

Spring brings big-name shows

From staff reports

Spring has arrived blooming with major shows as Ziggy Marley, the Kinks, Michelle Shocked, Melissa Etheridge and Pearl Bailey will visit the region's theaters for concerts.

The parade of shows begins Friday night in Waterville with Marley's concert with the Melody Makers. The show, at the Wadsworth Gymnasium at Colby College, starts at 8.

Tickets are \$13 and are available at Ticketron locations, the Record Exchange in Portland and at student activities' offices at Bates College, Bowdoin College, Colby College and the University of Southern Maine.

Ziggy, son of the late Bob Marley, has shouldered a musical tradition his father established a generation ago.

The elder Marley's musical talent and political passions helped transform reggae from a little-known form of Jamaican street music into a globally popular and important art.

Although Ziggy is talented, critics have noted he has yet to dress his tunes in the passionate trappings that his father used. Even so, his concert in Portland last year was fun and energetic.

For more information, call the Colby student activities office at 872-3000.

Fans of new acoustic music may wish to stay in Portland and take in a music revue headlined by singer Michelle Shocked.

The show, Friday at the Portland City Hall Auditorium, begins at 8 p.m. Appearing with Shocked is songwriter John Wesley Harding and the Hawaiian-based band Poi Dog Pondering.

Shocked's recent success has been — excuse the pun — a little shocking.

Only three years ago, Shocked was singing her funny, yet often melancholy, folk music on street corners and at small folk concert.

Her first commercial success came after an entrepreneur used a pocket cassette deck to record Shocked singing next to a campfire at a Texas folk festival.

That recording became a fast-selling album in England.

Since then, Shocked has made two studio-produced albums which critics have praised for their sensitive tongue-in-cheek lyrics and their simple style.

Shocked, it seems, can't help poking fun. Her most recent single, "The Greener Side," was made into a video full of pictures of flexing, barely-dressed male body builders.

With "The Green Side" video, Shocked parodies videos made by male singers that generally are full of writhing, half-naked women.

Tickets for the Shocked show are \$18.50 and \$16.50 and are available at Ticketron locations, Strawberries Records and Tapes locations, at the Record Exchange in Portland and by calling Teletron at 1-800-382-8080.

If you want music a little smoother from veterans a little older, steer to the Portsmouth (N.H.) Music Hall for Saturday's show by Pearl Bailey and Louie Bellson.

Calling the husband-and-wife team of Bellson and Bailey jazz legends would be hackneyed. Let's say instead that Bellson and Bailey are stylists who created some of big band music's most beautiful and enduring compositions.

Probably less is known about Bellson than about his famous vocalist wife.

Bellson, 65, grew up in Illinois and began drumming at age 3 at his father's music store. At 17, he won a drumming competition and joined band-leader Gene Krupa's orchestra. He then played with Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey and Henry James.

In 1952, he married Bailey in London. The two now work together in the Pearl Bailey Quartet.

The only tickets left for the

concert are \$75 and include a pre-concert reception across Chestnut Street from the music hall.

Money from the concert is being raised to benefit the 112-year-old hall.

For tickets, call 603-436-2400.

On Sunday night, the Kinks — one of England's longest-surviving rock bands — will perform at the Bowdoin College gymnasium in Brunswick.

But those who have waited until now to buy tickets are out of luck — the show is sold out.

The concert that may provoke the most comment among local audiences will happen May 10 and will feature an artist barely heard on local radio stations.

Melissa Etheridge has had two Grammy nominations in a row, been praised by critics and received Canada's prestigious Juno Award as International Entertainer of the Year.

Haven't heard her stuff? No surprise there.

Etheridge has had less radio time than many other pop singers because critics and radio executives apparently have a hard time pegging her. Is she country? Folk? Rock? Nobody seems to agree.

Etheridge relies on a couple of the main tools of folk — the acoustic guitar and thoughtful, introspective lyrics.

Yet, she electrifies her music with a passion and energy seen most often in rock music and rhythm and blues.

Whatever it is she sings, Etheridge is a spirited and very entertaining performer, one whose style should suit the intimate Portland City Hall Auditorium.

Tickets for the 8 p.m. show are \$18.50 and are available at Ticketron locations, Strawberries Records and Tapes locations, the Record Exchange in Portland and by calling Teletron at 1-800-382-8080.