

Scenes

Folk music fans to have ball

Boston singer kicks off series tomorrow night

By STEVE SAUNDERS
Staff Writer

Portland may not yet be a folk mecca, but the 3-year-old Portland Folk Club is encouraging a resurgence in interest in traditional music in the area with a busy fall schedule.

Starting tomorrow with a performance by Boston folksinger Fred Small, the club is sponsoring its most ambitious series of concerts yet this fall, and beginning next month it will co-sponsor a new monthly variety show.

The "radio rodeo," to be taped and rebroadcast on radio station WMPG, adds a third item to the club's menu, which has included smaller-scale concert series in the past and a series of regular monthly "music swap" jam sessions since last year.

The five concerts this fall feature some well-known names, and some performers who will be making their first appearance in Maine:

- Fred Small, who will perform tomorrow at 8 p.m. at State Street Church, 159 State St., is a former attorney who gave up his law practice four years ago to devote full time to music. He is described as a topical balladeer in the tradition of Woody Guthrie, Malvina Reynolds and Tom Paxton. Maine's Katherine Rhoda, who specializes in Lithuanian folk music, will open the show. Admission is \$5.

- John O'Connor, a Seattle-based singer-songwriter, will inaugurate a new "mini-concert" format Oct. 18 at the Irish Village Pub, 269 Commercial St. O'Connor writes songs about hard times, carrying on the tradition of Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston and Pete Seeger. Admission is \$3.

- Wild Rose, a Boston-area duo specializing in Balkan and Eastern European songs, as well as contemporary songs from Great Britain and the United States, will perform Oct. 27 at the First Parish Church, 425 Congress St. Both Wild Rose and their opening performer, Jennifer Caven of Falmouth, are planning to include a few ghost songs in their program in honor of Halloween. Admission is \$5.

- Unknown Camden singer-songwriter Gordon Bok will perform Nov. 17 at the State Street Church, his first concert in Portland in several years. Introducing Bok will be the



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duo Salem Street. Tickets are \$5 in advance and \$6 at the door.

- To close out the fall concert season, a folk club "stalwarts night" will be held Dec. 2 at the Irish Village Pub, giving some of the club's volunteers, and some of the regular performers from the music swap jam sessions, a chance to perform for a live audience.

The State Street Radio Rodeo program will have its debut on Oct. 28 at 2 p.m. at the State Street Church. The variety show, jointly sponsored by the folk club and the church's Polyarts program, will feature such local artists as the Crooked Stove Pipe Band, Salem

Street, Martin Steingesser and Nancy Tyn-dall.

Organizer Peter Twichell said the program is an attempt to recreate an old-time radio variety show and was inspired, in part, by public radio's "A Prairie Home Companion." Admission to the live performance is \$1, but the program will be taped and broadcast the following two Sundays at 8 p.m. on WMPG radio. A second show is planned for Nov. 18.

The club is also continuing to sponsor its round-robin music swaps, where anyone can come share a song, story, or whatever, on the third Monday of each month at the Irish Village Pub.