



POP 1

Def Leppard proved to the Dublin crowd only that their best years are behind them.



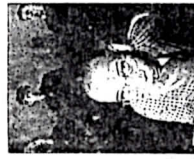
POP 2

... and the support band, Terrorvision, never turned up — but they did send their T-shirts



POP 3

Michelle Shocked celebrates her anti-slavery victory over her former record company



POP 4

For that authentic 'morning after' lyricism, give me the Aloo every time, says Caitlin Moran

Dog-eared cats

"DON'T forget us, and we won't forget you," Joe Elliott told the audience at the Point towards the end of Def Leppard's first Dublin show in four years. Sadly, the words seemed more like a desperate plea than a vow of solidarity, and contained the painful truth about the veteran satirical parus: their best years are behind them.

Def Leppard, from making it — but, bizarrely, their T-shirts were still on sale in the foyer. Def Leppard's professed desire to be taken as seriously as the likes of R.E.M. and U2 cannot be counted among them. They are rather than simply demand credibility. Appearing in standard rock 'n' roll garb — black leather trousers, a white vest and, er, a cardigan — Elliott exhorted one slaid stadium rock cliché after another without ever looking (or breaking the new life into them).

NICK KELLY

Marginal response

ONE of Britain's most cultured singer-songwriters returns to London and the Jazz Cafe is markedly underattended for the occasion. One hardly knows whether to smile at the opportunity to catch up with Chalk Gregson or to cry at such a lukewarm response.

Chalk Gregson Jazz Cafe, NW1

In fine form, whatever the turnout, Gregson himself has gone for the former. A veteran of the post-punk music scene of the late Seventies with his rock group Any Trouble he went the Elphinstone, reshaping himself into a respected, folk-inclined acoustic performer.

Where has Michelle Shocked been lately? Playing star wars, she tells Nigel Williamson

Look who's back in charge

Clashes between the corporate and the creative have long been a part of the music industry. Few such struggles, however, have been more bitter than the one involving Michelle Shocked. For almost four years, Merritt, the company to which the American singer was contracted, refused even to speak to her. Then she issued a lawsuit citing the 13th amendment to the American Constitution, the one which abolished slavery and involuntary servitude. Shocked has just won both the case and complete control over her career and artistic direction.

"I could call this the victory tour"

she was told that the studio would not allow her in. The record company was still not happy and would not pay for the studio time. She was effectively prevented from recording, but at the same time the company would not allow her to sign for anyone else.

American law who had helped to bring about the free agency of sports stars. The case potentially had huge repercussions and other labels that it could not be allowed to reach court. In the settlement Shocked was freed and has signed to a more sympathetic label.

The result is a staggeringly fine new album, *Kind Hearted Woman*, full of desperate-luck characters from the American backwoods. Several reviewers have described it as bleak, but they have missed the point. True, the stories are often harrowing — about a stillborn child, a hit-and-run killing, a boy who watches his father struck by lightning. But in the best Steinbeck tradition of American story-telling, Shocked's empathy for these characters



Michelle Shocked: back in Britain and back in full control of her music

King Heared Woman is released by BMG. Michelle Shocked plays Shepherd's Bush Empire on Monday