



The Guys' All Star Shoe Band, left, will join Garrison Keillor on the Orpheum Theatre stage this fall as Keillor brings "A Prairie Home Companion" radio show to Sioux City.

## 'Prairie Home' comes to Orpheum

By Michele Linck  
Journal Staff Writer

KWIT-KOJI FM 90 radio served up a big announcement with a side of Powdermilk Biscuits Monday at the Orpheum Theatre.

On Jan. 17, public radio superstar Garrison Keillor will broadcast his show, "A Prairie Home Companion," live from the Orpheum Theatre. "Powdermilk Biscuits, heavens they're tasty — and expeditious," crooned Gretchen Gondek, KWIT-KOJI general manager, mimicking Keillor's catch phrase as she took a bite of a biscuit to kick off Monday's press conference. Powdermilk Biscuits is a fictional sponsor of the program.

The two-hour show is aired by more than 550 public radios stations throughout the country and is heard by more than 4 million listeners. It has been heard on KWIT since 1978 when the station first went on the air, but has never staged a show in Sioux City.

Tickets will go on sale to the public Dec. 9 through the Auditorium box office and Ticketmaster, but will be available in advance to the Friends of FM 90, the station's supporters. Ticket prices will be \$65, \$44 and \$27.50. A \$2 theater restoration fee will be added to each ticket.

Appearing with Keillor in Sioux City will be actors Sue Scott and Tim Russell, as well as his regular band, the Guys' All Star Shoe Band. Musical guests on the show feature an eclectic array of styles, including

acoustic, classical, folk, country, jazz, blues and bluegrass.

Keillor is perhaps best known for his storytelling prowess, especially his signature, "The News from Lake Wobegon," with its tagline, "and that's the news from Lake Wobegon, where the women are strong, the men are good looking and all the children are above average."

Other regular settings for his fictional tale-spinning include the Chatterbox Cafe, the Sidetrack Tap and Ralph's Pretty Good Grocery. Regular listeners are also acquainted with Bertha's Kitty Boutique, the fussy French maitre d and Keillor's private-eye character, Guy Noir.

"A Prairie Home Companion" broadcast includes regular plugs for fictional sponsors. Among them, in addition to the biscuit folks, are the Castup Advisory Board and the National Duct Tape Council.

Greg Grupp, president of the Friends of FM 90, said the actual live broadcast is possible only because of the support of the Friends of FM 90 and others, such as underwriter John Gleason and the Marina Inn in South Sioux City.

Keillor does only 10 to 12 road shows each year, broadcasting mostly from his home venue, The Fitzgerald Theatre in St. Paul, Minn., so KWIT-KOJI was crowing about its catch Monday.

"This is the third year we have sent in a formal application," said Linda Hartje, a KWIT-KOJI marketing associate. "We knew we were very close last year in getting the show. This year,

## Corman, Conway join Broadway series

Harvey Korman and Tim Conway will kick off the 2004-05 Broadway Series next fall with their show of stand-up comedy and sketches, it was announced Monday.

Sioux City's Orpheum Theatre will be among the first stops on the comedy duo's tour. The pair entertained audiences for 10 years on "The Carol Burnett Show," earning legions of fans and four Emmy Awards apiece.

They were recently elected to the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame.

Korman and Conway first introduced their concert show in 1999. It was meant to be a short-term project, but was so well received that they have been playing steadily for the past three years in theaters around the country.

Korman first attracted attention on a TV series that starred Danny Kaye. After joining Burnett's show, he played a prominent role in almost every one of the show's skits. His films include "Blazing Saddles," "High Anxiety," and "History of the World: Part I."

As one of the anchor events for the 2004-05 Broadway Series, Korman and Conway will perform two shows in October next year.

through many, many e-mails back and forth we did secure the show. So, it's a major coup." She said hundreds of cities apply to host the handful of remote broadcasts each year.

Dr. Robert Dunker, president of Western Iowa Tech Community College, holder of KWIT-KOJI's license and the station's headquarters, said getting the show has been a long-time dream. "And the restoration of this magnificent theater has made that dream become a reality," he said, "because Garrison Keillor plays in restored theaters and does not play in modern events centers."

Dave Bernstein, representing

the Orpheum, said, "We always had (getting "A Prairie Home Companion") at the back of our minds when we started the Orpheum project."

Mayor Craig Berenstein said the live broadcast will build on the national exposure the Orpheum has already garnered for the city. "Having the ability to seek another 4 (million) visitors who will know the event is occurring in Sioux City is phenomenal and encouraging," he said.

"A Prairie Home Companion" can be heard on KWIT-KOJI FM at 5 p.m. each Saturday, with a repeat broadcast at 2 p.m. on Sundays.