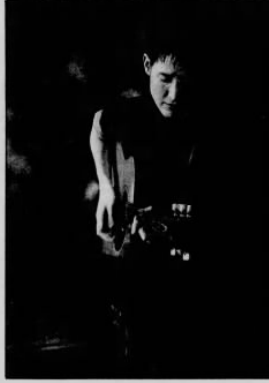


Onward to The Weekend

Section G Austin American-Statesman Thursday, June 2, 1988



UT's Arts Complex announces a schedule for 1988-89 that includes a greater number of mainstream attractions than previous years. Jazz performers Black Swans are on the bill for a February performance.



An English record producer recorded Michelle Shocked, right, on a Walkman at the Kerrville Folk Festival, and *The Texas Campfire Tapes*, as they were dubbed, reached No. 1 on the British independent charts. She has now signed with a major American label, PolyGram.

Fueled by the fire

Michelle Shocked aspires to keep success from spoiling her music

By Peter Blackstock
Special to the American-Statesman

Michelle Shocked has gone through more changes in her 25 years than most people go through in a lifetime. Now she's returning to the Kerrville Folk Festival to look for a place where things *haven't* changed.

Shocked has recently been the subject of a success story that beats fairy tales. Two years ago at Kerrville, an English record producer named Pete Lawrence was so impressed by Shocked's playing and singing during a post-concert campfire session that he asked her if he could tape some of her songs on a Walkman cassette recorder.

She agreed, and Lawrence took the re-

MICHELLE SHOCKED

Performing at: Kerrville Folk Festival
When: Friday, 7 p.m.
Where: Quiet Valley Ranch
Tickets: \$7 at the gate
Information: 1-257-3600

cording back to London with hopes of putting it out on his fledgling independent label, Cooking Vinyl. With Shocked's permission, he released *The Texas Campfire Tapes* late in 1986. Lawrence brought her to England in January 1987 for a series of performances, and by February, the record hit No. 1 on the British independent charts. Early this year she signed with a major American label, PolyGram, which just released *The Texas Campfire Tapes* in the United States and will put out Shocked's first studio album later this summer.

But that's just the latest in a lifetime of changes for Shocked, who ran away from her fundamentalist East Texas family at age 16. During the early '80s, she spent a couple of years in Austin, and lived in homeless communities in San Francisco, New York, Amsterdam and London.

"Now, I need desperately to believe that there's one place in the world where things haven't changed," Shocked said last week at her father's home in Dallas as the two were preparing for the trek to Kerrville. "I don't know why I need that, but, you know, my life has gone through so many changes in the past year-and-a-half."

"Some of them are good, and some of them are just changes. And I'm kind of trusting that the folks at Kerrville will

See Shocked, G5

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Shocked

From G1

know that I need this. It's a pretty loving bunch."

Though she's one of the festival's main attractions this year, Shocked is serving as a volunteer worker just as she has always done in past visits to Kerrville, although she no longer needs the \$8-a-day stipend that comes with the job. "I think they would be able to figure it out themselves, because not all the performers who come there work, but I'm someone who did and still does," Shocked said. "I hope they figure out what I'm trying to tell them."

She's hoping her rapidly growing audience will figure out what she's trying to tell them as well. In many ways, she sees her music as simply an outlet for her strongly leftist political views, but she's worried about being misunderstood as a result of her storybook success.

"Right now, the challenge for me is still figuring out how to say what I want to say effectively," Shocked said, "and to keep from somehow getting stuck in this Horatio Alger pigeonhole. That is the last thing on my mind, to be one to reinforce those kinds of arguments."

In fact, she said she sees the most recent changes in her life not as upward steps on the ladder of success, but rather as "just another chapter" of her life. She acknowledged that things have improved in some ways, but not in every way.

"I know that according to my politics, it's very difficult to reconcile what's happened," she said. "One way of putting it is that the best music is the music you make yourself, and I don't like being put in a role in society of providing music for other people."

That is one of the reasons she's eager to return to Kerrville, a festival that flourishes on the individual talents of many. Shocked said that for her the real attraction of Kerrville is "campground picking with other songwriters from all over the country. Some people might get the idea that the festival is for the main events, but I think that's just the excuse to get all the songwriters together."

That sense of community has always been important to Shocked, including the period she spent in Austin from 1981-83. During that time she was living at Voltaire's, which was located in the basement of Paperbacks Plus bookstore downtown and which eventually became the center of an underground alternative music scene.

"It was one of those points in time when culture and history and great things all come together," Shocked recalled. "And the beauty of something like that is that it's very unself-conscious. It's just happening, no one hyping it."

She also became somewhat involved with the Austin songwriting community at the time, playing on open-mike nights at such places as Folkville Ice Cream near the University of Texas campus, which later became the Beach and served as the breaking ground for several of Austin's most well-known new music bands. "As a matter of fact," she said, "that's how I got invited down to Kerrville the first year. I was writing all these songs and people said, 'You've got to come to Kerrville.'"

"From time to time I would sit in on some open mikes. Which is funny, because whenever I hung out in New York and people asked me if I played there, I would say not 'No,' but 'Hell no' because there was no real sense of community. But I will admit to playing open mikes around Austin because there was a community, and it was a very supportive one."

Her associations with squatters' movements in San Francisco and other cities were also driven by a sense of community. "It (squating) involves taking abandoned property that doesn't belong to you, and barricading yourself in from being evicted — resistance, in a way," she explained. "No matter how you look at it, squatting always increases your sense of community, because you're in it together. And that's what attracts me to it, like with songwriting."

The move to a mass audience for her songwriting, however, is bound to affect that sense of community. And while she's happy with the album she just recorded for PolyGram to follow up *The Texas Campfire Tapes*, she admitted that she will miss the intimacy and innocence of the first record's circumstances.

"I think it (the new record) will receive credit for its own merits. It will be pretty different from the first one," she said. "But what I'm pleased about is that I will always have the *Campfire Tapes* as part of my history. It will always be part of my background, of how I got started, whatever I become. Nothing can change that, really. Well, I don't know; I've seen history be rewritten, even in this country, but I'd be interested in seeing what they could do with that."

New York Times crossword puzzle: Possessive People

By Bernice Gordon / Puzzles edited by Eugene T. Meleska

<p>ACROSS</p> <p>1 Airport feature</p> <p>3 Prosaic</p> <p>9 Residue of grapes</p> <p>13 Mandy</p> <p> Painstaking role in "Evita"</p>	<p>35 Cites in R. I. and the Isle of Wight</p> <p>39 Hold-up</p> <p>41 Comedian Ole —</p> <p>44 Eye docs</p> <p>45 Arise</p>	<p>79 Bellini's</p> <p> Druidic</p> <p> priestess</p> <p>72 Arbonne</p> <p>73 Guido di Pietro, or Fra —</p> <p>76 Golfer's 19th hole</p>	<p>101 Blüchard's output</p> <p>103 First steps</p> <p>105 Because</p> <p>107 Disdainful look</p> <p>109 Bruce of films</p> <p>110 Thermochetes</p> <p>113 — company</p>
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