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Shocked cancels one show, plays another for free

A last-minute dispute with a promoter led Michelle Shocked to cancel her gig at Palookaville, she said.

But the audience didn't have to go far to find her. She played a surprise hour-long set a few doors down at the Catalyst.

"If the Catalyst hadn't accommodated our little folk Mass, it would have been much more distressing," said Shocked, signing autographs after the brief show.

Palookaville representatives were unavailable for comment late Thursday.

A man at the Palookaville door about 9:45 p.m. was telling ticketholders the show was canceled due to a conflict with the promoter, and that ticketholders would get a full refund.

But advance ticketholders who arrived early learned they had two ways to win: go to the short-but-free show from 9 to 10 p.m. at the Catalyst, and still get a refund on their \$18 ticket. Even the guest list was taken over to the Catalyst.

Those who bought \$3 tickets to the Catalyst band showcase Thursday also got to see Shocked, who opened the gig.

"It was a good deal," said the Catalyst's Peter Meninga. "People without (advance) tickets got to see a \$3 Michelle Shocked show, and the ticketholders got to see the show and still get a refund."

But it doesn't appear to be such a good deal for Shocked, who played for free and may not see any money for three scheduled San Francisco Bay Area club dates.

The dispute had nothing to do with Palookaville, but rather the promoter, who booked Shocked into the clubs then tried to renegotiate the deal at the last minute, Bart Bull, Shocked's husband, said backstage.

"Basically, a gun is put to your head," said Bull. "So we drew a line in the sand."

They backed out of Palookaville several hours before showtime.

Rather than let the audience down, Shocked — who considered renting a generator for an al fresco performance — called the Catalyst to see if they could accommodate her and her audience.

"Thanks to the Catalyst generosity, it was amazing," Shocked said.