

Also Around Town

Folkfest at Carnegie Hall

The four-act bill of Michelle Shocked, The Band, Taj Mahal and Uncle Tupelo sounds more like a traveling summer folkfest revue than a lineup for Carnegie Hall. But that's where this mostly organic music foursome appears tonight. What this diverse group of artists has in common is that they appear on Shocked's latest album, "Arkansas Traveler" (Mercury).

It has a spontaneous, on-the-road feel. In the album notes she says, it was recorded "on a riverboat, in an antique store, in a barn, and a doctor's office."

Uncle Tupelo's latest album is "March 16-20, 1992" (Rockville). It's a fairly traditional recording for a group that usually has borne a strong alternative-folk attitude.

Taj Mahal's recently released album "Like Never Before" (Private Music), hosts a whole bunch of special guests from all over the place: Hall and Oates, Dr. John, the Pointer Sisters, members of Little Feat, of the Hooters and D.J. Jazzy Jeff. Material ranges from Taj originals to tunes by Little Walter, John Martyn and, if Mr. Mahal ever had to prove his eclecticism, Goffin and King's "Take a Giant Step," recorded by the Monkees.

Taj had recorded the song as part of the obscure but influential 1960s group the Rising Sons, which also featured Ry Cooder. Previously unreleased recordings from 1964: "Rising Sons Featuring Taj Mahal and Ry Cooder" have just been released by Columbia/Legacy. The Band doesn't have a current recording out. But in addition to charter members Rick Danko, Levon Helm and Garth Hudson, the group now includes guitarist Jim Weider and percussionist Randy Ciarlante.

Michelle Shocked, The Band, Taj Mahal, Uncle Tupelo. Tonight at Carnegie Hall. Showtime, 8 p.m. Tickets \$25, \$27.50 and \$30 from the Carnegie box office or Ticketmaster.

— Wayne Robins