



OPENING ACT: Poi Dog Pondering is made up of Susan Voelt, left, Dick Ross, Ted Cho, Adam Sultan, Dave Crawford, Bruce Hughes and Frank Orrall.

SHOCKED: Takes listeners on a musical journey

SHOCKED/From G1

In San Francisco, Shocked - now a homeowner - finds herself in a "tricky position."

"It's pretty much a bootstrap operation, squatting is, and I've yet to see any bureaucratic or social service perspective that's offered a solution," she said. "But squatters don't ask permission. The whole squatting sensibility is that it's easier to ask forgiveness than it is to ask permission. And I'm not squatting now, so it puts me in a very awkward position. But here I have this forum and I'm really confused about what to do with the opportunity."

On her new album, Shocked hasn't altogether abandoned her past themes - the song "God Is a Real Estate Developer" and "On the Greener Side" are proof of that. But, true to form, "Captain Swing" is full of surprises, especially for fans of her first album. Critics have hailed the record as Shocked's most important to date.

Unity through diversity is another of Shocked's favorite mottos, and on "Captain Swing," she takes the listener on a musical journey that swings from spirited pre-World War II jazz, beatnik-styled folk, rhythm-and-blues, country/Delta blues, Texas Swing and '50s rock 'n' roll. A real trip through the roots of American music.

"The feeling of the record is very spontaneous. I think it swings."

"I don't know that it's my most important record. If nothing else I think they're (critics) calling me a clever so-and-so for throwing a curve ball this early in my career. My attitude is that I'm not really willing at this point to come out and say where I'm going. I just want to let you know where I'm coming from and where I've been."

Although she probably won't make an album with the Boston

MICHELLE SHOCKED

ALSO APPEARING: Poi Dog Pondering. **WHEN:** 8 p.m. Saturday. **WHERE:** Majestic Theater, 205 East Houston. **TICKETS:** \$17.50 and \$19.50. Call 224-3000.

Pops, Shocked now finds herself at another crossroads.

"I'm not throwing curves for the sake of curves but I do want to bring home this little revolution I call the 'Strawberry Jam' revolution. I've been singing about it all along. It's about making music the way you want and on your own, the old-fashioned homemade way," she said.

"It's like my producer Pete Anderson (who also produces Dwight Yoakam) said, 'You can't really be zigging and zagging on the fringes.' Nobody's going to care. Musically I'm up in the air because all these people are telling me that I can't zig when nobody noticed that I zagged. Pete was saying that you have to be successful at each step to get the whole point across."

And will Shocked have a career if her third album fails to cross over to a bigger sales market?

"If it's ('Captain Swing') a success, I think the fans will follow me. But if they start feeling like I led 'em down a dirt road, they'll say, 'See ya' later.'"

While she bristles at being lumped into the current female singer-songwriter pile that includes Tracy Chapman and Suzanne Vega, among others, Shocked seems to be taking more chances with her songwriting talents than the others.

"I don't know that I'm willing to take more chances. I have to wonder if I just have more choices. When you've got one or two influences or styles to draw on you're going to keep that. I think I have all these choices because I'm from Texas, which has a really rich heritage."

Get ready for a SHOCK!

Singer-songwriter believes variety is spice of life

By RON YOUNG
Pop music critic

Michelle Shocked still the feminist-activist-folk-singer-songwriter that she was on her 1986 debut album "Texas Campfire Tapes"? Is she the poet and slick songwriter of last year's album "Short Sharp Shocked"? Or is she the jazz baby and beatnik bopper on her new album "Captain Swing"?

"Born to fun, loyal to none," joked Michelle Shocked during a phone interview from her home in Los Angeles, relating the old Hell's Angels motto to the musical diversity of her three albums.

Speaking in an Okie-style drawl that sounds more like one of Steinbeck's "Grapes Of Wrath" characters than a modern pop music figure, Shocked talked about her musical directions, her favorite causes and the confusion she now is feeling because of her recent success.

Shocked performs Saturday at the Majestic Theater. The 28-year-old Dallas-born singer-songwriter will be performing material ranging from the acoustic "Texas Campfire Tapes," to the big band-styled sound of "Captain Swing." Opening the show will be Austin's Poi Dog Pondering, a nine-piece band whose new CBS album "Wishing Like a Mountain and Thinking Like the Sea" combines Celtic folk, world beat music and rock 'n' roll.

Shocked came to national attention through Polygram's release of "Texas Campfire Tapes," an intimate performance recorded on a Sony Walkman by a British music fan around a campfire at the 1986 Kerrville Folk Festival. Since then, she has gone on to headline last year's Kerrville festival as well as international fame as one of pop music's most original chameleons.

In her trademark black cap, Shocked cuts the figure of a modern Woody Guthrie, and in the past has used her success as a forum to raise issues she cares about. Some of her favorite themes in earlier songs have been racism, the environment and housing. Although she is an advocate for the homeless and was once a squatter

Please turn to SHOCKED/G16

GOOD FOLK: Michelle Shocked will be in concert at the Majestic Theater on Saturday.

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