

Keillor's droll wit charms Weidner crowd

But his audience had some trouble hearing him

By Warren Gerds
Press-Gazette

The news from Lake Wobegon is that its most famous native son came to the Weidner Center for the first time Monday.

This large man wore a tuxedo with a bow tie. He wore his traditional red socks, too.

When he was not caught up in musical spoofs with the Green Bay Symphony, he spun tales.

Visually, seeing him was as if you were looking at a pillow speaking. This pillow had rumpled hair, thick spectacles and a twisty mouth.

His sound was like it came from a pillow as well. His voice was just soft enough and just the right low, low tone to blur his words.

This beloved master of humor often could not be heard well. He stirred numerous complaints from the sellout crowd.

People who paid up to \$45 a seat did not expect to work for their entertainment.

Music was an important part of the evening. Lake Wobegon's best spoke warmly of the fine, 70-piece ensemble that shared the stage with him: "For an orchestra like this to survive, and thrive, in a football city is a great, great tribute."

Featured in the first half was *The Young Lutheran's Guide to the Orchestra*, a clever piece introducing instruments as Lake Wobegon's best pondered this

Concert review

Garrison Keillor

★★★1/2

★★★★ Excellent; ★★★ Good;
★★ Fair; ★ Poor

question: Assuming the Lord were Lutheran, what instrument would he play? (The humor drifts away from answering that.)

Tongue-in-cheek local references were woven into other narrated musical capers. It seems St. John the Evangelist Church's history includes musical directors the likes of Richard Wagner, Stravinsky, Sousa and John Cage. Always, the church had to call on

its safe haven, Miss Evelyn Palmer of Sturgeon Bay, to right the music. She died recently at age 162. People noticed her expression didn't change.

Lake Wobegon's best also told an involved tale of a seemingly wobegone son, given to working in a wild college bar.

The youth could have gone to college, but he took the family's Winnebago camper ice fishing in mid-March and ripped it apart after gunning it across open water from an ice floe.

The son is not wobegone, though.

He lives by the code of a Midwest culture: Be cheerful, mind your manners, be useful, don't feel sorry for yourself. The son is OK.

That's the news from Lake Wobegon.