

Gold is also the color of her voice

By PAUL ENNIS

JONI MITCHELL has been at the Riverboat before, singing songs of lyric imagery that soar with colors and play in carefree joyousness around the freshness of your mind.

And as the people came, the engagements grew longer. Songs like Circle Game and Urge For Going were reprinted in folk magazines. She was whimsical (The Wizard of Is) and fanciful (Blue on Blue), on-stage, innocent and naive. Her voice ranged from smooth clear contralto to breathy soprano.

Listen to these lyrics from Come To The Sunshine, written more than a year ago:

"Now comes the morning wet with the kiss of evening

"Shadows slip skulking away spectrums and rainbows and day

"I never saw a sky so free never so blue

"Morning with mystic pagantry unveils a time for sharing love with you

"Come to the sunshine share in the quiet of knowing

"No need for telling you sometimes when all the answers are so plainly showing."

Last night, and at Newport recently, she sang new songs as well. Even better. Catch the lyric in From Both Sides Now:

"But now it's just another show

"And if you care don't let them know

"It's love's illusions I recall

"I really don't know love at all."

Her voice is richer, guttier, more that of a woman than wide-eyed girl. She grips the odd lyric coquettishly, coying with words here, feeling them strongly, sharply there.

The scope of her songwriting has broadened, matured. Her relationship to life has grown more complex, her public expression of it more varied.

Songs like Where I Stand (which shows her musical maturity at its best), Tinsel Flower Lady (interior rhyme and surprisingly fine interior linear cuts) and Wait For Me show off this new side. Others like Dr. Junk The Dentist Man, Chelsea Morning and Michael From Mountains are more closely related to her older material.

Along with the many new songs written in the last few months has come greater concern for the ways of the older ones and greater control of her vocal range. It is a combination rare and not to be missed.

She's being held over at the Riverboat until her appearance at Mariposa in 10 days, following which she leaves for London and a British singing tour, where no doubt her voice will fall as golden as her hair.



Julian Havashi, Telegram

● JONI MITCHELL

DAVE LOUNSON