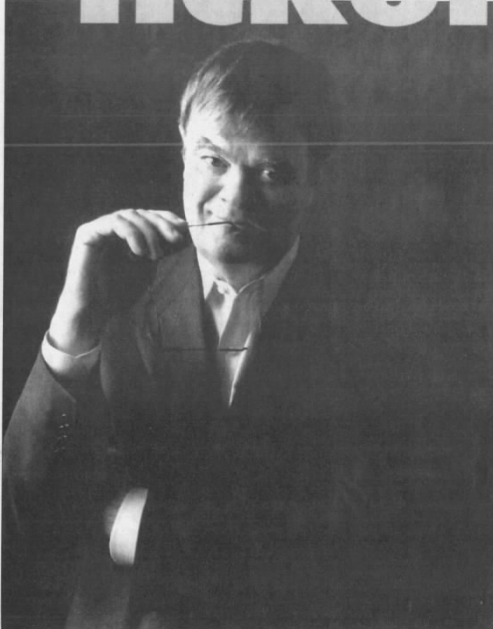


THAT'S THE ticket



GARRISON KEILLOR joins the Fox Valley Symphony for a show at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center.

By Terri Dougherty
Post-Crescent staff writer

The Fox Valley Symphony knew it scored a coup when it booked a performance with Garrison Keillor of Lake Wobegon and "Prairie Home Companion" fame.

But the impact of bringing in the author and radio personality for "A Night with Garrison Keillor" really hit home when tickets for the symphony event showed up on eBay.

"We have sold out other concerts before but never had a demand beyond the sellout," said Marta Weldon, the symphony's executive director. "To have them scalped, that's a whole new thing."

Tickets for the Tuesday event, originally priced at \$22.50 to \$72.50, were going for \$400-plus at one point. Tick-

Garrison Keillor brings with him big interest and a big demand for symphony show


WHAT: "A Night with Garrison Keillor"

WHERE: Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, downtown Appleton

WHEN: Tuesday

COST: \$22.50 to \$72.50. Tickets are sold out, but call the PKC box office to check for returns.

INFO: 920-730-3760 or www.foxcitiespac.com. For a taste of Keillor's style, see <http://prairiehome.publicradio.org>.



TUESDAY'S PERFORMANCE will be similar to programs Garrison Keillor has done with other symphonies.

ets went on sale in August and were sold out by Christmas.

"He really is a big deal for a town our size," Weldon said. "It's saying something that he's coming here to perform with our orchestra."

Keillor's wit and the symphony's music will harmonize at the event, which will be directed by Phillip Brunelle. Brunelle is Keillor's music director, and his friendship with symphony board member Tom Boldt laid the groundwork for Keillor's appearance.

Once Boldt convinced his friend to bring Keillor to the

the Performing Arts Center box office to check on availability.

The symphony is in a state of "excited anticipation" as it prepares for the event, Weldon said.

"I know all our musicians are working really hard, as they always do, but because of who he is there's that added extra push to get it right."

The performance in Appleton will be similar to programs Keillor has done with symphonies such as the New York Philharmonic. It will be interactive, involving both the audience and the musicians.

"It's not a narration," said Brian Sas, the symphony's operations and box office manager, "but comic scenarios with the audience and orchestra."

The classical repertoire will include Mendelssohn's "Selections from a Midsummer Night's Dream" and a piece by Bill McGlaughlin of National Public Radio.

Adding a creative flair to the music will be Keillor's popular wit, which has a special resonance with Midwestern audiences.

"I know we have a huge group of devotees to 'Prairie Home Companion,'" Weldon said. "He's a fixture in American culture."

Submitted photos

Terri Dougherty can be reached at 920-993-1000, ext. 243, or at tdougherty@postcrescent.com.