

She's not shocked by success

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Michelle Shocked lists herself as a squatter, a feminist, a Texan, a picker/poet, a jailbird, an Army brat and a runaway.

There's more, but you get the idea. To those in the music industry, Shocked is a singer/songwriter who has shied up to produce an unexpected proportion. Her latest album, "Short, Sharp, Shocked" is receiving raves from critics and waves from college radio.

But excuse Ms. Shocked, if she is just blase about the whole thing.

"It's almost difficult not to sound pretentious," said Shocked, during a telephone interview from Atlanta, Ga., "but I'm not impressed by it all ... I'm really just fortunate to be surrounded by so many good people."

Shocked surrounds herself with many contemporary issues such as racism, the environment and housing. She's performing benefit concerts and is involved in such organizations as Shelter, WOMAD and YNCD.

Sometimes she has gone beyond getting involved. A picture on her latest album shows her being re-

strained rather physically by a police officer during a demonstration in San Francisco, Calif., in 1984.

THE PHOTO is a rather frightening one. Shocked is being grabbed by the throat and is screaming. The police officer has a slight look of bemusement.

Shocked resisted the proceedings by putting a well-placed foot in the general vicinity of one officer's groin area.

"I was really a token gesture on my part," said Shocked, dismissing the importance of her rebellious actions.

"You don't realize what is happening when you're herding you off like a pack of animals. Here you were raised to believe in the basic right of freedom of speech and here you are being charged with conspiracy for exercising it!"

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Shocked took on a Jack Kerouac existence, traveling and participating in various political activities. She was arrested in Dallas and was a rape victim in Italy.

SHE WAS living in the hills of Santa Cruz N.M., where she was placed into a mental institution in 1983 by her mother. She stayed there until "the government got me out."

"That's where the 'Short, Sharp, Shocked' came from," she said.

"Here I had been living away from home on my own as an adult ... and she still had that enormous amount of power in which she could put me in a mental institution."

Shocked has been at odds with anyone resembling Big Brother since.

Her musical background takes even more jagged proportions. Since she grew up in a Mormon fundamentalist home in Austin, Texas. She ran away to be with her peace-loving, hippie father, where she began to become politicized.

Her first album, "Texas Campfire Songs," was somewhat of a fluke. A fan had recorded one of her performances at a folk festival in Texas. With her permission, he pressed the event into vinyl where it shot up the

independent charts.

Polygram took note and signed Shocked. "Short, Sharp, Shocked" is her first album on the label. On stage, she's politically vocal, but provides no answers. She's not sure she has them.

"I'm touring with Billy Bragg right now. He's very defined politically," she said. "You ask him what he is and he'll tell you he's a socialist. Ask me, the answer is vague and quite useless honestly."

SHOCKED IS more busy trying to establish her roots, not trying to make grand political statements. She hopes others take an interest.

"I'm putting my hand of faith in establishing some roots," she said. "Then maybe I can step back and look what other people have done with it. Maybe I'll be inspired by that."

"But what if that doesn't happen? Oh, well."

Michelle Shocked will perform with Billy Bragg and Mancini at 7:30 p.m. tonight at the Power Center, 121 Fletcher, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$14.50. For more information, call 89-MUSIC.

Michelle Shocked has drawn critical praise for her latest album on PolyGram, "Short, Sharp, Shocked."

IN CONCERT

BILLY BRAGG

Billy Bragg will perform with special guests, Michelle Shocked and Mancini, at 7:30 tonight at the Power Center, 121 Fletcher, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$14.50. For more information, call 89-MUSIC.

ROD STEWART

Rod Stewart will perform at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 18, at The Palace of Auburn Hills, 3777 Lapeer Road, Auburn Hills. Tickets are \$18.50. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6656.

THE CALL

The Call, with Harry Dean Stanton, will perform on Wednesday, Oct. 19, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For more information, call 951-MELT.

STATIC ALPHABET

Static Alphabet will perform, with special guests, True Blue Hearts, on Thursday, Oct. 20, at Paycheck's Lounge, 2932 Caniff, Hamtramck. For more information, call 872-8934.

GUESS

Guess will perform on Friday, Oct. 21, at Lili's 21, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck. For more information, call 875-6555.

PSYCHIK TV

Psychik TV will perform on Friday, Oct. 21, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For more information, call 951-MELT.

SINGLES

CLASSICAL

Here are the top 10 classical selections on Dick Wallace's midday program on WQRS-FM.

1. "Italian Symphony," Mendelssohn.
2. "La Gazzla Ladrone Overture," Rossini.
3. "Symphony No. 40," Mozart.
4. "The Lark Ascending," Ralph Vaughan Williams.
5. "Karelia Suite," Sibelius.
6. "Rodeo," Copland.
7. "Four Seasons," Vivaldi.
8. "Water Music Suite," Handel.
9. "Academic Overture," Brahms.
10. "Symphony No. 9 in," Dvorak.

COUNTRY

Here are the top 10 songs receiving airplay on WCIX-AM 1150, a country station in Detroit.

1. "Honky Tonk Moon," Randy Travis.
2. "Do You Love Me" Just Say Yes," Highway 101.
3. "Gonna Take a Lot of River," Oak Ridge Boys.
4. "The Gift," The Carters.
5. "Am I Crazy," The Statler Brothers.
6. "Saturday Night Special," Conway Twitty.
7. "Strong Enough to Bend," Tanya Tucker.
8. "That's What Your Love Does to Me," Holly Dunn.
9. "I'm Gonna Love Her on the Radio," Charley Pride.
10. "Desperately," Don Williams.

is not dismissing any possibilities.

"You could write a thesis about it," Goobers said.

Right now, Goobers and the Peas are busy writing new material for their debut show. They mix a barebones, rootsy sound with contemporary elements.

For instance, "In the City" touches on urban life from a Wyoming perspective.

"Taxi cabs, neon light and Broadway shows/Muggers steal yer wallet, punch you right in the nose/Forget the rats, trashy streets and heavy pollution/If you want to be cultured, man, I got a solution . . .

In fact, Goobers is pointing out the similarities between Morrissey of the Smiths and Williams. Both were depressive sorts. Even their hair-styles were similar. Maybe Williams is living in Morrissey's body. Goobers

ORIGINALS comprise nearly 75 percent of their music. The other 25 percent is devoted to some classic covers like Eddie Money's "Shakin' and Bachman's "I'm an Overdrive's Ain't It a Nothing Yet." There's a few tunes from John Denver and Williams and you get the picture.

Their brand of music went over well with college chums at MSU. Whether the Motor City music majors pounce on it remains to be seen. Neither Goobers nor the Pea sound too worried.

"It could be a disaster," Goobers said. "I think anyone who is into heavy metal or a skinhead would enjoy us."

Goobers and the Peas will perform on Thursday, Oct. 27, at Paycheck's Lounge, 2932 Caniff, Hamtramck. For more information, call 872-8934.

REVIEWS



Keith Richards is known more for his wild man persona than his musicality, and that's too bad.

He acknowledged that persona in a recent interview. "Ol' Keith said he sometimes jokes with friends about what 'that crazy Keith Richards' would do in such and such a situation."

But to appreciate Keith Richards the musician, you have to look past the heroin use and the boozing. There's a formidable musical legacy to consider.

With that Jagger guy, Richards has co-written some of the best rock songs ever — "Satisfaction," "Hotter Than You Think," "Brown Sugar" and "Angie."

And don't forget some great Stones ballads — "Ruby Tuesday," "Wild Horses" and "Angie." While the Stones' sweet side has in recent years been downplayed, it's still a part of what Richards' is all about.

And how about Keith Richards the

TALK IS CHEAP

— Keith Richards

guitarist? It's curious that when the subject of great guitarists is raised, Clapton and Van Halen are almost always mentioned before Richards.

But rock guitar is more than just fast single-note work. Some will tell you the "Satisfaction" riff is more rocking, more moving than anything Van Halen ever wrote.

And those chord figures, which drive "Brown Sugar" like a stick shift Chevy picking up speed, are one of the most lasting, memorable sounds of rock and roll — and will be remembered longer than many a hot solo.

It might be said that "Talk Is Cheap" has two flaws. For one, all the songs generally have the same instrumentation. A song or two backed just by acoustic guitars would have been nice. Also, no one song seems destined to join the Stones' very best numbers.

Still, the album is a joy, with its clean, stripped-down rock and roll sounds and plenty of soulful Keith Richards' vocals.

— Kevin Brown



RATTLE AND HUM

— U2

merchandise and overall U2 hype.

But I do believe that the band members themselves are still in control of what brought them attention in the first place: Their music.

"Rattle and Hum" is a good indication of how U2 is attempting to progress while keeping fans happy. I think a lot of U2 fans have the intelligence to accept when the band makes some changes to their "fairy" songs. For example, here they have a gospel choir join them on "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For."

They have discovered the song form of songwriting, as opposed to the music soundtrack type. If you have heard the new single, "Desire," you'll know what I mean. The song has very little Edge-as-a-guitar-hero parts, and is more akin to a straightforward Buddy Holly rock'n'roll song.

The live cuts on the LP still feature Bono as preacher/politician for

the common man. Some of his wailing can be annoying. He seems to be like that his bellow/scream, as on "Pride (In the Name of Love)," makes him sound pretentious where as his understated vocals, as on "New Year's Heartland," are much more effective.

Actually "Heartland" is the only new song which is reminiscent of previous U2 albums, in this case "October."

They do a few cover songs, a weak version of the Beatles "Sgt. Pepper's" a rowing version of Bob Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower," and B.B. King's "When Love Comes to Town" on which Bono himself does most of the vocals and a beautiful guitar solo.

It is good to see that they are not just settling back and re-living "War Part II." They're still challenging themselves and, hopefully, their audience.

Surly, the only question left is: What about U2 in: Will they finally pay off the Irish national debt and re-name the country Ireland with its capitol city, Dublin?

— Cormac Wright