

# BC Musician

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MAGAZINE



IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD  
AS WE KNOW IT & I FEEL FINE  
THIS IS THE DAWNING OF A NEW ERA  
THIS IS THE END IT'S ONLY MAKE  
BELIEVE I'VE GOT THE URGE FOR GOING  
WHAT A WORLD WHAT A WONDERFUL  
WORLD I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE  
LIGHT THIS IS THE DAWNING OF  
THE AGE OF AQUARIUS NEW AGE  
MORNING HAS BROKEN ALL  
YOU NEED IS LOVE 2000 LIGHT  
YEARS FROM HOME I'M A ROCKET  
MAN I WALK THE LINE GOTTA  
POCKET FULL OF RAINBOWS  
THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

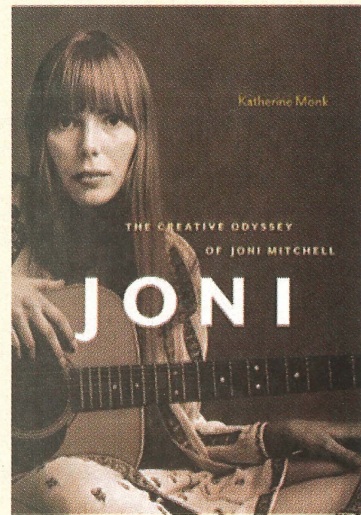


# BOOK & CD REVIEWS

By Richard Samwell

## Joni The Creative Odyssey of Joni Mitchell

Katherine Monk  
Greystone Books  
Vancouver, 2012



of Mitchell's it might give you a new way to hear her music. The book is not meant to be comprehensive biography, nor is it chronological. Monk has organized it by by nine themes she identifies as threads that run through Mitchell's life; identity, illness, maternity and so on. In Monk's own words she has produced a "creative map — a road guide through human experience that anyone can grasp, regardless of how you feel about (Mitchell's) music."

Throughout her recording career, which ran from 1968 to 2007, unless she changes her mind about retiring, Mitchell always had complete creative control both over her music and her album or CD covers. That fact makes her almost alone in the history of recorded music, and she is interesting because she is one of the few popular artists who has not only endured but also because her creative growth has happened without the direct impedance of commercial considerations. Some people argue that she is the most important female musician of the last fifty years. Certainly her music has taken a lot of turns since she began as a typical 60's folk singer, she has reinvented herself in pop, jazz, electronic and world music, sometimes more than once.

There are a couple of issues with the book that rest more with the publisher than the author. Especially because it is not chronological, the book would have benefited from a discography of Mitchell's work. It would help if the reader could refer to the timing and sequencing of the recordings because the text sometimes shifts time without notice. The omission of a discography is particularly odd in light of the inclusion a four page bibliography of the materials Monk read in preparation to write the book. It would logical to give Mitchell equal time. In addition tighter copy editing would have helped. There is a Nabokovian mis-hyphenation of the word re-creation on page 13 which completely negates the meaning of the sentence. The word regard is misspelled on page 41, and Monk is occasionally given to non-sequiturs, which is easy to do given her obvious energy and the enthusiasm she developed for her subject while writing this book.

All of this might sound intimidating and can easily drive off the cliff of pop psychology. But Monk handles it well. The writing is interesting, she ties everything to events in Mitchell's life so the links are clear, and even if you are already a fan



### Conversations

Coat Cooke / Joe Poole  
NOW Orchestra Records

### High Wire

Coat Cooke / Rainer Wiens  
NOW Orchestra Records  
noworchestra.com

Conversations and High Wire are the sixth and seventh releases from the NOW Orchestra Records catalogue. The saxophone player on both these CDs, Coat Cooke, founded the Vancouver-based Now Orchestra in 1987. They are one of the few fully functional improvising big bands in the world and over the years they have attracted some of the most important national and international modern musicians to collaborate with them (including Wadada Leo Smith who is one of the artists featured in this year's annual Oxford American Music Issue, the other great music magazine you should be reading).

Both these CDs fit the category of free jazz. There is some argument that purely improvised modern music is no longer jazz. Although it evolved from jazz, it now exists at some point further out on the musical continuum. In any case it takes some courage to play this music. It is not music that is every going to attract mass attention, so it can be lonely work.

Conversations was recorded live at the Cellar in October of 2011. The CD is literally that. Cooke plays a couple of notes; drummer Joe Poole responds, and they are off on an improvised dialogue. The beauty of this music is in the details. Ideas emerge, they shimmer to the surface and they disappear. It requires careful listening, just as the musicians have to

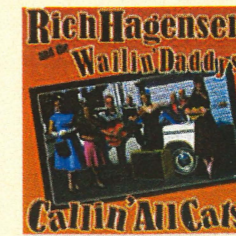
# CD REVIEWS

By Richard Samwell & Bobby Herron

listen carefully to each other in order to sustain the conversation. These two play at a very high level of mutual understanding. They can be funny, subtle, lyrical, strident and challenging.

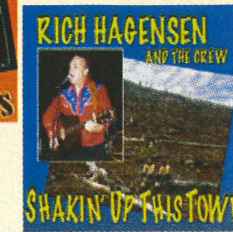
High Wire is the same but utterly different. On this CD the duets are between Cooke and Rainer Wiens. Wiens is a Montreal-based musician who plays electric and prepared guitar. He also contributes thumb piano on one track. The music has an industrial undertone, as if you are listening to the soundtrack of a science fiction movie.

You can preview both CDs on CD Baby and buy them as discs or MP3s, although when you do a search on Coat Cooke, for some reason, you get a bunch of CDs by the Reverend Tina Redden. Either it's a strange software glitch or he has an alternative life as a gospel honker. In science fiction anything is possible.



### Callin' All Cats

Rich Hagensen and the Wailin' Daddys

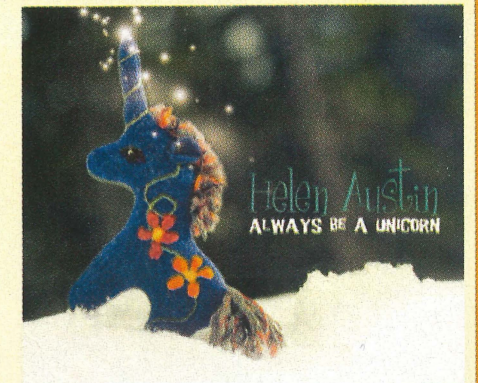


### Shakin' Up This Town

Rich Hagensen and the Crew  
fireballrecordscanada.com

Look out, here comes the conscience of Campbell River and Surfduster's co-founder Rich Hagensen with two new CDs. Callin' All Cats is unreconstructed rock n' roll and its influences are right out front. Elvis, Carl Perkins, Johnny Burnette, Eddie Cochran, Jerry Lee Lewis, a dash of Bo Diddley, a nod to Neil Young and some weird psychedelic organ that would not have been out of place on a Painted Ship single. Clearly this music is a lot of fun for Hagensen and his heart is fully in the project. He covers some early Canadian rock singles on the CD including The Del-Tones 'Moonlight Party,' Jim Morrison & The Stripes 'Ready to Rock,' and Wes Dakus & The Rebels 'El Ringo.' The songs on the CD are drawn from four sessions recorded between 1988 and 2011. Each session features different musicians but the common denominator is the lead vocals and rhythm guitar of Hagensen. Eighteen tracks in all, including three credited to The Monster Stalkers, yet another Hagensen project.

The second CD, Shakin' Up This Town, draws on many of the same musicians as well as others, but the music is more folk based. Songs of social justice and protest mixed with rocking country music. There are also two bonus tracks from the movie 'The Pristine Coast.' Hagensen has been on the road playing his music for more than 40 years while also working as a labourer, social worker and union activist. He comes by his politics honestly and every note sounds like it was hard earned.



### Always Be A Unicorn

Helen Austin  
helenastin.com

Helen Austin is a multi instrumentalist and a singer/songwriter who had a career as a comedienne in the UK before moving to Vancouver Island. These days she's dedicated to the craft of songwriting and the business that goes with it.

Her latest album is titled Always Be A Unicorn, is for children. I put it in the CD player and watched my almost two year old daughter Cadence's reaction. She immediately began doing her tiny dance moves — swaying back and forth and grinning. Thumbs up on the kid-o-meter.

All 17 songs on this record are tremendously catchy and up beat with a kind of humble self-empowerment theme throughout. There's a level of sophistication here that in my opinion should particularly appeal to girls ages 6 to 11. If you're wanting a break from music that's self important and serious, go ahead, put on 'Always Be A Unicorn.' Along with 'Fishin For Pickles,' by Jamie Junger I'll listen to this when the complex adult world starts to unravel my nerves and I require a simpler musical escape.

There appears to be something distinctly British in many of the melodies Helen's crafted for the songs on this album. Given the opportunity, they would like to bounce around in your head like a bunch of balloons. The simple arrangements — often articulated with a couple of acoustic instruments and the adeptly applied background vocals by Helen and her kids, Daisie and Charlie, make this a good collection of tunes to sing along to. Have them playing in the minivan on those long BC road trips.

We have an End of Days recommendation. NOW Orchestra and Okestra Futura have three performances this November. Because every performance is their last, and also, essentially, their first, how better to experience a first and last before the (possible) very last? Add this experience to your bucket list.

Nov 22: Jeff Younger's Unsupervised and Tony Wilson's Long Hand Trio

Nov 23: Okestra Futura under the Direction of Coat Cooke with special guests George E. Lewis and Giorgio Magnanensi

Nov 24: NOW Workshops Ensemble Concert. (By donation to benefit their education program.)

All shows at the Scotia Bank Dance Centre, 677 Davie St, Vancouver. 604.636.7033  
noworchestra.com

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