

MAY 24 1990

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Michelle has fans swinging

MICHELLE

Continued from G 1

She followed it with one of her new tunes, "God Is A Real Estate Developer," a political song aimed at organized religion and corporate greed.

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Shocked likes to tell weird, disjointed stories on stage that... make a point.

After the first two songs, she rambled about militancy and moral rectitude and proctologists, finally quoting Emma Goldman, the radical feminist from the early 1900s, on Lenin's Russia: "If I can't dance, you can have your revolution."

That opened the floodgates. People rushed from their seats and filled the aisles and the orchestra pit, dancing for the rest of the show. Shocked and her band gave them plenty to move to, including

the punchy, brassy "On the Greener Side"; the colorful, descriptive "Memories of East Texas," which the crowd sang along to spontaneously; and a fun song about conservation, "(Don't You Mess Around With) My Little Sister." A new song, "Playing the Game," featured great R&B organ. The band added a lot of oomph to earlier Shocked songs, including "Anchorage" and "If Love Was a Train."

The political songs were the most moving, including "The L&N Don't Stop Here Anymore," about the lives of coal miners; "Graffiti Limbo," dealing with the death of a young man at the hands of New York transit police; and an anti-Vietnam War song by the late Steve Goodman, told from the point of view of a soldier's widow.

The show was opened by John Wesley Harding, a British singer-songwriter with a stinging, tongue-in-cheek sense of humor. He had unkind words for Madonna, Jesus Christ, Sting, Phil Collins, Live-Aid, Ricky Nelson, "We Are the World" and just about the whole of Western Civilization.

For one so quick to criticize other musicians, his songs weren't so great. "The Devil In Me" was a poor remake of the Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil"; "Space Cowboy" ripped off Steve Miller's "Space Cowboy"; and "Cathy's New Clown" didn't come near to the Everly Brothers' "Cathy's Clown."

Michelle's new style didn't shock the crowd

Michelle Shocked & the Captain Swing Revue and John Wesley Harding last night at the Paramount Theatre.

by Patrick MacDonald
Times staff critic

Michelle Shocked has got it. She's a natural talent with a gift for song writing, a love of the stage and just enough quirkiness to make her stand out and give her a certain edge. And like all good singer-songwriters, she wears her heart on her sleeve.

Last night at the Paramount the skinny, boyish Texan showed she has the right stuff by performing a whole different kind of music from the last time she was here two years ago. The former folkie has embraced swing music with all her might, and she's just as credible doing that hip urban style as she once was doing down-home rural folk and blues.

Actually, she blended both styles last night, dismissing her new six-piece swing band in the middle of the set to do some of the old songs, accompanying herself on guitar. But even those tunes had a tinge of swing in them.

Shocked's change of style bothered some critics, but it was obvious last night that her fans are with her. "I had to stick my neck out to do this style of music," she told the adoring, near-capacity crowd. "Thanks for your enthusiasm."

She eased the audience into the new style by opening with one of her familiar songs done in a swing arrangement, "When I Grow Up," a child's fantasy about having 120 babies and living to ripe old age.

Please see **MICHELLE** on G 8 