

## REVIEW

Michelle Shocked at the Auckland Town Hall last night.

It is a measure of Michelle Shocked's ability to fit her audience and keep it rocking that she did so even for this reviewer, anchored down in disgruntlement over the concert's organisation.

The town hall doors were not opened until five to eight. After a 10-minute crawl through a chaotic photo passageway into the circle, there was a free-for-all scramble over seating and another long wait for the concert to start at 8.25.

The still-affable audience warmed quickly to a good performance by supporting artist Guy Wishart. Not every word Wishart sang was clear, highlighting that Shocked's always are. Dressed in black dungarees and a striped shirt, a relaxed and grinning Shocked came on to a stage that was oddly back-dropped with three triangular sails.

Accompanied by fiddle and guitar-playing Australian Wayne Goodman, Shocked played her own acoustic guitar and sang two new and unrecorded songs.

She moved on to *Cement Lament*, *On the Greener Side* and *Silent Ways* from *Captain Swing*, and then returned to the earlier *Short, Sharp, Shocked* with *When I Grow Up* (a near full town hall audience sang along, too) and *W.D.*

number, *W.D.*, the *Campus Crusade*, was more of a story-telling with guitar backing. By *Hello Honeysville* and the *Swampy Side* (convincing despite the lead) of *Little Sister*, the audience was rocking and whooping. In a curious reminder of 60s folk music, Shocked sang an unaccompanied ballad about a Vietnam War widow.

Even a radical like Shocked showed her true American colours by having the widow tear up her war pension cheque, refusing welfare from the state. Somewhat surprisingly, sometime activist Shocked made virtually no references to the Gulf War, sticking instead to her avowal to "entertain the troops."

She seems to have moved completely away from those more playful, quirky Texas Campfire Tapes numbers and there is now never a hint of cuts. She was in powerful voice and the amplification produced a remarkable level of guitar sound.

In brimmed her and glasses, down country Goodman made a fine partner for the girl from Texas. Though bad management and limited venue marred the early part of the evening, Shocked and Goodman gave us a great night of folk songs, love songs, blues and laments in a Texan tradition, and a surprising amount of swing.

—Candice Gray

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# NEWS

## MICHELLE SHOCKED RECORDS

Michelle Shocked appears in Sydney on 22 March with Paul Kelly's band, The Messengers. While she is in Australia, Michelle will take time out to record with the band for her next album, due in August.

MICHELLE SHOCKED + MESSENGERS Photo Tony Mott

