

RECORDS

by Robin Mackie

Most of the established girl singers have an important songwriter tucked in their back-pockets (as it were)—Tony Hatch for Sandie Shaw, Clive Westlake for Dusty Springfield and so on.

A girl singer-songwriter is a great rarity, and Joni Mitchell is without doubt the best

As a singer, she has a perfect technique and diction, but unlike Joan Baez, she does not let technical perfection rid the singing of conviction and emotion, and above all she never sounds boring. Her second LP **"Clouds"** (Reprise) utilises double-tracking, to make the album sound even better in stereo, but her voice stands on its own without embellishments, and one track is unaccompanied.

For dustmen on strike, two

of the best numbers are also released by Reprise as a single, the bright and cheerful **"Chelsea Morning"** and the contrasting **"Both Sides Now"**, her best known song, with a typical theme of disillusion.

Country Joe and the Fish range from the brilliant to the embarrassingly bad on most of their LPs, and the new issue, **"Here We Are Again"** (Vanguard) contains much the same mixture.

The re-formed group pos-

sesses only two original members. Joe himself and Barry Melton, an excellent guitarist and very bad songwriter. Their new sound is much more gentle with politics and satire left out—rather a shame.

There are two notable highlights—**"Crystal Blues"** is the old-style Fish at their best, while **"Here I Go Again"**, a mellow, relaxed, rolling song presents the new style to its best advantage.

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