

1975: Year of female vocalists?

Why not appears no longer a question record buyers ponder. Two years ago, female singers were only occasional visitors to the upper echelons of the music charts with the exception of a few superstars like Carole King, Carly Simon, Aretha Franklin and Joni Mitchell. Today they play a significant role in the music business. And why not! Here's a brief look at some releases by female vocalists during the past few months.

Joni Mitchell



Joni Mitchell's double live album *Miles of Aisles* (Asylum AB 202) further establishes her as pop music's prime female force, comparable maybe only to Carole King. On *Miles of Aisles* Ms. Mitchell presents versions of many of her classics: Both Sides Now, Woodstock, Big Yellow Taxi, You Turn Me On I'm a Radio and The Last Time I Saw Richard. The album also includes two previously unreleased tunes, "Jericho" and "For Love or Money". Joni is joined by Tom Scott's L.A. Express which plays very controlled adding still more colour to her musical romanticism. *Miles of Aisles* is an excellent album especially suited for those who don't have a chance to see Joni in concert.

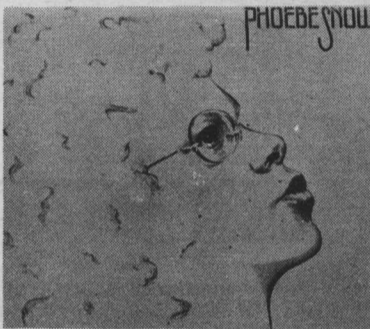
Linda Ronstadt

With *Heart Like a Wheel* Capitol ST 11358, Linda Ronstadt has finally gained the recognition she deserved for so long. Still predominantly a country album, Linda advances



into more rock material with her hit single "You're No Good" and "When Will I Be Loved." One can only hope that she will venture still more frequently into this musical field since her voice is very well suited for rock material. The outstanding tune of the album is probably the title cut "Heart Like a Wheel" on which she is joined by Maria Muldaur and which is a showcase for Linda's sensitivity.

Phoebe Snow



Nominated for a Grammy award as best new female vocalist of 1974, Phoebe Snow has been one of the most remarkable new comers to the music scene. Her debut album *Phoebe Snow* (Shelter 2109) features a variety of music from jazz-influenced cabaret tunes ("Harpo's Blues") to Joni Mitchell type ballads like "Poetry Man", the current hit single. With the exception of two tunes, all songs were written by Phoebe who establishes herself as one of today's best lyricists. *Phoebe Snow* is not what might be described as a commercial record but it grows on you after a couple of listenings.

Olivia N.-John

Commerciality is the basic objective of Olivia Newton-John's latest record *Have You Never Been Mellow* (MCA-2133). Designed at the middle-of-the-road-market, Ms. Newton-John's records cannot be compared with the others reviewed here in artistic terms. Nevertheless *Have You Never Been Mellow* is a good pop craft featuring tunes by Rick Nelson, John Denver, and Olivia's house writer, John Farrar. The best cuts are the title song and a remarkable version of "The Air That I Breathe."



Melissa Manchester



The next female superstar might well be Melissa Manchester whose third album *Melissa* (Arista AL 4031) has just been released. Produced by

Vini Poncia and Richard Perry, the latter being a major factor contributing to Carly Simon's success, Melissa Manchester has come up with her commercially strongest set yet. She has abandoned the slightly cool style of *Bright Eyes* and opted for a more pop-oriented formula. Several tunes are characterized by a strong influence of soul music, especially that of Stevie Wonder to whom she dedicates the song *Stevie's Wonder*. *Melissa* features a number of potential hit singles like "Midnite Blue", "Party Music", "We've Got Time" and "Just Too Many People."

Harold Kuckertz

(Records courtesy of SU Records, HUB Mall)

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