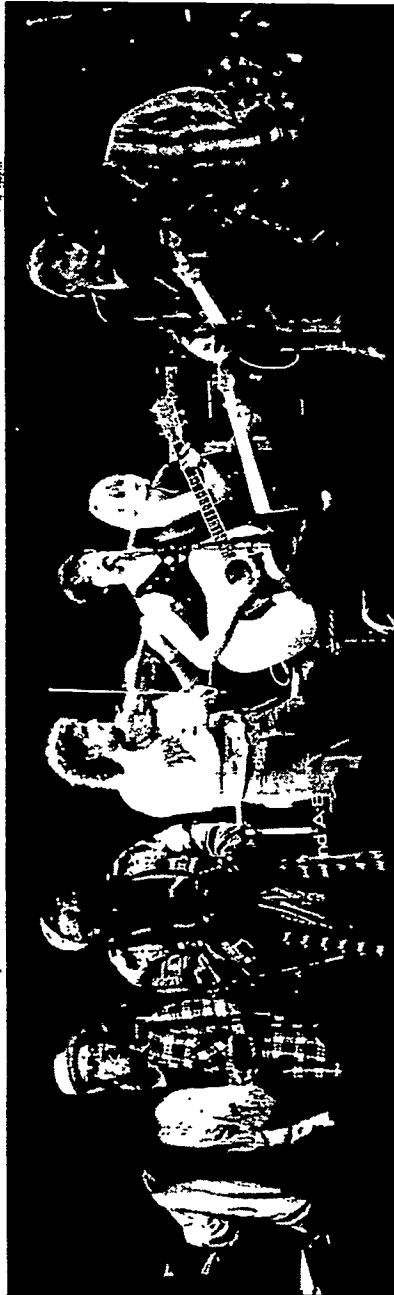


LEISURE / MUSIC

Michelle Shocked wheels musical caravan into Toad's

POPCENE — ORLA SWIFT



Michelle Shocked, center, jams with her "musical caravan," Toad's Place on Sunday. The band had hopes teaching a lesson about history and racism. Including Taj Mahal and members of Uncle Tupelo, at

NEW HAVEN — Michelle Shocked had some pretty ambitious ideas when she set out on her "musical caravan" tour with Taj Mahal, The Band and Uncle Tupelo.

The multiple-act tour, which stopped at Toad's Place Sunday, was supposed to bring to mind a minstrel show and even teach us a lesson or two about history and racism.

Well, it didn't feel like a minstrel show. And all we learned about history is that Michelle doesn't want us to repeat it by voting for George Bush. She likes Bill Clinton, and Clinton's people like her, as evidenced by the Clinton badge-bedecked people who helped fill the dance floor. Still, it was a well-run and enjoyable performance, with Shocked taking the stage to introduce each band, and giving speeches while the roadies moved equipment between acts. She even stood in the wings and danced as The Band played its set.

Although each band's set couldn't