

Michelle Shocked & The Arkansas Traveler Revue - Carnegie Hall, NYC, NY

by Steve Matteo

Of the more adventurous, yet in the final analysis volatile, tours of 1992 was Michelle Shocked's Arkansas Traveler Revue. Featuring headliner Shocked expanding on the musical and lyrical themes of her recent Arkansas Traveler disc, the tour also included Uncle Tupelo, Taj Mahal and The Band (Garth Hudson, Rick Danko and Levon Helm). By the time of the Carnegie Hall show (not even a half-dozen shows into the tour), The Band was already off the tour. Whether they wanted off or Shocked wanted them off is unclear as of this writing. Certainly it was a big disappointment nonetheless.

Carnegie Hall was the perfect venue for this revue-style show. At times the raucous yet sweet-natured music gave one a feeling of what those celebrated Weavers concerts

of yesteryear may have been like.

Uncle Tupelo opened the show, playing songs from its home-grown musical catalog and sounding quite good. Mixing Neil Young-like country rock with a new music edge and spirit, the group seems destined to enter the world of major label acceptance soon.

Giving the show an anchor in roots music from Arkansas was the next performer, Taj Mahal. After years of putting a unique spin on country blues, Taj Mahal hasn't lost a step. He jumped from boogie-woogie blues at the piano to the twangy acoustic blues sound that has made him one of the rare blues artists to connect for years with rock audiences. His bright, melodic guitar twang is irresistible and he continuously paid homage to the great blues artists who inspired him.

Beastie Boys/Henry Rollins Band/Da Lench Mob - Roseland, NYC, NY

by Mark Hendrickson

This slam dancing has got to stop. Someone could get hurt. Like me.

In fact, loads of people did get hurt in the mosh pit at the Roseland Ballroom, but, worrying about my own safety, I can't say how many or how severely. It just looked nasty down there in the pit, with elbows and feet flying in every direction. And rather than explore the psychology of why otherwise sane people would voluntarily throw their bodies around like used Kleenex, inflicting and receiving pain wantonly, let me just get on with the review and hope these moshers seek professional help soon.

Da Lench Mob, yet another new rap act (is there no end?), was greeted by the audience as most opening acts are — with scorn.

and derision. "Beasties! Beasties! Beasties!" drowned out most of the group's raps, as hordes of testosterone-filled Young White Males prepared for the slamming to come (mostly by ingesting mass quantities of beer and whiskey). Still, Da Lench Mob carried on bravely until Ice Cube joined them for their last song, "Gorillas In The Mist," when the energy level both on stage and in the crowd reached mild interest. Cube kicked, and the audience responded with cries of "Beasties! Beasties! Beasties!"

The Henry Rollins Band didn't fare much better, but at least the white boys could slam, which seems to be the only reason the inflated crowd paid their money to come. It didn't help that Rollins, once the leader of punk legend Black Flag, is virtually incomprehensible. I'll give you an example of

Shocked began her portion of the show with "When I Grow Up," the lead track from her debut studio album, *Short Sharp Shocked*. She then began concentrating on the fiddle music that is the basis of her new release, explaining how old fiddle songs she learned from her father were the basis for the new songs on her album. In fact, she brought her father out and he played on several songs; her brother performed on "Shaking Hands (Soldier's Joy)."

On many occasions during the evening, she took time to explain the origins of much of the music and the stories behind the lyrics. She also explained how her first two albums were conceived: her first was influenced by Texas songwriters Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark and her second, *Captain Swing*, was a tribute to swing artists such as Bob Wills.

Rollins' vocal stylings: "AAHHHHGRR-RAAAHHHHH!!" Of course, the music being loud, fast, angry and violent only meant that those in the pit loved it, while those of us waiting for real music scratched our asses, waiting for the Beasties.

Not that the Beasties are real music, but compared with the wall of thrash that was Henry Rollins, the Beasties are like the Beatles. At least you can understand them. I must say that the Beasties looked strange holding actual instruments and trying to be a real band, instead of cavorting on stage like crazed hooligans, like in the old days of "Fight For Your Right (To Party)." But hey, they're trying to progress, right?

And, as evidenced on their latest album, *Check Your Head*, the Beastie Boys have progressed, from one-hit-wonder jokes to,

Some other memorable performances were "Prodigal Daughter (Cotton-Eyed Joe)" and "Secret To A Long Life." She did a bit of a reworking of her semi-hits "Anchorage" and "Come A Long Way," and was buoyed throughout by the solid string support of Alison Brown, a major rising star on the acoustic scene.

This truly was a wonderful night of music. Shocked puts a lot into her music and the way it is presented. When she takes the patience to choreograph her introductions and arrangements, she is unbeatable in preserving rich American musical traditions while forging a style unmatched by anyone. She indicates that these first three albums are an introduction to who she is and to where she came from; if this is merely the introduction, the future should be nothing short of earth-shaking.

well, a real band. From the complex vocal interplay of "Pais The Mic" to the raunch and grunge of "What'Cha Want," the Beasties sound like they intend to stick around for a while. And the only way to do that is to reinvent yourself.

Their short set at Roseland, while focusing on material from *Check Your Head*, also included selections from *Licensed To Ill* and *Paul's Boutique* and it was easy to distinguish the strength of the new material. But the biggest reaction from the headbangers was for "Fight For Your Right." The mosh pit seemed to grow from a few dozen to hundreds, which is when I almost got bombarded by a flurry of feet and beer bottles.

So if you like to take your life into your hands when you see a show, this was definitely the one to see.

by Francis Bell

Patty Larkin - The Brokerage, Bellmore, NY

were better than good.

all the while making you feel like she's was

all along. Patty Larkin is what I mean.