

"AN English chap by the name of Pete Lawrence requested a few tunes he'd heard me play at a campfire the night before, which I recorded then into his Sony Walkman. He released it on his Cooking Vinyl label as an album called *The Texas Campfire Tapes*", and the rest, as they say, is history. That first 'session' was just one of those remarkable 'lucky breaks' that sometimes happen in pop music — Michelle Shocked just happened to be working as a volunteer at the Kerrville Folk Festival in Texas the night Lawrence heard her, recorded her, etc. She'd been sort of 'doing' the folk festival circuit for years, initially tagging along behind her father, then, after running away from home, going up to San Francisco and living as a quatter and activist (Ronnie Reagan's policies were getting right up her nose), as an occasional participant. It was while she was squatting Michelle Shocked found out that she had a #26 album on the UK indie charts! *The Texas Campfire Tapes* eventually got to #1 and Michelle Shocked stopped squatting, got signed to a major label, PolyGram, and has released two more albums, *Short Sharp Shocked* and *Captain Swing*, on equipment somewhat more sophisticated than that first Sony Walkman outing.

Michelle Shocked has lost none of her edge. And she's not taking the easy way out either. As Paul Kelly pointed out in last week's issue, Michelle has been touring Europe picking up local musicians in each country to back her, inevitably changing the complexion of the songs she performs, and looks like using various cuts recorded through the tour for her next album, and that should include a track or two featuring her Australian backing band, The Messengers, when she arrives here for dates around the country, with Sydney seeing her March 22 at the Enmore Theatre.

