

12 **GO** MUSIC OF NOTE
Week of July 19 to July 25, 1990

Heart strings and guitar strings

■ **Performers:** Garrison Keillor and Chet Atkins
 ■ **Where:** Humphrey's Concerts by the Bay, San Diego
 ■ **Playing:** 6 and 8:30 p.m. Tuesday
 ■ **Tickets:** \$25
 ■ **Info:** 278-TIXS

JOE TASH/Staff Writer

SAN DIEGO — When humor writer and radio star Garrison Keillor climbs onto a stage, his favorite thing to do is produce laughter with a yarn or two. Next best, he likes to sing songs that pull at the heart.

Those who attend a performance in San Diego next week by the tall transplanted Minnesotan and his buddy, guitarist Chet Atkins, can expect plenty of both.

"Tearjerkers and comedy go perfectly well together, like oil and vinegar," said Keillor in a telephone interview from a stop on his latest performing tour,



year-old son, will play guitar, joining Keillor and Atkins. Although his son is a new-wave musician at heart, he'll be playing "some sweet tunes for his old man," Keillor said.

Keillor, who has described himself as a "shy person," said that when he is performing, "I like to stand out in front of an audience and hear them laugh."

And Keillor, who speaks in soft, slow tones, is a maestro at finding humor in everyday situations. Beginning in 1974, Keillor entertained radio listeners each week with "A Prairie Home Companion," an award-winning live variety show built around monologues about the fictional town of Lake Wobegon, Minn.

When the broadcasts ceased in 1987, the show had an audience of 4 million listeners and was carried on some 300 public radio stations.

Last year, he launched a new radio show, this time from New York City. "The American Radio Company of the Air" features sketches, monologues and generous samples of what Keillor calls "classic American music."

The show's second season begins in October.

Keillor has also written such best sellers as *Leaving Home*, *Happy to Be Here* and *Lake Wobegon Days*.

A native of Anoka, Minn.,

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Chet Atkins, left, will accompany Garrison Keillor onstage at Humphrey's in two shows Tuesday.

dubbed the "Sweet Corn Show." Keillor and Atkins will perform a pair of gigs Tuesday at Humphrey's outdoor concert stage on Shelter Island. The shows were predicted to sell out (only 100 or so tickets remained earlier this month), but Keillor also is scheduled to perform the next night at the Wiltern Theater in Los Angeles.

The 19-city tour will take

Keillor and company to such diverse stops as Philadelphia, Salem, Ore., and Quincy, Wash., as well as San Diego and Los Angeles.

Atkins will play with Keillor on most of the dates, said Jennifer Howe, Keillor's manager. But filling in for a couple of shows will be guitarist Leo Kottke.

The show features Keillor

singing his own songs, such as "End of the Cold War" and the "Hymn to Sweet Corn." He'll also do sing-alongs with the audience and recite poetry.

Atkins will perform some of his hits with his band, as well as material from an album due out soon on which he collaborated with Mark Knopfler of Dire Straits.

Jason Keillor, the writer's 21-

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KEILLOR: Brings Atkins onstage

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Keillor moved from his home state to Denmark in 1987 and, after a short time, decided to take up residence in New York City. He still maintains a home in Denmark.

The stories Keillor spins revolve around small-town life, specifically the town of Lake Wobegon. Those folks have a different set of values than city slickers, according to Keillor. "It's the difference between 'yuppies and Norwegian bachelor farmers.'"

And the people he performs for can relate to that. "People who come to these shows are really small-town people at heart," Keillor said.

The touring shows allow Keillor to stretch out a bit.

"It's tremendous fun. It's really luxurious to do it for about a month," he said.

It offers a break from the deadline pressures of producing a weekly radio show, for which Keillor writes scripts, songs and monologues and books guests.

"A tour like this enables me to take some of the material I've come up with and enjoy the most and do it over and over again

and enjoy it myself," Keillor said. "I think it's wonderful fun to go out and to take a song and play with it night after night. It's really a graduate school in performing."

Often, he is too nervous and pressured on his radio shows to have a great time with the material, Keillor said.

The heart of his touring show, however, is the news — from Lake Wobegon, that is.

And what's the news this year?

"It's about summer and about vegetable gardening, which is very important to the people in my town. They know the food you raise yourself is so much better than anything you can buy."

Especially the corn.

"Sweet corn is considered an aphrodisiac in my town," said Keillor, and has even been known to "inflamm the passions" of quiet Scandinavians and Midwesterners.

Through his gentle stories that poke fun, Keillor has a simple message to put across: "The world is filled with grace and humor because God loves us."

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What's Conductor David Chase leads the chorus, accompanied by orchestra, in Beethoven's Mass in C Major.

When 7:30 p.m. July 29

Where's Poway Center for the Performing Arts, 15498 Espola Road, Poway

Tickets: \$9, general \$7, seniors/students. 748-0505

Info: 744-1150, ext. 2317 or 2316

T. Fox & Fox City Band

When July 29

Where's B Street Cafe & Bar, 425 West B St., San Diego

Victory Ridge

When 7 p.m. Aug. 2

Where's Lamppost Pizza, 2213 E. Valley Parkway, Escondido

Info: 740-2419

James Durst

Programs Music emphasizing world-wide concerns, including environmental and international peace

When 8 p.m. Aug. 2

Where's Redwood Terrace, 710 W. 13th Ave., Escondido

Info: 747-7751