

THE FIDELITY

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MOVIE PASSES Page 2

"I can't explain what happens to me on stage. I just really enjoy myself up there."

There is a big difference between Michelle Shocked the singer on stage and the young Texan off-stage. DAVID SLY reports

MICHELLE Shocked can pour out her heart in a song, yet the wait-like Texan singer remains a mystery. Away from the stage, the astute songwriter is embarrassingly shy, chuckling nervously in interviews and beate to let a conversation slip far from the subject of music. But once she steps on stage, she is transformed. She opens up and talks with her audience, spinning endearing anecdotes about her past and her aspirations.

and Short, Sharp, Shocked. Now she is back in Australia to perform the easy, swingin', rhythm'n'blues songs from her Captain Swing album, using Paul Kelly's backing band The Messengers.

"My emotions aren't faked. Performing music is one part of my life that I'm entirely comfortable with. It's the one thing in my life that I know I'm good at."

Michelle proved herself an outstanding performer to Australian audiences during her first visit to these shores last year in a simple solo acoustic performance (accompanied in places by her father on fiddle and mandolin) featuring songs from her first two albums The Texas Campfire Songs

another hit. Also, I want to make a stronger/rise. The shy one... Michelle bond with Australian audiences. "I really like the attitude of you guys. I've as local/brad still but pulling come back to play the pubs again to learn a little more."

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SHOCKED

THE GUIDE

Shocking truth about Michelle

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Michelle's liaison with The Messengers — comprising Michael Barclay (drums), Steve Connolly (guitar), Peter Bull (keyboards) and Jon Schofield (bass) — stemmed from striking up a friendship with Kelly in Los Angeles two years ago.

When Kelly arrived in the City of Angels to promote his sumptuous album *So Much Water So Close To Home*, his record company's promotional plans collapsed, leaving him and the band without any radio exposure or bookings for live performances. Michelle sympathised with the downcast Australian and started plugging the record and Kelly's talent during her own media interviews.

"It really hurts me to see great talents like Paul and the band get overlooked when so much crap gets endorsed by the media," she said.

"Heck, I admire these guys so much I want them for my own band. I've had to settle with just borrowing them."

She will record one track in Melbourne with The Messengers. It will be collated with other songs she has cut in Woodstock, in upstate New York, and recording she has planned for later this year in a variety of studios in south-eastern American States.

Michelle says the diversity of recording locations represents her attempt to capture a range of regional sounds on a single album.

"Some people say it's an ambitious idea, but, hell, if you ain't ambitious then your art ain't going to be worth much in the long run," she said.

Michelle intends to record *The Weaving Song* with The Messengers, an adaptation of an instrumental fiddle tune her father taught her many years ago. She penned her own set of lyrics about an old man with a drinking problem who couldn't walk a straight line home.

"I based those words on my own experiences with Australian lager last year," Michelle said with a chuckle.

She regrets that the weight of her gentle humor has not been so easily projected through her songs.

"Pop music is marketed with a sledge hammer, no matter who you are," she said.

"People make a decision about you on a first impression and the subtle aspects of your character get lost in the cracks so that one simple picture of the artist emerges."

"It's not what I want, but it's plain fact that pop is marketed by style rather than substance. All I can hope for is that people will be intrigued to buy the records and come to the shows and see there is some substance and humor and warmth behind the image."

"Anyway, whatever people perceive as my image will be bullshit anyway. I'm just a girl who writes songs and has a good time playing them to people. It's nothing fake. It's just Michelle havin' a good time."

● Michelle Schofield performs with The Messengers at the Old Lion Hotel on Wednesday, March 13.