

Judy Collins Concert

Ken Fireman

1972

Judy Collins' Masonic Auditorium concert on December 10th, provided one of the most refreshing musical experiences of the year. No massive ego-trips, no carefully choreographed onstage "chaos"; just lots of talent, thoughtful material, and an evening of good music.

A Judy Collins concert is a virtuoso performance. Collins displays her talents on piano, guitar and autoharp, and brings all of them off well. But what dominates the evening is her voice; she is perhaps the clearest, most compelling singer around today.

Collins also surrounds herself with excellent back-up musicians, who blend well with her own talents.

But it is Collins herself who clearly dominates. She has been around for a while—over a decade—and her artistic maturity permits her to blend many different musical currents into a coherent performance.

For example, Collins can move from the country simplicity of an Ian Tyson song ("Some Day Soon") to the lyrical urbanity of a Joni Mitchell tune ("Both Sides Now") without skipping a beat. It is the impact of her compelling vocal talents which ties things together.

Collins' selection of material reflects her diverse background. In her appearance here, she sang a powerful song about the Attica prison revolt (written by Tom Paxton, another veteran from the folkie-ethnic years), and a montage of songs and poems of an anti-war theme by Bertolt Brecht and Jacques Brel.

Collins also sang a series of new songs, written by herself, which will be available in recorded form when her new *Electra* album comes out in January.

These songs, which were sung with a piano accompaniment, were highly personal in nature. The most striking was an eulogy for Marty Hoffman, a singer/writer who wrote the tunes to some of Woody Guthrie's songs ("Deportee," etc.), Hoffman recently killed himself.

After ten years of performing, Judy Collins remains one of the most vital singers around in the pop music field today. Her rare talents find full expression in a concert setting, and the result is a fine night of music for the listener.

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