



Michelle Shocked and the Casualties of Wah

with Pony Stars
Irving Plaza; Saturday, November 9
On Michelle Shocked's *Kind-Hearted Woman*, recorded almost four years ago and sold at her shows but only now being released widely (Private Music), the singer forgoes sentimentality and instead strives to paint stark, realistic pictures of life as she sees it, using her trademark vibrato-intense voice as a conduit of pain. Her modus operandi isn't new: *The Texas Campfire Tapes* (1986) and *Short Sharp Shocked* (1988) also echoed within the familiar confines of sorrow and anger with

surprising emotional rawness, even for an artist steeped in the traditions of honky-tonk honesty, folk-rock confessions and punk outrage. Shocked, in the press notes for *Kind-Hearted Woman*, says that "stories about death, frustration, frustration, frustration, death, death and death lead to grace, redemption, acceptance and, God willing, peace." I certainly hope so.

During the last few years, she has been bitterly fighting her former label Mercury, a battle she finally won earlier this year (she still owns her masters, including those for *Kind-Hearted Woman*, and her contract with Private Music is nonexclusive). Mercury's last stand is *Mercury Poise: 1988-1995*. The collection shows Shocked's musical range, from the big-sky country of "On the Greener Side" and the anguished folk rock of "Anchorage" and "Stillborn" (from *Short Sharp Shocked* and *Kind-Hearted Woman*, respectively) to the jump blues of "Street Corner Ambassador." It's a good primer for those not familiar with Shocked's song cycle.

"Life is good," Shocked writes. "New Orleans is home. God is in his heaven and all's right with the world. Believe me. Then carry on like you always did." Shocked's shows are filled with stories, acoustic and full-band treatments and audience participation, and can easily stretch to three hours. So get to living after the show.—*Marie Elsie St. Léger*

Meat Beat Manifesto
with Dr. Alex Patterson

Irving Plaza; Thursday, November 14
Now that everything to which you're supposed to dance sounds at least ten years old, one-man band Jack Dangers finally sounds about as modern as everyone else. "I'm stuck in 1979" is the catchiest lyrical hook of *Subliminal Sandwich*, Meat Beat Manifesto's new 138-minute album. The package includes two discs: one with instrumentals in the current English electronic styles that have names, but are all discs to us red-blooded Yanks; and the other with more of that, plus some actual songs.

Fortunately, the records are not the point (which is rare in club music). Meat Beat is famous for its multimedia shows, which can last two and a half hours and involve choreographed dancers and freeform Intellibeam-driven light shows,

films and slides, musicians real and fake, and, of course, Mr. Dangers, a tall, thin, bald nice guy in baggy rave gear. He spouts PC propaganda, does things with turntables, or pretends to, and sings a bit (in a style consistent with the fact that he owns the complete Throbbing Gristle live cassette suitcase). There have been as many as 15 people onstage, but for this tour Meat Beat Manifesto is a drummer, a keyboard player, Dangers as "the Main Controller" and his photo-shoot partner John Wilson, who is to MBM what Andrew Ridgeley was to Wham! U.K. Purportedly the show will be "improvised and open-ended," which in this kind of music usually means "not entirely on DAT."

The time I saw Meat Beat Manifesto, it was mostly on DAT and they still blew the PA twice. So be sure to take ecstasy before the show, because they're really loud.—*Stephia Merritt*

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They Might Be Giants + The Magnetic Fields + Cub (Roseland, Fri 8) Clever ditties, gut-wrenchingly sad songs or cuddlecore—take your pick. Figuring out which is which should be almost as much fun as hearing each in this marquee venue.

Doug E. Fresh + DJ Red Alert + Affonso Nunez + Oru NEM + DJ Just & LP Nique + Chino + Jay Z (YWCA's Memorial Hall, Fri 8) There are so many acts in this hip-hop spectacular (including possibly the greatest live rapper ever, Doug E. Fresh), we can easily see the festivities going on 'til dawn.

Edith Frost (Mercury Lounge, Sat 9) Edith Frost is a supremely talented Brooklyn singer-songwriter. Like Baltimore's unsung diva Linda Smith, Frost puts her haunting

words over spare, arty backdrops. But she's moving out to the Windy City, so you should see her now.

Godflesh (Watlands, Mon 11) Godflesh is ex-Napalm Death/Head of David guitarist Justin Broadrick's band. The group's bass-heavy sonic volcano is more engulfing than Swans or Sabbath at half speed.

Jenny Seach and the Masters (Knitting Factory, Tue 12) Latin goes downtown. As far as scenemakers go, trombonist Seach is the cream of the crop. His bands just team with all-stars, and boy, can they salsa.

Betty (Mercury Lounge, Tue 12) This wisecracker, mostly a capella girl trio from Washington, D.C., takes a break from the cabaret circuit to visit the lovely Mercury Lounge.

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