



DELORES TAYLOR
..... incredibly remarkable

rock pile

THE LADIES' BLESS 'EM

Perhaps, as the people say, Rock lost its one undisputed Queen with the death of Janis Joplin, but in soft Rock, or folk-rock, the ladies flourish as never before. Personally I think this is a good thing. In this period of the modern troubadour (Neil Young, James Taylor, Cat Stevens), it's nice to know the women can make beautiful music too.

Carole King's TAPESTRY (Ode SP009) is not new, but just in case someone still doesn't know about it, I want to say it's a beautiful, organically unified album, a paen to arete. *Eros* is important to her, yes, but love for everyone, friendly love, seems to be the still centre about which her art turns. Even when her songs reveal the failure of such love they are telling us how important it is. In haunting melodies and simple evocative lyrics, she sings of love or laments its disappearance: "You're so far away/doesn't anybody stay/ in one place anymore?"

Joni Mitchell's 4th album, BLUE (Reprise MS2038) is her heaviest yet most personal and private album. In a series of love songs including "California", the title song, and the brilliant "A Case of You", Joni sings of her own loves and their major meaning in her life. Love is a holy sacrament, the holy sacrament, to Joni, and she never gives up on it,

even if some of her men give up on her. "Oh, you're in my blood like holy wine," she sings, and we listen and believe. This is Joni Mitchell's best album yet, and that's saying a lot.

Finally, I'd like to talk about *Joy of Cooking*, a Bay area band that has released an album of the same title (Capitol ST-661) which may easily be overlooked among all the big names, but shouldn't be. *Joy of Cooking* is a really tight little band, but what sets it apart from many similar groups is the presence of two ladies in the lineup. Toni Brown on keyboards and Terry Garthwaite on guitars share the singing duties of the group as well as doing most of the songwriting for it.

The band has a unique sound, based partly on the tight harmonies of the two female leads. Toni Brown does most of the writing, and she has at least three topnotch songs on this album: "Too late, but not forgotten" and "Red wine at noon" are lovely evocations of her early family life, her drunken father and her continuing love for him juxtaposed to images of the present. "Only time will tell me" is a witty and driving investigation of decision-making among other things. But there are no bad songs on this album, nothing you won't enjoy listening to, again and again. The performances are relaxed yet rhythmically strong, the melodies catchy, the lyrics intelligent.

by Douglas Barbour

FLIK—BAK

BILLY JACK

A friend of mine used the term 'rip-off' to describe BILLY JACK, now playing at the Towne Cinema. By rip-off, I think he meant that the film exploits public sentiment to make a buck. In a way, he is right—in a way.

The plot of BILLY JACK surrounds (and overwhelms) the struggle of a multi-racial 'free' school to survive the obvious prejudices of a small, smug southwestern town. The school just happens to be located on an Indian reservation policed by Billy Jack (Tom Laughlin), an ex-green-beret-war-hero-half-breed. Controlling the school and Billy Jack's rage against the whiteman, is 'the remarkable woman' (Delores Taylor)—who is perhaps more incredible than remarkable as she suffers even rape without flinching. As well as being a pacifist and an ardent supporter of civil rights, Miss Taylor has no eyebrows. I mention this because it kind of scared me at first.

Also on the side of the 'free' school (i.e. goodness), there are—of course—the kids. Singing songs about brothers newly

slaughtered in Vietnam, 'rainbow love', etc., these particular kids are about as obnoxious as they come. No doubt a school—especially a free school—needs children. Nevertheless, I still think my grandfather's dictum a valid one: Children should be unseen and not heard. However, for you animal lovers, they are there.

Fortunately, Billy Jack soon abandons the kids and gets down to the serious business of raping and/or pillaging. The latter is done by Posner, the town wheel, and his lackies; the former, by Posner's weak-kneed son, Bernard.

Bernard, as Billy Jack states: "Is like a little brown monkey going around stealing everybody's bananas." No matter how much he rapes and lays waste, it is hard to take him seriously. When, for example, he is about to savagely ravish 'the remarkable woman', Bernard turns to his side-kick and says: "You know Dinosaur, I don't really feel like doing this."

Lines like these endear Bernard to the heart of even the sternest of moralists. He is

downright lovable—the Pepsi Generation's answer to 'Old Vice'. By the time Billy Jack finally corners him in bed with a thirteen year old Indian girl, the audience feels more like applauding his persistence than condemning his promiscuity.

Because it does not take itself too seriously, BILLY JACK communicates the kind of sincerity which is often lacking in other films of its genre. (In the *Heat of the Night*, comes to mind.) If it is a rip-off, it is an honest one. The film, moreover, serves a purpose beyond making a buck. In exploiting the Indian culture, BILLY JACK at least acknowledges the culture's existence. And the film goes further. By treating the Indian cultural heritage with and unflinching respect, it portrays an alternative at least as valid as the concrete idiocy of the whiteman's civilization.

If BILLY JACK is a rip-off, it is of a kind that has been long overdue.

—W. N. Callaghan, Jr.

The Decadent Doc

by J.R. Thompson

DOC is Frank Perry's latest exercise in confusion. This time, however, the confusion is not ours, but his. He tried to do two different things at once? demythologize the West and give a sympathetic account of Doc Holliday.

His technique for destroying myth is the creation of a decadent atmosphere. Decay and corruption abound. The hero, dying of TB, spends a lot of time coughing up blood, and in the end, kills a young man in cold blood. Wyatt Earp's well known villainy is exposed in his feud with Ike Clanton, and Perry could not resist piling on further pefidy by having Wyatt make political hay from his brother's death at OK

Corral. All three Earps survived that gunfight, but Perry's obsession with decadence led him to grasp every opportunity no matter how blatant, to express it.

By shooting the film in a sort of mud-washed half-light, with out of focus backgrounds and an absence of sharp outlines, he obtained a sense of impurity that reinforces the decadent tone. But when he implies decadence by having "Big Nose" Kate, one of the West's greatest whores, hung up about her image when living too far.

The humanization of DOC was his other theme and was notably well done, thanks to the very real talent of velvet-voice Stacy Keach and to the plastic beauty of Faye Dunaway, which no amount of

grime can hide.

Had Perry stuck, with the unification of these two themes, his movie could have been much better. But the gunfights, brawls and bawdy jokes, the basic tools of the Western, in their archetypal appeal, resist his efforts at espionage.

Aside from Perry's confusion, and possibly as a result of it, there is a major flaw. The film is perforated with pregnant pauses which miscarry to such a degree that the viewer is often afflicted with a sense of patent boredom.

Frank Perry challenged the Western and lost, and although it is impossible to produce great cinema when the director is this unsure of his intent, the result may be, and is here, an impressive failure.

Dr. P. J. Gaudet
Dr. D. G. Kot

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