

# DAILY VARIETY

WEDNESDAY  
NOVEMBER 27, 1991

## CONCERT REVIEWS

### Dwight Yoakam; Michelle Shocked

(Universal Amphitheatre;  
6,251 seats; \$21 top)

Promoted by the Universal Amphitheatre. Band: Dwight Yoakam, Pete Anderson, D.J. Jarvis, Jeff Donovan, Taras Prodaniuk, Scott Joss, Skip Edwards. Reviewed Nov. 22, 1991.

**R**owdy" was the operative word for Dwight Yoakam's two-hour set, with an emphasis on uptempo material. This was not a well-rounded display of Yoakam's abilities, though much of his appeal to the rock 'n' roll audience certainly was delineated.

The U Amphitheatre got into the spirit by providing the seatless pit up front, normally reserved for high-intensity rock acts' fans. Emmylou Harris dropped in for two songs during the encores.

For the second consecutive year, country singer Yoakam made a one-off, nearly sold-out appearance at the Amphitheatre. With nothing in particular to promote — his most recent Warner/Reprise album, "If There Was a Way," is a year old — it seemed an opportunity to mingle with (and show off in front of) his homeboys, shake off a little cabin fever and pick up some shopping money for the holidays.

Yoakam's appearance was also a chance to expose singer-songwriter Michelle Shocked to an audience that might be espe-

cially appreciative of her upcoming Polygram/Mercury album, the country-influenced "Arkansas Traveler."

Texan Shocked changes artistic direction like the early Bob Dylan, from her folkly first two albums to her horn-laden "Captain Swing" to next year's "Traveler," which finds her in the company of old-timey and bluegrass musicians.

For this show, Shocked imported Austin trio the Bad Livers, on guitar, stand-up bass and fiddle and player acoustic guitar and mandolin.

All but ignoring her first three albums, Shocked led the group through numbers including "Soldier's Joy," "Blackberry Blossom" and "Cotton-Eyed Joe," sometimes adding her own new lyrics to the traditional fiddle tunes.

An adept performer, she gleefully led the audience through a "chair dance," acting as a square-dance caller and instructing the folks to "join arms... lean back ... now lean forward," etc.

The set didn't go down as well as it might have in front of her own audience. Most of the Yoakam crowd likely had no idea of what to expect.

Also to Shocked's detriment, the band's delivery often sounded tentative — whether due to lack of rehearsal or skill being a moot point under the circumstances.

There was no problem in that respect with Yoakam and his group, most of whom have played with him for (if not in) some time.

The outfit is distinguished from most country bands by the Hammond organ played by Skip Edwards and by Jeff Donovan, who's probably the loudest drummer in country music.

Subtlety was tossed out the door, with a minimum number of ballads and an emphasis on shuffles and out-and-out roasters like "Turn It On, Turn It Up, Turn It Loose," "Honky-Tonk Man," "It Takes a Lot to Rock Me, Baby" and local writer Dave Alvin's "Long White Cadillac."

One of several encores was a rip through Bill Monroe's "Rocky Road Blues" at a tempo that gives a new meaning to the term "breakneck."

All of that was a lot of fun, and gave lead guitarist Pete Anderson a chance to dazzle, but other high

points included Yoakam's soulful ballad "If There Was a Way," his version of the Grateful Dead's "Truckin'" from the recent "Dedicated" anthology, Elvis Presley's "Suspicious Minds" and a joking couple of bars of what sounded like John Anderson's "Black Sheep."

Harris joined with Yoakam for a reading of "Sin City," written by her mentor, Gram Parsons, and recorded by Yoakam and k.d. lang.

She also took a rare opportunity to rave with a rocking band in a jumping, Little Feat-styled impromptu reading of "Jambalaya."

— Todd Everett

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