

## Preview



MICHELLE SHOCKED ... strong messages

## Make way for Michelle

When Texan folk singer Michelle Shocked takes the stage next Saturday in Wellington it won't be to sing cosy campfire songs. Shocked has always been a politically-motivated musician, and with a Gulf war going on she is bound to drop a few cluster bombs of her own.

Now in her late twenties, Shocked first picked up the guitar at 16 when she ran away from her fundamentalist family to live with her estranged "hippy atheist" father in Dallas. After putting her self through university she spent several years on the road in the United States and Europe.

When Shocked returned to Texas, her mother had her committed to a psychiatric hospital in Dallas until the insurance money ran out.

Paul Kelly previews the upcoming Michelle Shocked concert at Wellington's Opera House, Saturday March 2.

In 1984, at a demonstration outside a Republican National Convention Shocked was arrested — and in the process picked up her name.

Asked for a name by a police officer, she replied "Miss Shell Shocked." The arresting officer wrote down Michelle Shocked, and that's how it stayed.

Shocked shot to overnight, if underground, success with *The Texas Campfire Tapes* four years ago. Recorded on a walkman beside a fire at the Kerrville Folk Festival, and with chirping crickets and revving pick-up trucks in the background, the album topped British independent charts within a month of release.

From there Shocked signed with Polygram and made *Short, Sharp Shocked* in 1988, and *Captain Swing* in 1989.

Shocked has yet to achieve the mainstream commercial success of other 'new' women artists, but with her folk roots and rebellious approach she is the most likely to voice her generation's disenchantment if Gulf hostilities drag on.

Not all her songs are political though. Shocked is probably best known for Anchorage, a whimsical, witty and warm song on long-distance ties.

As a performer Shocked promises to be strong on personality and presence, and short on posturing and prattle.