

Photos "primarily show the tired, the sad and the elderly"

Photo Jacques Berube

## Exhibit of candid photos

**Jacques Berube**  
*Ici...Ailleurs...Here...Elsewhere...*  
 Latitude 53 Gallery

review by Cathy Duong

Jacques Berube's work at Latitude 53 Gallery is a pleasant surprise. The Quebecois artist offers a mini-album of photographs taken in Quebec, the USA and Europe from 1984-86 in his latest exhibition entitled "Ici...Ailleurs..." (or "Here... Elsewhere...") for our part of the country. Most of his photographs let the viewer take a candid peek at people's actions, and ranges from amusing but more often sombre scenes. One photograph shows important officials lined up with all sorts of grimaces, smirks and silly looks on their faces; another one shows a bag lady sifting through a garbage can.

Berube shows the social aspects of the locations in which the photographs were taken. They primarily show the tired, the sad and the elderly in their moments of contemplation. The mood evoked in the viewer is one of subdued desolation. An example is a photograph taken in Tadoussac, Montreal in 1986. It shows a man with a walking cane

slumping against a huge stone with a look of despair on his face. Behind him is the outline of a cemetery fence.

Berube's emphasis for naturalness in his pictures is accomplished by the many scenes of tranquil streets during or after a rainfall. Nature is further perceived by a scene taken in St. Malo (1984). It shows an unusual view of a bird's eye view of a flock of birds hovering above a man walking on a cobblestone street. One can perceive the contrast between the bird's fluttering wings and the hard sidewalk. The man in the middle is shown between his natural and concrete environment.

Berube makes good use of the architecture of his street scenes. The edges and outlines of buildings, lamp posts, and streets provide strong lines for the composition of the pictures. There are good contrasts in these black and white photographs and they are expertly taken as shown by the clear quality of the pictures.

For those of you who have an interest in photography, or who just want to view some very interesting photographic work, the exhibition will be at Latitude 53 until November 29.

## Shocked: an instant legend

interview by Sandy Stiff

So, you ask, who is this woman who calls herself Michelle Shocked? Well, in folk and roots music circles she has become something of an instant legend. It is because of the Walkman.

You see, in 1986 Michelle Shocked was a volunteer at the Kerrville Folk Festival in Texas. She was introduced to British record producer Pete Lawrence, who later walked up to the campfire where she was sitting and asked her if he could record some of her songs on his Sony Professional Walkman, says Shocked: "I didn't know he just wanted a few songs, I just sang them. All my songs."

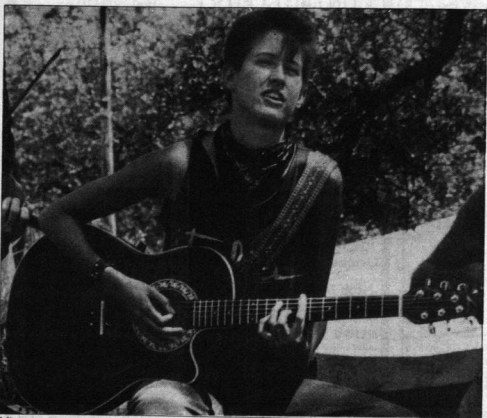
Shocked explains that at the time she had just come back from Amsterdam where she had been involved in the squatting movement. No one was paying much attention to her music, so she was playing to "radiators and chairs." One reason she went to Kerrville, she says, was that she "really needs the companionship and inspiration from other

songwriters."

After Kerrville, Shocked went to New York where Lawrence contacted her about pressing that Walkman recorded tape into a record. Shocked's reaction was "well sure, go ahead. Good luck." She says she did like the idea of the record because it meant that what she was doing "wouldn't be completely lost in a time sense because (she'd) been writing songs almost like a diary." On the other hand she says, "I didn't really feel like it would be worthwhile to go out and learn all the things I've now had to learn," about a career in the music business.

So the record was pressed, very audible accompaniment of campfire-side crickets and all, and *The Texas Campfire Tapes* in a short time reached the top of the British indie charts. Michelle Shocked now has a sort of cult status in Britain and is quickly achieving the same in North America.

So who is this woman who calls herself Michelle Shocked?



Michelle Shocked sings at Dinwoodie on Thursday.

## The tale of Ballets Jazz

interview by Rosa Jackson

Since its inception fifteen years ago, Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal has gained recognition in five continents and forty countries, bringing fame to Canadian dance.

The company's success has been largely due to the efforts of its artistic director, Genevieve Salbaing. Salbaing has an extensive background in dance. She studied classical ballet in Morocco and in Paris, where she was born, and was soloist with the Washington Concert Ballet. "Most of my training was in ballet, but I was very, very interested in jazz," she says.

It was after her husband, to whom she has now been married for 45 years, was transferred to Montreal that Salbaing began to choreograph professionally. "I was always interested in choreography," she says. "By the time I was 17 or 18 I had already started to make up dances."

In Montreal, Salbaing choreographed her first productions for Les Ballets Chiraef. She later worked with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and with several other companies as a freelance choreographer. In 1972, she decided to form a company that would "devote itself to jazz music." Her aim was to "establish a strong, good company that would become internationally known."

"It takes time to get a repertoire... it takes a few years to get off the ground," comments

Salbaing, adding that she never expected to come so far with the company. "It has progressed from a very small group to a very successful company."

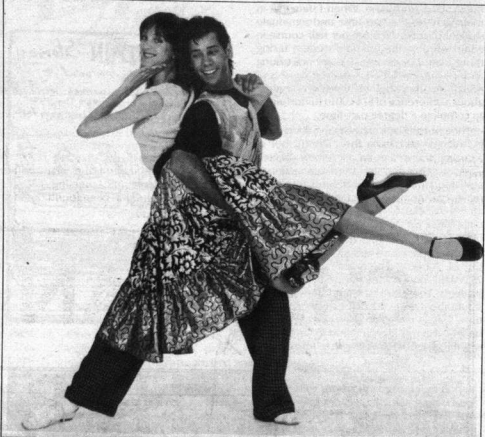
Salbaing sets high standards for her dancers. They all have "strong classical and modern technique, musicality, personality, and a sense of theatre. They are an interesting group of people with whom to choreograph." She says also that "it is very important that the dancers look great. They are beautiful to look at, energetic, and dance with a lot of passion and sensuality."

According to Salbaing, the company's touring schedule is "very demanding." In a year the company performs 125 times throughout the world. "In South America and Africa we get an especially good reception," says Salbaing. "They really let go."

Les Ballets Jazz's style has been called "spirit lifting." This quality is important to Salbaing. "The company is accessible to everybody," she says. "They are energetic, and the music is good."

The company's present production features a wide variety of music, from ballet to tango to the Art of Noise. Salbaing has recruited choreographers from all over the world to put the show together. "The company has an international flavor, but the dancers are Canadian," she says.

Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal will be at SUB Theatre, November 12-14.



Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal, now internationally known.

Photo Ian Westbury

Shocked ran away from home at age sixteen and says, "I'm one of the few runaways that I know that, like, went on and put herself through school." When in her junior year at the University of Texas, Shocked said a conversation with her father helped shape the direction her studies would take. "He said to me: 'You know, daughter, it doesn't matter what you study in school — whatever it is you learn, you're going to want to express and communicate to other people.' And that word communication got stuck in my head."

Michelle thus ended up with a degree in speech, with a concentration in the oral interpretation of literature. Shocked feels that this is what she is doing with her degree. When it comes to songwriting, Shocked says: "I like stories and what's more I like humorous stories."

Shocked's earliest musical memories are of her mother singing in the church choir, and of summers spent living with her father, where she learned to play guitar. For the rest of the year she would live with her mother and stepfather — who was in the military — wherever he was stationed. Shocked's family was also devoutly Mormon, and she explains: "I always thought of that as something of a double negative you know, military... Mormon, and maybe that's what happened — it kind of cancelled itself out." It did so for Michelle, at any rate. "I think by the time I ran away it was just a typical rebellion. I wasn't going to accept anyone else's version

of reality."

Part of her reality was becoming involved in the squatting movement: first in San Francisco where Shocked says there was a squatting scene corollary to the hardcore scene (skinheads living in an abandoned warehouse, and so on); and then in Amsterdam in 1985, where she also became involved with so-called "Pirate radio."

Back to New York in 1986, Shocked became involved with the homeless of that city. She says, "I was part of a group of people who felt really strongly that we would be doing (the homeless) a good turn by introducing them to the concept of squatting," the intent of the squatting movement being people helping themselves.

While Shocked's songs may not be that highly politicized, the idea behind them is, "That's kind of what I'm on about with my music too, you know?" she comments. "You don't need to glorify all these pop stars and let them make music for you. Music is something that belongs to people and they don't need to put it in other people's hands, they can do it themselves."

This woman who calls herself Michelle Shocked has "a fantasy that people will bring their instruments and sit in the audience and play along. I'm just trying to inspire people to be more casual about this whole approach to performing and music."

Michelle Shocked plays Dinwoodie Lounge Thursday with the Oyster Band.