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• MUSIC •

Shocked's friendly jam session hits sour notes

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REVIEW / by Daniel Gewertz
Michelle Shocked, Taj Mahal, Uncle Tupelo at Silverado

As Michelle Shocked told an anecdote Wednesday from the stage of Silverado, she began to cry.

To most of the crowd of 1,075, it seemed Shocked was emotionally reacting to the introduction to the song "Memories of East Texas." But it was likely the backstage tension of this nearly disastrous show was the real cause of Shocked's tears.

One of Shocked's three opening acts, The Band, did not perform as scheduled. According to the concert's promoter, Dave Werlin, Shocked issued an ultimatum just hours before the show: If the Band played, she would not. "I begged her to be professional about it," said Werlin, "but she wouldn't change her mind."

On her recent "Arkansas Traveler" album, Shocked recorded every song with a different musical guest, journeying throughout America and as far as Australia. The current tour's concept was to revive those musical friendships, with Missouri's Uncle Tupelo, California's Taj Mahal and Woodstock, N.Y.-based Band members Garth Hudson, Levon Helm and Rick Danko all playing opening sets, then joining Shocked for a song or two during her segment.

The Band reportedly balked at hanging around for Shocked's

closing act, although the group performed with Shocked on six previous tour stops. Shocked then canceled their appearance.

The concert was the first for the new c & w dance club. About 1,000 seats were placed on Silverado's dance floor, but the result awkwardly straddled the con-

cepts of club and concert hall. While the sound and sightlines of the new club were excellent, the crowd was so loud that acoustic acts Uncle Tupelo and Taj Mahal were lost in the hubbub.

Tupelo members are musically solid, but lack drama and a distinctive persona. Taj Mahal

sped through a brief solo set on guitar and piano. Standards such as "Freight Train," "Stagger Lee" and "Walking Blues" were given funky treatments, but the big space and inattentive crowd dissipated the effect.

Shocked appeared with a band sparked by the great ban-

joist Alison Brown and fit Ray Legere. Though less intense than some previous area shows, Shocked was rambunctious, singing almost every song from "Traveler" album, and then going back for emotive versions from 1988's "Short S Shocked."