

F6 Friday, July 10, 1992 ***

PREVIEW

The Atlanta Journal / The Atlanta Constitution

Keillor wings it with wacky tales and 'Wobegon'

By Derrick Henry
STAFF WRITER

Sort of a hip Midwestern cross between Will Rogers and Gene Autry, homespun humorist Garrison Keillor brings his unique musical and verbal talents to Chastain Park on Saturday.

Mr. Keillor — creator of the popular radio shows "A Prairie Home Companion" and the current "American Radio Company" (airing at 6 p.m. Saturdays on WABE-FM 90.1) — joins the Atlanta Symphony Pops Orchestra in a typically eccentric combination of gospel music, songs about amazing cats, outlandish adaptations of classical favorites and wacky stories.

One such story is "The Music Program at the Second Methodist Church, Ottumwa, Iowa," in which Mr. Keillor intends to reveal little-known facts about some famous composers.

"It's about a church and their parade of music directors over a 100-year period," says the Minnesota native, 49, who talks at the same unhurried pace and with the same wry wit as his radio persona.

"They include Richard Wagner, Debussy, Gershwin, Stravinsky and Sousa. That's a fairly distinguished list of composers, but they were disasters as music directors."

In another enlightening segment, "The Young Lutheran's Guide to the Orchestra," Mr. Keillor



FILE

Garrison Keillor brings his unique blend of music and stories to Chastain Park.

CONCERT PREVIEW

Garrison Keillor

Humorist. With the Atlanta Symphony Pops Orchestra conducted by Philip Brunelle. 8:30 p.m. Saturday. Chastain Park Amphitheatre, Powers Ferry Road at Stella Drive. \$15-34.50. 892-2414.

methodically explores which instruments are best suited to upstanding Lutherans.

No Garrison Keillor show would be complete without his updating of "The News from Lake Wobegon." In these richly inventive, often touching monologues about the Minnesota town where "the women are strong, the men are good-looking and all the children are above average," Mr. Keillor raises the art of improvisation to rare heights.

"I wing it pretty much," he admits. "The words somehow come out. It's a facility preachers develop: talking while you try to think of something to say."