

## NIGHT BEAT/Russ DeV

### Shocked hopes that 'Swing' wasn't a miss

Not surprisingly, **Michelle Shocked** drops right to the bottom line concerning the current tour behind her 6-month-old album "Captain Swing."

"There's a lot riding on the success of this tour," she says from her Los Angeles home. "I had a pretty successful video earlier this year with the single ['On the Greener Side'], but the single itself was never released properly to radio — and that was a disappointment that ended up reflecting on the success of the album."

"Now," she adds, "we're coming at it with Plan B."

That means the 28-year-old singer-songwriter will be a week into an open-ended tour when she performs with a six-piece band tonight at Masquerade (doors open at 8 p.m., \$15, **Poi Dog Pondering** opens, 249-6400). And she's hoping her concerts in clubs and small halls across the United States will revive "Captain Swing," which is No. 151 on Billboard's pop chart after peaking at No. 110 about three months ago.

She's also hoping Mercury/PolyGram Records gives a bigger push to her just-released second single, "(Don't You Mess Around With) My Little Sister." The label simply threw out the first single to see what would happen — and not much did.

"It kind of just died," a PolyGram spokesman said of "On the Greener Side." "Captain Swing," Miss Shocked's third record for PolyGram, has sold less than 100,000.

The LP features a full horn section and a mix of swing, folk, blues, country and semipop styles smoothed out by the studio and stage experience of producer Pete Anderson, a guitarist who also leads Dwight Yoakam's band. "I had Pete as my front man until last week, but now he's in the studio with Dwight," Miss Shocked says, trying to sound woeful.

However, the truth is that she's pleased with the turnouts she's had on her American tour (she also visited Great Britain with the band in the fall and did some solo dates in Australia earlier this year). "But my goals are pret-



Special

**Michelle Shocked** performs tonight at Masquerade.

ty modest," she says. "I just want to show some slow and steady growth."

To facilitate those aims, Miss Shocked recently changed her management company and moved to Los Angeles. "I never thought the likes of me would be happy here," she says. "Everything is so flat."

A native of Dallas, Texas, Miss Shocked lived — frequently as a squatter — in San Francisco, New York City and Amsterdam, the Netherlands, before releasing her debut LP "Texas Campfire Tapes" in 1987. It was followed a year later by "Short Shaped Shocked," which, because of her political/social concerns, resulted in Miss Shocked being lumped with Tracy Chapman and other politically aware female singers.

Miss Shocked has never forgiven the world for that. She points out that her influences include her father, a seminomadic hippie known as "Dollar Bill," fellow Texan Guy Clark, Doc Watson, Big Bill Broonzy and Georgia traditionalist Norman Blake.

"I was really scared for awhile — I didn't like any women [musicians] because I was being compared to them," she says. "Then I heard Bonnie Raitt and Lucinda Williams, and I think they're great. They're kind of retro and I like that."