

NORTH COUNTY
BLADE-CITIZEN

OCEANSIDE, CA
DAILY & SUNDAY 39,000

FRIDAY
MAY 25 1990

BURRELLE'S

460

NORTH COUNTY
BLADE-CITIZEN (ENCINITAS)

SOLANA BEACH, CA
2-TIMES/WEEK 39,000

FRIDAY
MAY 25 1990

BURRELLE'S

889

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Shocked always a surprise

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Perhaps it was a surprise to Michelle Shocked's fans when she came out late last year with an album immersed in swing music — with horns and drums and the sass of the jazz era.

But it shouldn't have been. Shocked and surprise seem to be synonymous. After all, this was the Texas folksinger who was signed to a major label after recording a cassette tape of her insightful, acoustic folk songs on a Sony Walkman at a campfire outside a folk festival.

This was also the woman who turned down an initial signing bonus offer of \$130,000, and asked for \$50,000 instead, advising Polygram Records executives they should take the money they saved on her and sign an additional new artist.

Michelle Shocked has been a homeless hobo, she has been unjustly committed to an insane asylum and she was raped in Europe. Shocked became suicidal, achieved peace of mind through therapy and has been a poet singing of life's intricacies for most of her 27 years.

Now, Shocked is swinging to the sounds of a bygone era, but with a decidedly modern lyrical approach emerging just as strongly.

"This is a whole new challenge for me," Shocked said from Vancouver, where she is on a tour that brings her to the Bacchanal on Thursday and the Coach House in San Juan Capistrano on Tuesday (May 29). "I find myself growing in many ways because of this music."

The music is off "Captain Swing," Shocked's hopping third album. With the brass and verve of the big-band sound, the music Shocked has arranged is from a bygone era. But listen closely and hear Shocked still singing with a decidedly societal message — even on the more personal songs.

With a lead cut titled "God Is A Real Estate Ambassador," it's apparent Shocked wants people to dance, but wants them to



Michelle Shocked brings her folk and swing styles to the Bacchanal.

think when the music has ended.

"A year ago, I might have said that dancing is a brain disease," Shocked said. "But every year of your life, you go through different changes and gather added perspective. As much as I used to want to educate people to the value of personal politics, I find I just as much enjoy entertaining the troops."

The idea for a swing album has been in the back of Shocked's mind for some time, but it was only after her first tour ended last year that she decided to do something about it.

On this tour, Shocked travels with full band behind her. The experience has given Shocked a chance to put new meaning on what swing is. Now she sees it as much an attitude as a style.

"I can never find an adequate way to express it," she said. "There is a common denominator to telling stories

with music that's more important than any style. I felt after the last album I was labeled with a certain style and put in a category with other people, that didn't get to the heart of the matter. I want to do something essential with the music. And that can be found in swing or acoustic, it really doesn't matter. All music has swing if you look for it."

Shocked recently completed a short tour on behalf of the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL), an organization that champions student involvement in community service. She is also working to establish a Los Angeles outlet of the European organization World of Music, Art and Dance.

"I try to use the system for good, but I'm not big on the pop singer as conscious raising tool," Shocked said. "I'm a real medium-is-the-message believer."