



CATHERINE LEONER

Michelle Shocked's ZooTunes concert: good vibes all around.

Michelle Shocked at the Zoo: back in the musical current

Concert review

MICHELLE SHOCKED, *Wednesday evening in a ZooTunes concert at the Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle.*

BY PATRICK MACDONALD
Seattle Times staff critic

You can't go to a ZooTunes concert without kids and a picnic basket.

It's not required, actually, but it seemed that way Wednesday evening at the Woodland Park Zoo, where a capacity crowd enjoyed perfect sunny weather, neighborly good vibes and Michelle Shocked, her band and backup singers.

ZooTunes concerts are held at the expansive North Meadow, with its thick, barefoot-friendly grass and backdrop of big, leafy trees. Families spread out blankets, low-back chairs and picnics, and there's a still room for kids to dance, frolic and drip ice cream and Popsicles.

"This is so beautiful," Shocked said, looking out at the brightly dressed audience.

The folksy, rootsy, Texas-bred singer-songwriter seemed to have slipped off the radar in recent years, so it was good to see her back and in top form. She brought along a batch of new songs, from 30 she and Hothouse Flowers guitarist Fiachna O'Braonain wrote last November in preparation for a millennium New Year's Eve concert. O'Braonain was among her five-piece band, and so was Shocked's husband, Bart Hull, on accordion.

The kids loved "Jump Little Rabbit," in which Shocked imagined herself in a children's story, and joined in the playful "booty dance" that accompanied "If Love

Was A Train," a celebration of love's sometimes bumpy road. Folks also got up to dance to the rocking "Survival of the Prettiest," a bittersweet remembrance of high school.

"If Not Here" was a tribute to Shocked's friends who have died, but it celebrated rather than mourned them, with a refrain of "Joy that's shared is joy made double." "Picoesque" was inspired by Shocked's neighborhood in Los Angeles, and it bounced from the gospel of a black church to the Latin rhythms of the local bodega. "That's So Amazing" praised the awesome beauty of the moon and stars. "Butterfly Hill" honored the woman who lived two years in a redwood to save it.

Among the few old songs were "Anchorage," Shocked's great song of lost love, and the autobiographical "Memories of East Texas." A welcome surprise was a slow, bluesy take on Jimi Hendrix's "House Burning Down."

8-29-00

Dear Michelle & Bart -

I really enjoyed seeing you both and having a chance to hang out for a bit.

Michelle - your show was great!!

Keep it up.

Warm Regards -

Dana