

The Boston Globe
BOSTON, MASS.
D. 500,106
MAY 82

MAY 8 1990
BURRELLE'S

Swing, surprises from Shocked

By Paul Robicheau
SPECIAL TO THE GLOBE

Feverish dancing in the aisles isn't the norm at a Michelle Shocked concert. But then, the big-band R&B and swing blues of her third album "Captain Swing" also marked an unusual turn for the outwardly shy but politically savvy Texas folksinger.

In any case, Shocked dashed that album's whiff of commercial gimmickry at the Opera House on Saturday with her most assured and energized local show to date — and her first with a band.

"I was getting the feeling that people knew what to expect," Shocked told a crowd of 2,400, proclaiming, "If I can't dance, you can keep your revolution!"

Dance they did, although a couple more vociferous fans were led away by security, prompting a pause by the rattled Shocked.

MICHELLE SHOCKED

with Poi Dog Pondering and John Wesley Harding

At: The Opera House, Saturday night

But the show rolled on, with a surprisingly animated Shocked egged on by her six-piece "Captain Swing" band. The LA-based crew looked incongruous with the gangly singer in a worker's cap (especially saxophonist Jim Pollock in his moussed-up mane). But the playing was tight and sassy, giving a kick to old tunes like "When I Grow Up" and "If Love was a Train" as well as romps from the new LP like "Sleep Keeps Me Awake" and the roadhouse-styled encore "(Don't You Mess Around With) My Little Sister."

"Must Be Luff" provided a Dixieland flavor, while "Look's Like Mona Lisa" featured Shocked on calming mandolin and violin by Susan Velz, whose Austin group Poi Dog Pondering laid down an infectious, tex-



MICHELLE SHOCKED

tural gumbo of musical styles in its middle set. Poi Dog also backed keen solo opener John Wesley Harding for two songs, including a hoedown take of Prince's "Raspberry Beret."

The night's biggest surprise, however, came when Shocked's father joined her in a mandolin duet. Also, while the band was entertaining, her mid-set solo spot (peaking with "Graffiti Limbo") showed her clear, resonant voice commands on its own.