

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN
Perth W.A.

10 DEC 1992

Date

Folksy Michelle sings and talks way into hearts

MICHELLE SHOCKED

Concert Hall
December 8

THE Arkansas traveller rambled into Perth and stole the hearts of hundreds of fans — a mixed audience of the young and not so who had come to enjoy Michelle Shocked's unique folk songs and storytelling.

Between songs Shocked told delightful tales about ghosts, and the music and styles which have inspired her. This Australian tour marks five years' work on a trilogy of albums.

While sketching material from *Short Sharp Shocked* and *Captain Swing*, Shocked concentrated more on her latest release, *Arkansas Traveller*, and new unrecorded material.

The four-piece acoustic group opened with *When I Grow Up*, from *Short Sharp Shocked*, and a number from *Captain Swing* to explain her influences before *Over The Waterfall*.

On stage Shocked comes across as a lovable, gangling hayseed who instantly finds her way into your heart. Her simple, colourful narratives are delivered with a delightful shyness. From the outset the audience lapped it up, clapping and stamping through the collection of fiddle tunes.

Even if you've heard of square dancing you may not have heard about chair dancing. As a real ice-breaker everyone at the show learnt all about it, joining hands and rocking to the music.

Prodigal Daughter, *Weaving Way* and *Contest Coming* followed before volunteers helped bring the title track, *Arkansas Traveller*, to life.

Highlights of the evening included the successful single *Anchorage* and two new unrecorded songs, *Custom Cutter* and *Still Born*.

A lot of stamping and cheering brought the quartet back for an encore, *Come A Long Way*.

This show made me laugh and smile so hard my cheeks hurt. In my book, this was one of the best shows of the year.

Ara Jansen