

A soothing night at BPAC

By Seth Rogovoy
Special to The Eagle

LENOX — Garrison Keillor brought his soft-spoken, homespun style — familiar to listeners of his popular programs on public radio — to the Berkshire Performing Arts Center Sunday night in a show that heavily emphasized the country gospel tradition.

With his fellow entertainers, Robin and Linda Williams and Kate MacKenzie, Keillor soothed a full house at BPAC with a quiet, peaceful concert of old-time acoustic music and chatter that undoubtedly served as a tonic for many at the end of a hectic, summer weekend.

When all four sang together, as they did at various points throughout the evening, they were the Hopeful Gospel Quartet, forever in search of "the perfect chord and the perfect tone."

Each performer was also given his or her moment in the spot-

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light. Kate MacKenzie sang the sort of old-time, plaintive country ballads for which she is known, and Robin and Linda Williams duetted on a handful of their original country and folk compositions.

But it was undoubtedly the Keillor of "A Prairie Home Companion" and the mythical Lake Wobegon that the audience came to see and hear. If he sang just a little bit too much and talked perhaps not enough for some tastes, he left the majority of the crowd pleased to have been able to attach a visual image to the already familiar audible one.

Keillor did talk a bit, and in his signature style, he interweaved observations about contemporary life in New York City seamlessly

into tales about growing up in Lake Wobegon.

With a masterful magician's sleight of hand, Keillor took the audience on a journey into New York's subways, onto the city's streets, around the dirt path of the Central Park reservoir, into a song about the horses Brownie and Pete, and onto an ode to the eternal delights of sweet corn.

It was an evening of low-key entertainment for the most part. Even the band, a three-piece ensemble consisting of drums, bass and dobro, seemed caught in Keillor's soporific spell.

Keillor did, however, rouse the audience to a hearty round of applause toward the end when he introduced a segment on family saying, "I am tired of hearing about family values from politicians. . . . It's okay to hear about them from family members, but not politicians.

"They're supposed to run the government. When they make a mess of government, they shouldn't start telling me about my family," at which point Keillor proceeded to do precisely that.

Exhibit is a lesson in metal

By Daniel Grant
Special to The Eagle

LENOX — Metal can fool you.

Art Review