

entertainment

Armatrading succeeds with new album

By WILFRED LANGMAID
Brunswick Staff

Joan Armatrading has shown tremendous potential ever since her first album *Whatever's For Us* was released in 1974, and has released a number of fine albums since that time. However, she never enjoyed the success in North America that she deserved, despite her success in Europe. Canadian fans have responded somewhat better than Americans, in that she has had four gold albums in Canada.

Her latest album *Walk Under Ladders* should be the album which makes her recognized as an international superstar. The 31-year-old, who was born on the island of St. Kitts in the West Indies has come up with an album with super self-penned lyrics which are poignantly performed, and set off with just the right amount of instrumentation.

The album begins with "I'm Lucky." It has an unusually-deep minor chord based synthesizer introduction to lead us into Armatrading's clever and perfectly-rendered vocals. Such lines as "No heather, no cross, no wonder, I'm lucky" show us how skillful a lyricist is Armatrading. This is indeed a fine album opener.

"When I Get It Right," which follows, is Armatrading at her rhythm and blues best with just enough rock. It is followed by the even more vibrant, and slightly more reggaeish,

"Romancers." Here Armatrading displays her outlook on life and the tremendous control and quality of her voice, which never sounds as though it were strained. The reggae undertone is accentuated by the organ work of Nick Plytas, who is very strong on all keyboards throughout the album.

"I Wanna Hold You" is almost punkish in some respects, and displays Armatrading's remarkable versatility, as well as that of her back up band, including guitarists Hugh Burns and Kirby.

"The Weakness in Me" closes side one. In many respects, this is the album's best cut. It is a slow song about a woman confronting an old lover for whom she still has very strong feelings. One quickly enters into the scenario, and can do nothing but empathize with her when she succinctly sums up her lover's triangle problem by singing "And I need you, and you."

This song shows why the album is successful in all aspects of production. While in past albums, notably *Me Myself I* from last year, Armatrading's vocals have tended to be occasionally obliterated by backing instrumentals such is not the case here. Instead, there is just enough support by Plytas on piano, Burns on acoustic 12 string, Andy Partridge on

acoustic 6 string, Thomas Dolby in synthesizer, Jerry Marotta on drums, Tony Levin on bass, and Ray Cooper (of Elton John fame) on percussion. And Armatrading's vocals are nothing short of beautiful. What more could one ask?

"No Love" begins side two, and keeps the album's momentum rolling. Like all of Armatrading's songs, it is really saying something. Here, the vocalist has been in a not-so-serious, just-for-fun relationship with someone but is now finding that she is in love, and she wants the same in return. Mel Collins has a fine saxophone break in this track.

"At The Hop" is a colorful rock with some good guitar work by Burns and soloist Gary Sanford. It is followed by "I Can't Lie to Myself," which really is a reggae song. It tells of two people who are good friends, and the changing mood of the female in the relationship who first sings "You know you're a beautiful person, but just now you bother me" only to later proclaim "Take it all now baby. It's always been for you. I can't lie to myself."

"Eating the Bear" is almost new wavish, and it displays some really clever vocals by Armatrading. It precedes the album's final track "Only One," an unusual slow song which nonetheless highlights



JOAN ARMATRADING



Armatrading's splendid vocals, which is in essence the best way to close the album.

Walk Under Ladders could well be the turning point in Joan Armatrading's career. Her past albums have had vir-

tually everything but the North

American buyers. Hopefully, one will soon be able to unequivocally say that this was the Armatrading album which had everything.

1984 is future sound

By DAVID MAZEROLLE

high-pitched voice sounds just right for the material.

1984 is Rick Wakeman's treatment of, in his own words, a "subject too big to be wasted." He succeeds admirably in capturing the drama of the classic Orwell novel, a bleak tale of totalitarianism in the future. From the Overture to the final cut, 1984, Wakeman mixes classical themes and pop music, orchestra and rock band, traditional violins and high-tech synthesizers to produce a work that rouses the listener.

The seriousness of the subject is apparent in the choice of musical styles. The Overture begins on a classical theme, with instrumentation by the New World Symphony Orchestra, and segues neatly into guitar and keyboard-driven rock 'n' roll. The passing from classical to rock is also the style of "1984". Another track, "The Hymn," has a gospel sound to it. It is an ode to Big Brother, and has the finest lyrics and vocals on the album. Jon Anderson's oddly thin,

Another bad choice of vocalist is Steve Harley, a truly awful singer who mercifully is limited to one cut. Even the lyricist, Tim Rice, known for his work in Jesus Christ Superstar and Evita, gets to sing a tune, the "Prole's Song."

The music on this album is impeccable, of course, considering Wakeman's pedigree. Classically trained at the Royal Academy of Music, he knows his way around a keyboard. The many instrumentals make for a fine album, and save it from falling into a swamp of pop clichés at the hands of the vocalists.

Chestnut: quality entertainment

By DARYL BARTON
Brunswick Staff

The foremost feature I associate with the Chestnut and its manager, Frank Scott, is sincere concern, not only for the public, but for performers as well. Tremendous planning and work have culminated in the best nightclub atmosphere in Fredericton. Local designer Don Wright engineered this medieval replica, suitable for musical acts, stand-up comedians, and even theatre productions. An unusually fine sound system also reflects a preoccupation with the needs of entertainers.

This concern also extends to us, the customers of the Chestnut. Pool tables and arcade machines can be found in the three-level fortress. Along with spacious on all levels, a TV screen graces the first floor of this palace; special happy hour prices benefit those who

like to watch Monday Night Football games. Occasional tournaments will also be held (the pool tournament on Sunday, Nov. 22 went well).

Cover charge at the Chestnut is very reasonable at two to three dollars. Gold memberships at \$30 for adults and only \$20 for students are available. This is a further indication of careful organization. These prices also show a respect for the university student's budget, providing an excellent bargain when one considers the identical cost at the Cosmo, which sports no regular live entertainment whatsoever.

A comfortable atmosphere is created through the proximity of performer and audience, as tables exist immediately in front of the stage. The entertainers, ranging in style from Irish to folk acts (e.g. Brigand) and bluegrass talent, always

seem to complement their leisurely surroundings.

Manager Frank Scott exemplifies the Chestnut's desire to please in his determination to give Maritime entertainers a suitable set-up for performing. Mr. Scott enjoyed success with the old Chestnut (later rented by other controllers) and his managerial experience is vital to future success in the present club. A close friend of various major recording artists, Frank handles most of the advertising and promotion duties himself.

Last week's musical line-up was indeed spectacular, and the amiable manager of this renovated addition to the Chestnut Complex intends to keep the quality of entertainment at a high level. For the mature student, the Chestnut is just about the most relaxing and intriguing way to spend an evening I know of. Check it out.

by: Judy Rogers
Rick Wightman



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