



MICHELLE SHOCKED (left)
and Loudon Wainwright III

Not Your Plain Ol' Folk

PINNING DOWN THE MUSIC OF Loudon Wainwright III is a little like trying to figure out long-distance phone service. The information is all there, but you'll probably get a headache long before you have the answer. Better to appreciate it on a song-by-song basis and let the larger picture fall into place by itself.

What we can say for sure is that when Wainwright plays Town Hall Saturday night—a sort of semi-regular pilgrimage for a fellow who has found a more receptive audience in England of late—he'll have a close complement in his opening act, Michelle Shocked.

Shocked is sort of a folk singer (the same way Wainwright is sort of a folk singer) from Gilmer, Tex., and she has this record called "The Texas Campfire Tapes" which may be the most charmingly unpolished piece of legally issued work since the Sex Pistols. The 12 songs

constantly fade in and out from being recorded on a portable Sony, with chatter and background noise intact.

On the album jacket Shocked looks like a skinny, punky kid with untied sneakers. On the record, she's a writer with something to say and a pleasant voice to sing it in. Mostly she tells stories, like "The Ballad of Patch Eye and Meg," but she also knows when to turn a good line into a full-fledged hook—like in "The Secret to a Long Life (is knowing when it's time to go)."

In any case, she and Wainwright—whose latest album has just been released in the States and includes the striking "Hard Day on the Planet"—should make one of your more memorable musical evenings.

—David Hinckley

Show's Sat. at 8. Tix are \$15-\$17.50 at Town Hall box office (123 W. 43d St.), Ticketrons & Teletron (212-947-5850).