

CONCERTS



SWEET CORN. Guitarist Chet Atkins and humorist Garrison Keillor will be performing at 8 p.m. today at the Meadow Brook Music Festival. For tickets, call 377-2010.

Some down-home sweet corn

Garrison Keillor forsakes Lake Wobegone for suitcase

Gannett News Service

There will be no lazy, hazy days at Lake Wobegone for Garrison Keillor this month.

The popular radio humorist-author is spending it living out of a suitcase as he leads his "Sweet Corn Show" tour across the United States. The tour will be making a stop tonight at the Meadow Brook Music Festival in Rochester.

"This is the first time I've ever gotten out for the fun of it," Keillor said. "I've usually been so busy with the radio show. This will be the first time I've been to a different city each night."

The "Sweet Corn Show" is a potpourri of music, comedy and storytelling in Keillor's folksy style.

The creator-star of "A Prairie Home Companion" and the current "American Radio Company of the Air" will be joined by a rotating roster of performers, including country-guitarist Chet Atkins, singer-songwriters Robin and Linda Williams, Kate Mackenzie and guitarist-singer Leo Kottke.

According to the soft-spoken Minnesotan now based in New York, the "Sweet Corn Show" won't be a replica of his radio programs. But, he promised, fans won't be disappointed.

"It's a little looser than the radio shows. With most shows, you have an opening act, then the second act and so on. This show is nothing like that. We come and go and do things with each other."

On the other hand, he said, "We'll do some songs we've done in the past, and I'll always talk about buttermilk biscuits. And I want to do some poems and a couple of cat songs I like. And of course, the news from Lake Wobegone is new."

Garrison Keillor

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In all, he said, the program "bubbles along like the radio show does. I just put together what I think would be fun if I was in the audience myself."

One of the reasons Keillor, 48, can go on the road just for the fun of it is because of the two-year hiatus he started in 1987.

At that time, he announced he was ending "Prairie Home Companion" and moving to his wife's native Denmark to concentrate on writing.

That time off, he explained, enabled him to recharge his emotional and creative batteries.

Keillor's respite came after "A Prairie Home Companion" transformed him from a relatively obscure writer and regional radio performer to a pop culture superstar.

Although he has made the jump to television (he has been featured on PBS and the Disney Channel) and is a best-selling author, radio will always remain his first love.

"I suppose radio is minor to other people in show business," he said. "Yet radio has spawned so many performers. To me, who got his start in radio, it's not minor at all. Radio seems to me a path into people's memory and into their hearts. But you only know that if you've had the amazing experiences I've had."

Chet Atkins will join Garrison Keillor at 8 p.m. today at the Meadow Brook Music Festival on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester. For tickets, call 377-2010.

Riverbank concert features music's latest 'odd couple'

Opera and Broadway will make an interesting musical couple Saturday along the banks of the Black River when the St. Clair County Community-College Symphonic Band presents its weekly twilight concert.

The free concert, which begins at 7:30 p.m. just east of the Tenth Street Bridge, will feature selections from the operas "Carmen," "Marriage of Figaro" and "The Barber of Seville," as well as Leonard Bernstein's "American in Paris" and Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Phantom of the Opera."

Non-operatic works include a medley of songs from the movies, including "Glenn Miller in Concert" and "Trombone Rag."

Gazebo series showcasing local musician Jake Wade

ST. CLAIR — Pop music with a jazz twist will be featured when Jake Wade performs at 4 p.m. Sunday in the Riverview Plaza.

The performance is part of the Music at the Gazebo concert series sponsored by the St. Clair Music Study Club.

Wade is a former band teacher at Port Huron Northern High School and a long-time area musician.

The concert is free.

Elsewhere

Northgate Bible Church Outdoor Concert Series, 6 p.m., Sunday, 4311 Pine Grove, Port Huron. Featuring Front Line.

Summer Praise concert, 6 p.m., Sunday, Pine Grove Park observation deck. Featuring the Salvation Army Band, Citabel Timbrel Brigade and vocalist Tina Debeay.

Detroit Symphony Orchestra Summer Season, 8 p.m., Friday and Sunday, with Neeme Jarvi and Roberta Peters and featuring music by Strauss, Lehar and Kodaly, Meadow Brook Festival Theater, Rochester. For tickets, call 645-6666.

Dread Zeppella, 9 p.m., Sunday, St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For tickets, call 645-6666.

Chicago, Friday; Temptations and Four Tops, Saturday, Pine Knob Music Theater, Clarkston. For tickets, call 645-6666.

Odetta and Friends (children's show), 11 a.m., Saturday; "An Evening With Rodgers and Hart," with John McGinn and the Meadow Brook Festival Orchestra, Saturday, Meadow Brook Music Theater, Rochester. For tickets, call 645-6666.

Freddie Jackson, 8 p.m., Friday; Maze featuring Frankie Beverly Patii LaBelle, Regins Bell, Tony! Toni! Toné!, 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Riverfront Music Theater, Chene Park, Chene and Atwater, Detroit. For tickets, call 645-6666.