchell setting, while "The Only Joy in Town" is a fascinating update of "Carey" (from her *Blue* period). I didn't much like "Ray's Dad's Cadillac"—I mean, c'mon lady, high school was 30 years ago, and who cares anyway? "Nothing Can Be Done" (music by Larry Klein) did nothing for me either, but if you can listen to the opening riff of "Two Grey Rooms," with Joni back on a real piano for the first time in who knows how long, without getting a chill down your spine, you're probably some kind of space alien.

Sound is better than any of Joni's recent releases; arrangements are mostly spare and effective, and while there's still too much processing, it's maybe half of what we've gotten accustomed to of late. The LP is warmer and better than the CD, and you'll probably like it better if you can find it. Fat chance. Anyhow, this is a genuine Joni Mitchell record, and it just don't get better than that. —Les Berkley

THE TEXAS TORNADOS

Reprise 9 26472-2 (CD only). Bill Halverson y Los Texas Tornados, prods. DDD. TT: 31:19

DIOS MÍO! Los Texas Tornados esta un badass Tex-Mex conjunto y rock'n'roll banda *aye chee wab wab!* Consista de Doug Sahm, Freddy Fender, Augie Meyers, y Flaco Jimenez, cuatro de los muy formidable dudes en la Tejas historia música. "Los Texas Tornados" esta un ejemplo primero de qué los disco compañía weasels cooking up una "Tejano Grupo Supremo" por los dineros giganticos; ¿pero who cares cuando la musica esta este *matador*? ¡Los weasels a Warner Hermanos, GRACIAS!

Los Texas Tornados esta un clásico de la musica funda en los border towns de Tijuana, Nogales, y Nuevo Laredo; parte conjunto, parte Spanish canciones de amor, parte Gulf Coast r&b, parte garage rock, Tex-Mex esta *no* como los green ink pens, anillos de Navcom, o los cryosurgery. ¡Creo que estoy *enfermo!* ¡Tex-Mex esta como SEXO! El folleto hasta incluía una lista de los "Gringo Lingo": "Besos" = kisses; "Cerveza" = beer; "Bonita" = pretty; "Chavala" = good-looking Mexican girl; "Texanita" = little girl from Texas; "Qué Paso" = what's happenin'; "Dinero" = money; "Pantalones" = pants. ¡Tengo hambre!

Doug Sahm y Augie Meyers forma El Sir Douglas Quintet en los '60s tempranos, y recuerda los smash hits "She's About A Mover" y "Mendocino"; Meyers los acompañaba con su Vox Continental órgano esta una de los sonidos frios en historica musica, solo-mano definira la palabra "Cheesy." Freddy Fender esta quizá el más célebre de los Tornados, a causa