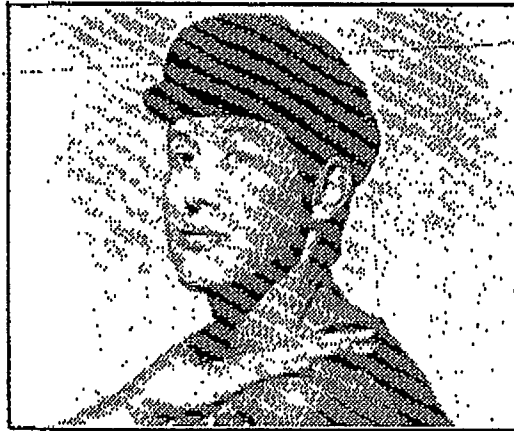


**MICHELLE SHOCKED**  
**Dallas Brookes Hall**  
**Wednesday 3rd January**



Michelle Shocked  
— pointless politics

Michelle Shocked is not this Texan singer's real name. What are Michelles called for short? Shell. Ever since she can remember Michelle's nickname was Shell Shocked and ironically, as she has grown into independence this nickname is kind of relevant to her attitude — a politically conscious individual with a delightful countenance and a powerful voice.

Unlike other politically evolved persons, Shocked steers away from the usual singleminded aggression prevalent in politically active radicals. Her wit and unique way of explaining injustice doesn't assume an inaccessible knowledge, rather she sings about ordinary people, ordinary events in a language common to most people. She makes politics fun.

Her live performance was not a highfalluting diatribe. Instead it had the air of a stand-up comedy performance. Between songs she recounted anecdotes in an almost literary fashion, and the timing of her words and actions showed Shocked to be a natural, engaging story teller.

The set, although not long enough to satisfy the devoted audience, ran through songs from her albums *The Texas Campfire Tapes*, *Short Sharp Shocked* and *Cap-*

*tain Swing*. During the course of the performance Shocked brought her father up on stage and the pair launched into a fast instrumental on their mandolins.

The musical side of the concert was without doubt exceptional, especially considering the barrenness of the stage, just Shocked and her guitar. The message of the show was equally impressive and while Shocked is undeniably authoritative on the ugly ways of the world she does not preach her message.

There is however one thing Shocked has to learn to live with. She commented on stage that she was the ultimate contradiction. A folk singer earning her living professionally out of her music. She said that it wasn't enough to leave the entertainment up to professionals like herself and that the public should pick up their guitars and sing (those that wanted to anyway). However we kind of like that fact that a politically orientated folk singer should be able to earn a living out of this trade. And while Shocked appears somewhat apprehensive about this fact no one in that audience would ever dream of criticising her for it.

★ Rowena Webber