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Festival launched Shocked's career

FOLK FESTIVAL conjures up images of folks sitting around a fire, playing guitars and singing. For Michelle Shocked, the Kerrville Folk Festival opened the door to a worldwide audience.

Late one evening in the spring of 1987 she joined a campfire with her festival buddies and sang some of her original songs. A fellow from England recorded the campfire performance on his Sony Walkman. Several months later, Campfire Tapes, a recording of this performance was released in England, and the rest is history.

After achieving international recognition, she was picked up by a major label, Polygram, and recorded a second album. In 1988 she returned to the Kerrville Folk Festival playing main stage, every songwriter's dream.

She stepped down from the stage, received praises from Peter Yarrow, and then shared her impressions with me. "I don't want to let this go to my head. My main goal is to keep my feet on the ground. It was a thrill playing for such an appreciative audience, and a greater thrill because my dad was playing with me."

Father and daughter played a mandolin duet together, note for note during the performance. "It's just what we do. It's not really slick," she shyly acknowledged all the praise.

Now Michelle has toured extensively supporting the album, 'Short, Sharp, Shocked', and has a video on MTV, "When I Grow Up I Want to Be an Old Lady." All this from a young woman who performs because she has something to say. "I don't like all this fuss being made, but I know the fuss is what brings me new au-

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Kathleen Hudson



diences. Audiences I can talk to."

SHE UNDERSTANDS the contradiction of her life, living within a system while criticizing the system. In an article entitled "Antihero," the transcript of her keynote address at College Music Journal Marathon in New York, Michelle talks about working for change through music, on the inside and the outside. Both Abbie Hoffman and Billy Bragg had previously been keynote speakers at this event.

Now Shocked had center stage. It was her turn to speak.

"I've been thinking a lot about inside versus outside lately, and I don't know where I stand. My own background has shaped my commitment to working outside the system. But then I got signed to Polygram. Okay, I haven't resisted too much.

"I thought I couldn't go any further underground than folk music. Where else could I go? Abbie Hoffman says you should always keep one foot inside the system and one foot outside. I agree: I think you should always be able to jump back out of the system again."

Michelle Shocked will be sharing the main stage Saturday, May 27, with Peter Yarrow, Nancy Griffith, John Ims,



MICHELLE SHOCKED
...Around festival campfire

Hans Thesink, and the Austin Lounge Lizards. Time for those writers who have something to say about society (Yarrow and Shocked), those who sing of Texas with a strong literary bent (Griffith), an international blues singer (Thesink) and a band that defies all labels — the Lounge Lizards. Sunday's bill includes The Lime-lighters, Patty Larkin, Shawn Phillips, Van Wilks, Hamilton Camp, Danger in the Air, Tom Espinoza and Lorraine Duisit. Running from May 25 through Saturday, June 11, The Kerrville Folk Festival showcases the best music in the country. Call 257-3600 for details.

Happy Trails.