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POP MUSIC / LISTENING ROOM

Here's a shocker: Singer rejects Fast Lane

By ERIC DEGGANS
PRESS MUSIC WRITER

It's not that unusual for bands at the club level to cancel concerts. When they do, it's usually chalked up to something like poor ticket sales, throat problems or some other freak occurrence.

But listeners checking out WHTG-FM last Friday heard a much different reason for the cancellation of unconventional folkie Michelle Shocked's show — scheduled for later that night at the Fast Lane in Asbury Park — courtesy of Shocked's husband and manager, Bart Bull.



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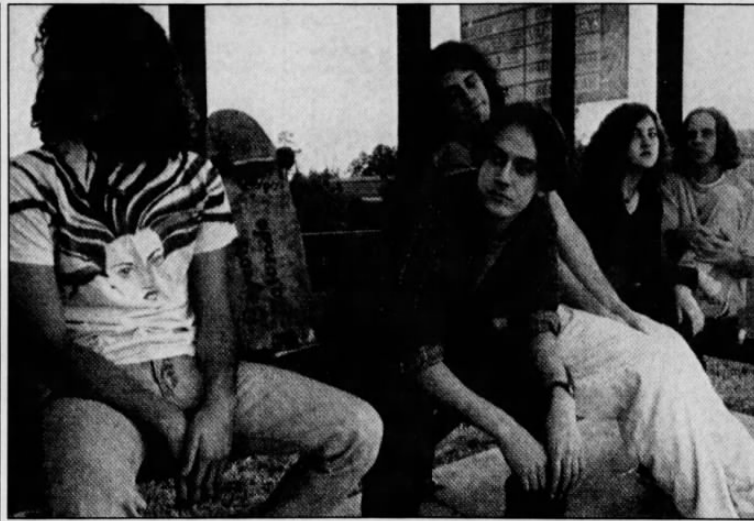
During an interview hosted by DJ Matt Pinfield, Bull accused Fast Lane owner Mark Grubman of trying to change their agreed-upon contract by hiring three local bands as opening acts and asking them to sell tickets to the event.

Days later, speaking on the telephone from another stop on Shocked's tour, Bull explained that Shocked wanted the show to unveil the direction of her yet-to-be recorded fourth album — expected to focus on funk and soul music — while exploring her previous records, which delved into folk, big-band swing and old-style "fiddle" music.

"The shortest show we've played has been over two hours long. And a set-up like this exploits local bands by making them hustle tickets."

In response to Bull's statements, Grubman said the opening bands had already been hired for the show when Shocked's management objected to the arrangement. Subsequent attempts to work out a compromise, which continued up until Bull and Shocked left for their radio interview, failed, he said.

"The main problem was the local bands — they wouldn't allow them, but I wanted them. I stand by my local bands, and I'm not going to blow them off for a national act."



● Chocolate U.S.A. is one of the 26 bands in Outbreak South.

Hyped as one of the biggest music industry conventions in the country, next week's New Music Seminar will feature more than 400 performers showing their stuff at New York City clubs and showcase concerts organized for the movers and shakers of today's music biz.

If you live at the Shore and have no intention of springing for the seminar's \$380 registration fee, this may not mean much to you. But a few local clubs have taken advantage of the event to bring down bands showcasing at the seminar for special shows they might not be able to put together otherwise.

Chief among these efforts is the second annual Outbreak South — scheduled at T-Birds Cafe in Asbury Park and the Brighton Bar and Cafe Bar, both in Long Branch — featuring three weeks of concerts by bands brought to the tri-state-area for the seminar and hungry for gigs.

Kicked off at the Brighton last Saturday with Irish punksters the Barleycorns, Outbreak South encompasses 26 bands headlining shows at the

three clubs, including: Athens, Ga., rockers Chocolate U.S.A. (at the Brighton July 23), New York City's Amazing Cherubs (at T-Birds next Friday) and Minneapolis' Dumpster Juice (at the Cafe Bar tomorrow night). Admission for all shows, except a Thursday appearance by San Francisco's Overwhelming Colorfast, is \$5.

Another event benefiting from the seminar's influence is T-Birds' Anti Groove Fest (8 p.m. tomorrow, \$5 admission), an all-day concert featuring aggressive, guitar-oriented bands suitable for frenetic moshing and stage diving. Heading the bill is Dallas-based Zen Pirates (a seminar performer), along with Undertoe, Urge, Perpetual Jones, Horschack 77 and Underdawgz.

If a night of high-energy, crowd surfing music doesn't hold much appeal, the Fast Lane is offering its own all-day Festival of Groove (2 p.m. to 2 a.m. tomorrow, \$10 admission) featuring bands from the Spin Doctors/Blues Travelers mold with tuneful, percolating jams. At the top of the bill is New York-based God Street Wine, with

From Good Homes, World Within and five more bands. Also on hand will be activists from Clean Ocean Action and Brookdale Community College's Ecology Alliance, hoping to educate the partying masses.

MORE STUFF: Legendary jazz trumpeter Maynard Ferguson at the Heiring Avenue Beach in Seaside Heights . . . The Authority brings its potent blend of funk, salsa, hip hop and jazz to Planet Surf tonight, at Joey Henderson's Surf Club in Ortleigh Beach . . . West Coast harpslinger Mark Hummel appears tonight at Jason's in Belmar . . . Long Branch rockers the Bruce Wacker Band celebrate the release of their self-titled debut disc tonight at the Cafe Bar in Long Branch . . . The Jayhawks tomorrow at the Stone Pony in Asbury Park . . . Paw appearing Sunday at the Fast Lane in Asbury Park . . . African-American roots music master Taj Mahal comes Thursday to Club Bene in Sayreville.

□ Eric Deggans is the Asbury Park Press music writer. Pop Music appears Fridays.