

From Keillor, a Danish Christmas

By Scott Alarik
Special to the Globe

Garrison Keillor is spending Christmas in Denmark, as he has every year since his marriage three years ago to Ulla Skaerved, who was a Danish foreign exchange student in Keillor's Anoka, Minn., high school class. This year, Keillor plans to have the best of both worlds by spending Christmas in Denmark but sharing it with his American friends the best way he knows how, via the radio. "An American's Christmas in Copenhagen," a 90-minute special, airs on WGBH-FM tonight at 8 p.m. A two-hour version of the show will air on WGBH New Year's Day at 4:30 p.m.

Last month, in advance of Keillor's concert at the Wang Center here, he spoke warmly and enthusiastically about the Christmas special. His brainstorming was in full flower, offering a glimpse into Keillor's creative process at work, and into his faith in the powers of radio.

"I'd like to give people in America a chance to see something of a country I have a lot of affection for," said Keillor from his office at The New Yorker. "I think one could do that better on radio than on television. Denmark is so dark in December that any sort of television that is shot over there would be radio anyway. But to be able to hear the footsteps of the Danes on the street as they go to

work in the morning, and the sound of their feet and of the traffic and the sound of the bells - I think you'll almost be able to feel what the air is like; it's damp and it's cloudy and dark.

"Being in Denmark makes me feel like a child, probably because I understand so little. My language there is on the level of a 5-year-old

child, so I'm hoping this program will have the same magic for radio listeners. There will be a lot that they won't understand. I want them to hear Danish, which is a pretty language; a little guttural, but very delightful, I think. And I want them to hear about things that they might not completely understand.

Global Classroom looks at arms race

By Joseph P. Kahn
Globe Staff

Part five of Tufts University's Global Classroom Project will air twice this weekend on WGBX (Ch. 44): today at 11 a.m., and again tomorrow at 5 p.m. The show, linking Soviet and American experts (and students) by satellite, is particularly compelling this week. Subject: the "cultural and psychological impact of the nuclear arms race on American and Soviet societies." Panelists include writers Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and E. L. Doctorow, psychiatrist Robert J. Lifton, filmmaker Rolan Bykov ("Letters From a Dead Man"), and historian Roy Medvedev.

Don't be put off by the slow pace and ponderous topic. In the wake of Gorbachev's US visit and the Armenian tragedy, it's important to step back and put US-USSR issues in their larger perspective. None is larger than the shadow of the Bomb. For artists, as Doctorow says, what has been

lost is "the moral immensity of the single, individual soul." Bykov's cinematic statements are equally eloquent - and harrowing. You won't find much of Marlo Thomas' cuddly optimism here, but you will find much to think about.

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WNEV-TV has briefly suspended news anchor Diana Williams for missing a live "cut-in" to Wednesday's local news show. Williams, who co-anchors two Channel 7 newscasts, at noon and 5 p.m., was handed a two-day suspension for failing to appear on the 30-second news brief. It was the second such incident involving Williams in the past several weeks.

News director Jim Thistle had no comment on the action. His assistant news director, Jacques Natz, characterized it as "a personnel decision." Williams, who was out of the office yesterday, is expected to resume her regular duties next week.