

native songwriting, fared a bit better in a brief opening set. Again, though, women's voices saved the day via the sparkling songs "Something Good" and "What Can You Do for Me," built on vocal samples of Kate Bush and Annie Lennox, respectively. But when samples provide most of a show's character, something's wrong.

—STEVE HOCHMAN

A Down-Home Michelle Shocked

If "Hee Haw" is ever revived for the MTV generation, there's a perfect host ready: Michelle Shocked. On Saturday at the Palace, Shocked made country corn out of the traditional mountain tune that provides the title for her latest album, "Arkansas Traveler," getting five audience volunteers on stage to engage in some down-home silliness.

But there was much more to the show than pickin' and grinnin'—though Shocked was sporting a big grin throughout the evening. She explained that the show recapped her "trilogy" of albums laying out "where I come from, musically speaking." As she looked back on

what she's done with her roots—Texas singer-songwriter styles, swing music and mountain folk—she seemed justifiably proud.

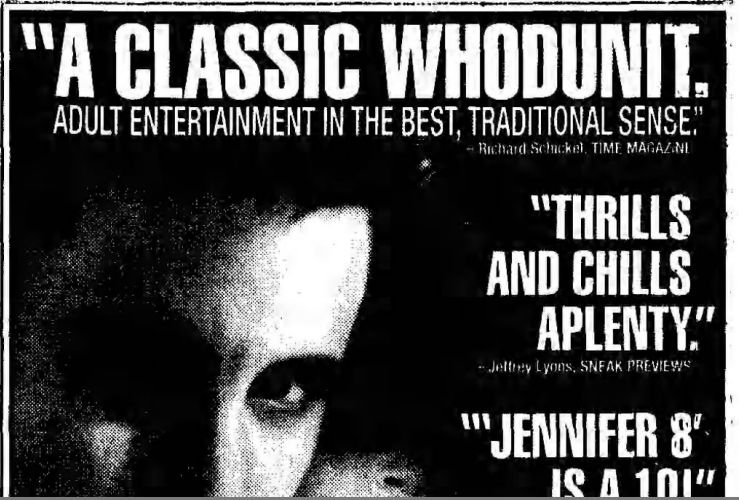
With three semi-acoustic side-kicks and some help from opening acts Taj Mahal and Clarence (Gatemouth) Brown, Shocked darted in and out of her various styles. Along the way, she joyously injected her own irrepressible personality and politics.

If her serious moments occasion-

ally seemed pedantic and the silliness sometimes *really* silly, she can be forgiven, since both come from her genuine enthusiasm. And how can you fault someone who in one week goes from playing at the President-elect's celebration in Little Rock to getting a jaded Hollywood crowd to do some giddy square-dance steps en masse?

Hee haw, indeed.

—S.H.



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