

Friday, August 22, 2008 **venue**

STAGE 

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Lake Wobegon road show comes west

By **KATHALEEN ROBERTS**
Journal Staff Writer

When Garrison Keillor wraps that molasses baritone around the phone lines, images of the Chatterbox Cafe and Norwegian bachelor farmers surface unbidden. You fall through the "Prairie Home" looking glass into a rabbit hole of memory.

Keillor is bringing his "Prairie Home Companion 'Home of the Heart'" Rhubarb Tour to the Santa Fe Opera at 8 p.m. Tuesday with country star Suzy Bogguss.

The author/screenwriter/radio and film star spins homespun corn, transcending the pone through sincerity and his own gentle brand of humor.

He says the Santa Fe show won't be broadcast.

"This is a vacation from broadcasting," he said via telephone from a spot in Bismarck, N.D. "Broadcasting is hard work, dear, and this tour is fun. This is a man in his extremely late years having fun."

In conversation, Keillor comes across as thoughtful, deep and a tad melancholy, if resigned to his success. He uses words with the precision of a diamond slicing glass.

Now 66, he says he first visited the opera years ago when he took in a John Crosby production of "La Boheme." Although the show was "fabulous," he said he still hasn't quite made up his mind about Santa Fe. It might have something to do with a Midwestern disinclination to brag.

"Every time you go to Santa Fe, you're surrounded by people who tell you how wonderful it is," he said. "I do know that when you come to St. Paul, you're not surrounded by people telling you how wonderful it is. When we pick you up from the airport, we start apologizing to you. The people I meet in New

"Prairie Home Companion" 2008 Rhubarb Tour

With **Suzy Bogguss**

WHEN: 8 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 26

WHERE: Santa Fe Opera, five miles north of Santa Fe on U.S. 84/285

HOW MUCH: \$56 to \$78 for general seating. \$250 for the gala, which includes premium orchestra seating, VIP parking, pre-show dinner with Garrison Keillor. \$100 of the \$250 is a tax-deductible donation to the New Mexico Museum Foundation. Tickets available at the SFO box office or by calling (505) 986-5900 or toll-free (800) 280-4654

Mexico who have moved from Minnesota, they have betrayed where God has placed them. I just want to pinch them."

Notorious for his last-minute script changes, Keillor hasn't quite nailed down exactly what will transpire on stage here. But show sleuth Guy Noir won't be prowling the city's streets to dig the dirt from "a city that knows how to keep its secrets."

"Guy won't investigate" Santa Fe, Keillor said. "I tell sort of a Guy Noir story. There's a woman in a red dress ... and a shot of gin straight up."

Fans can expect the traditional audience greetings gathered after intermission. Regular listeners know the quirkier, the better.

"The reason they might sound invented to you is we do have a weakness for doing the odd one," he conceded. "If someone wants to say hello to their child in Iraq, we would definitely put that in. Otherwise, it would just be 'Happy birthday to Susie.'"

Half of the singing cowboy duo Dusty and Lefty will appear.





Garrison Keillor brings his "Prairie Home Companion" tour to the Santa Fe Opera on Tuesday.

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