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Troubadour Shocked does a swing shift

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By Bob Millard

IT'S SO long lonely troubadour, hello "Capt. Swing" as Michelle Shocked shifts from acoustic solo to a flexible horn band on her newest record and current tour.

Shocked brings her "Capt. Swing" tour Friday to the Bronco Bowl.

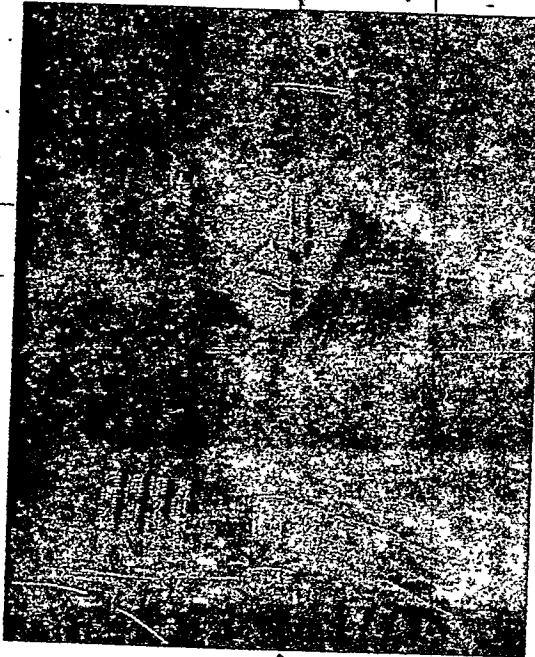
The new presentation brings out a strength in Shocked's vocals. She takes to swing, horn blues and string arrangements with gusto.

"In a way, I'm establishing a foundation, and a big part of that to me is not quite fitting into the definitions and pigeon holes until I'm ready to be defined," she says.

Shocked performed until now as a solo to establish communication with her audience.

"I had a choice to make and I did present my music in a rather austere, intimate way with just me on stage," she says. "But that was never, in my opinion, going to be the end of my story. I like playing with other musicians. I like the interaction too much."

Shocked is a walking contradic-



Michelle Shocked: A walking contradiction?

tion in many ways. A teenaged runaway turned political activist, she now finds herself earning a good living singing about her politics and opinions, and deciding how to use her surplus income.

"People who make a profit out of politically motivated action, that's my definition of a politician, if you want to know the truth," says Shocked, who advocates

squatter's rights for the homeless. "Based on political philosophy, I refuse to invest in property."

At 28, Shocked has come by her contradictions, musical and personal, honestly. During her teen years, she traveled between her mother's strict Mormon home in Gilmer (where her stage name comes from her stepfather's Germanic surname, Schacht), and her father's hipper Dallas home (where blues and folk music were a constant influence).

Her paternal grandmother had a big impact on Shocked's lifestyle.

"She's been a real inspiration to me," Shocked says. "She was a real independent spirit herself. She's from an Italian background and she got divorced in the '50s. She raised two kids by herself."

Shocked, who as an artist is still raising herself, reflects such gumption.

Michelle Shocked will perform Friday at the Bronco Bowl, 2600 Fort Worth Ave. Doors open at 8 p.m. Tickets \$19.50 (plus surcharge). Call 787-2000.

Bob Millard is the Times Herald's pop music critic.