

Records

Joni Mitchell. Ladies of the Canyon, Reprise RS6376.

Joni Mitchell's third album is personal, sophisticated and professional and at times a little boring.

While each song on the album is well written, the total impression is sameness. Of the dozen different selections, eight are in the same tempo, slow.

For those unfamiliar with Miss Mitchell's style, her voice, while it lacks the lyrical roundness of Joan Baez or the gusty power of Laura Nyro, has a light but solid quality. At times she sings almost out of her range, and an almost-country style yodel is occasionally thrown in. Her articulation is perfect. All the lyrics are printed on the album cover, but they are hardly necessary.

Personal album

Most certainly the album is personal, and is an expression of Joni Mitchell's personality. All the songs were written and arranged by her. The lyrics are concerned for the most part with personal and inter-personal sentiments. She even plays her own piano and guitar accompaniments.

And Miss Mitchell is certainly professional. She very adeptly uses other accompanying instruments and additional vocal support without coming off as an over-produced Los Angeles record company mish-mash.

In the song, "For Free," cello is integrated with guitar and a short but very good clarinet lick played by Paul Horn. At other times, flutes and baritone sax are also used.

Joni's piano playing reminds one of Nyro especially in the song, "The Arrangement." Coincidentally, the piano accompaniment to "Rainy Night House," resembles the "Let It Be,"—"Bridge Over Troubled Waters," style in vogue presently.

Engaging songs

The songs themselves, all of them, are quite complex and engaging. That is when they are considered separately, one at a time. It is their total effect that is deadening.

The opening song is a haunting, but cheery tune, "Morning Morgantown," written in a minor mode. A light picking style of guitar is used as accompaniment. Mitchell's almost yodel is heard near the end of the song. The rest of the side is practically a sea of slowness, with but one really outstanding song, "The Arrangement." The title song, "Ladies of the Canyon," picks up the tempo some, but isn't enough to change the general impression of all the songs being the same.

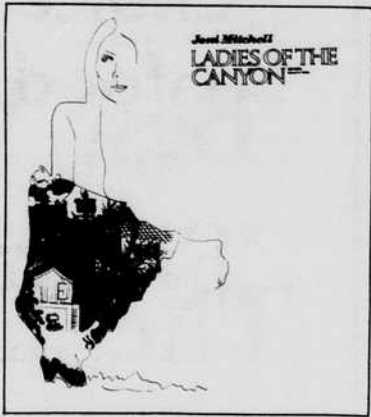
This slow-sameness syndrome continues for the first three songs on the second side. Finally a salvation comes in the last three songs. Beginning with the pro-ecology song "Big Yellow Taxi," the album again becomes interesting. The tune is happy, airy and unlike anything else on the album. At the end of the song Joni reaches for a low note which she doesn't quite hit. She laughs unpretentiously, adding a spark of spontaneity that the album needed.

Following "Taxi" is Joni Mitchell's version of "Woodstock." She wrote the song and in her rendition, the spirit of Neo-Eden is presented much better than in Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young's rock style. The final song is "The Circle Game." A group of singers called "The Lookout Mountain United Downstairs Choir" join Mitchell leaving the song a community come-together feeling.

The last quarter of the album plus the two outstanding songs, "Morning Morgantown," and "The Arrangement," makes the album very worthwhile and enjoyable.

Understand, all the songs are excellent and enjoyable. It is just a little hard to take more than one or two at a sitting. They could lull one to sleep.

—Matt McCormack



Northwest poet reading today at University

Marvin Bell, the last of three young poets to give readings in the 1969-70 Northwest Poetry Circuit, will give a reading of his work at the University today. Scheduled for 4 p.m., Bell's appearance is part of a tour of ten northwest colleges and universities.

The Northwest Poetry Circuit is an organization formed under the aegis of the Academy of American Poets. Each academic year reading engagements for three young established but relatively unknown poets are arranged and administered at northwest colleges and universities by the Continuing Education Division of the Oregon State System of Higher Education.

Bell, who is currently poetry editor of The Iowa Review, has given readings of his work at colleges and universities across the country. His poetry has been published in numerous literary reviews and magazines, and in thirteen anthologies, including The Major Young Poets, America's War Poetry, and Where is Vietnam? He has published four books of his own works, and in 1969 received the Lamont Award given by the Academy of American Poets for his book, A Probable Volume of Dreams.

Olympic film shown tonight

"Olympia: Festival of the People," will be shown at 7 and 9 tonight, under the sponsorship of the German department.

"Olympia," the second of Leni Riefenstahl's documentaries, and in the style of his "Triumph of the Will," is about the 1936 Olympics, in which Jesse Owens took part for the United States.

Olympia has been acclaimed as a textbook on the uses of photography, editing and music in film. It is the most expensive film ever made of the Olympics, and was released in 1937 after a year of editing.

The two showings are in 150 Science, admission is 75 cents.

Bartel designated new English head

Roland Bartel was named new head of the English department of the University in an announcement Wednesday by Charles Duncan, dean of faculties.

Bartel, who has been acting department head for the past two years, has been teaching in the English department since 1951.

A specialist in English Romanticism, Bartel has written two books and several articles on the subject. Bartel was formerly assistant dean of the College of Liberal Arts and later acting associate dean, a post he resigned in 1964.

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