



Michelle Shocked was eclectic in both words and music Tuesday night at the Caravan of Dreams

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Long, blunt, Shocked

Michelle delivers lots of music — and a few sermons on the side

By ROBERT PHILPOT
FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

FORT WORTH — It was an eclectic Shocked. *Eclectic* is a word that's overused in music reviews, but there's no other way to describe Michelle Shocked's show Tuesday night at the Caravan of Dreams. (Besides, it makes for such a nice pun.)

How else to describe a 2½-hour show that included elements of folk, blues, funk, '60s dance music, '70s soul, disco and hard rock?

And that was just the musical part. A good portion of the show was a mix of lecture, sermon, revival meeting, dance lesson, nostalgia and tabloid television.

Sometimes it came all at once, such as on a lengthy dance number called *Mama Taught Me*: During a section of the show that incorporated the Bee Gees' *Staying Alive*, a man and a woman joined Shocked onstage to dance.

Turned out they were her brother and sister, and not just in the universal sense: Shocked told the crowd that she had recently been reunited with her siblings after a 15-year separation. And, she added, her mother had recently divorced their father, who she said abused Shocked and her brother.

That kind of emotional punch boosted the enthusiasm of an already adoring audience, who ignored the carps of some overly cynical critics and came to see Shocked put on a show.

It took a couple of numbers for them to get into it, though, and they needed Shocked's help: During the second song, an extended *33RPM Soul*, she pointed out that she fought to get the audience a dance floor, and they'd better use it, or she'd feel bad.

After that jump-start, things went smoothly, slowed only by Shocked's numerous monologues (an average of about 1.25 per song).

She included surprises both fun — a break into the

Ohio Players' *Fire* during *V.F.D.*, an actual tin whistle during *Over the Waterfall* — and serious, such as her closing, band-less *Memories of East Texas*.

The points in Shocked's sermon/lectures — about racial and sexual tolerance, and about being true to yourself — were well-taken, but the patter flirted dangerously with heavy-handedness. If she could fine-tune her thoughts, though, she might have a spoken-word album in her future.

ABOUT THE OTHER NIGHT

Tuesday night
Michelle Shocked and the Casualties of Wah
Caravan of Dreams, Fort Worth

ATTENDANCE: Dancing-room only.

THE CROWD: About as eclectic as Shocked's music, but heavily weighted toward thirtysomething and older-something. Divided about evenly between those who chose to dance and those who chose to sit.