

Reliable 'Companion'

6 THINGS TO LOOK FOR WHEN GARRISON KEILLOR PERFORMS THURSDAY AT DPAC

By ED CONDRAN
Correspondent

Garrison Keillor's fans would be woebegone without the soothing baritone voice of "A Prairie Home Companion," the Minnesota Public Radio show broadcast nationally on NPR. But it doesn't look like Keillor—his given name is actually "Gary"—is going to give them the chance to miss him. The longtime radio show host, who will perform Thursday at the Durham Performing Arts Center, teased his retirement in a 2011 interview with AARP Bulletin, but took it back just a few months later. So rest assured that Keillor isn't going anywhere anytime soon—except from city to city on his "An Evening with Garrison Keillor" tour.

1 Lutheran tales: Lutherans are a favorite Keillor muse, so you'll certainly be hit with a fair share of stories and jokes with repressed Lutherans at the punchline. If you've listened to "Prairie Home Companion," you know the drill: "Even Catholics up here are Lutherans."

2 Ah, the suffering: Your head will swim with visions of endless Midwest winters and perhaps some stories about bologna sandwiches. (Hey! Since when does delicious bologna equal suffering?!)

3 Cat people, beware: If Keillor reprises his well-known theory about felines—"Cats are intended to teach us that not everything in nature has a purpose"—there may be some harrumphing from cat lovers in the audience. We'll defer to the great American humorist Mark Twain on this one: "When a man loves cats, I am his friend and comrade, without further introduction."

4 Aging white folks: Let's face it, it'll be an NPR kind of crowd. Keillor's core audience is comprised of boomers with low hip quotients but a high percentage of hip replacements. They'll certainly turn out for their man (as we hit press almost a week before the show, 85 percent of the venue was sold).

6 Some local color: Raleigh-based musician Joe Newberry is a frequent guest on "A Prairie Home Companion." Newberry will be at Thursday's show and just might perform a couple of numbers with Keillor. There go the other 15 percent of ticket sales!

5 Prairie Dogs: Keillor's devoted flock will meet en masse, but, OK, *this* you may not see: a re-creation of the hilarious "Prairie Home Companion" fan tailgating parody from last season's "Portlandia" TV show. In it, recurring characters Malcolm (Fred Armison) and Kris (Carrie Brownstein) set up a sedate tailgate at a Keillor event in Portland. Their tailgating food of choice? Soup. "You want a really low flame," Malcolm explains. "You want it so—you want it *off*." Later, a streaker is admonished to carry his activity to a non-NPR "low-brow" event—like a football game. It would be awesome if Keillor poked back at that dynamic Northwestern duo.



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Details

What: An Evening with Garrison Keillor
When: 7:30 p.m. Thursday (Jan. 29)
Where: Durham Performing Arts Center, 123 Vivian St., Durham
Cost: \$35-\$60
Info: 919-680-2787 or dpacnc.com