

# MICHELLE SHOCKED

W o m a n w i t h a M e s s a g e . . . .



In January 1987 a most unusual and delightful album was released. An album of compelling and intimate songs recorded on a Sony Walkman in the middle of a field. That album, 'The Texas Campfire Tapes' was the first time most people had heard of MICHELLE SHOCKED.

With the recent re-emergence of the female singer songwriter Michelle may not be a megastar like some of her contemporaries, (Tracy Chapman,

Melissa Etheridge, Sinead O'Connor), but that's just the way she likes it. Her following is constantly growing and intensely loyal.

Born in Dallas Texas, Shocked spent her formative years as an army brat being moved from place to place until she ran away from her step fathers militarist, Mormon home at the age of 16. She went to live with her father in Dallas who was had introduced her to bluegrass and country music during her summers with him. By 1983 Michelle took to the road to see the world, often living on the edge of homelessness, squatting in San Francisco, Amsterdam and London. She was raped in Italy and committed to a mental hospital in Santa Cruz. The cover for the second album 'Short Sharp Shocked' features a photograph of her being man handled by police at a political rally in New York City.

Last year Michelle released her third album 'Captain Swing' and toured Australia for the first time.

"That tour was so great. It was like my first gigs in London three years ago. The reaction was wonderful. This time I'm touring with The Messengers and it should be a lot of fun. Paul Kelly and The Messengers are the only band I know who deserve far more international recognition than they presently receive. I may be doing some recording with them while I'm there, if Paul doesn't mind."

On this tour with what is usually Paul Kelly's band, Michelle will be doing two Kelly compositions, but you'll have to go to the show to find out which ones.

Having very much rejected 'the system' early on and been somewhat nervous about mainstream success and the mechanics of the 'business' side of the music industry, does all that side of things sit more comfortably with her now?

"I don't know if I'll ever be totally comfortable with it, but I realize that it's



a means to an end. It's the way to let people hear what I have to say. My working with record companies and so forth has alienated me to a degree with my folk friends. We've kind of grown apart in some ways, but I'm doing what I always wanted to do, make music and have people hear it."

Michelle's next album will feature some of her musical hero's making guest appearances, recorded all over the world.

"I made up a wish list of people I would love to work with, and amazingly most of them have agreed to do it. I also like the idea of recording something everywhere I go as I travel."

Politics are important to Michelle but whilst it is important for to have an opinion in her songs, she is not preachy or sanctimonious. She offers opinions rather than forces answers. Michelle is ideologically sound as is her friend Billy Bragg, with whom she toured the States two years ago. There's also a story about Mr Bragg being guest navigator on Michelle's house boat and navigating them right into trouble.

"We ended up grounded and I hurt my foot wading to the bank to get help. It was really funny in retrospect."

Without Mr Bragg in tow let's hope she makes it to town next week without any similar mishaps.

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**MICHELLE SHOCKED AND THE MESSENGERS PLAY THE OLD LION NEXT WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13TH.**

