

Humorist's quartet in Santa Fe

Journal Staff Report

As many people know, Garrison Keillor is a storyteller, author, humorist and host of the popular radio show "A Prairie Home Companion."

What they may not be aware of is that Keillor is also a singer. He sings bass in the Hopeful Gospel Quartet. The quartet, whose songs Keillor likes to introduce with humorous anecdotes, does gospel old-time standards like "Jordan" and "Softly and Tenderly." But it also does some doo-wop, folk and what Keillor described as "a hymn to sweet corn."

In an interview for last week's performance in San Diego, Calif., the 56-year-old Keillor said he's doing a 16-city late summer "First Annual Pre-Millennium Tour" to escape the heat of the Midwest.

"San Diego has no mosquitos or horseflies, and the sweet corn at the farmer's market is almost as good as what we have at home. Fresh sweet corn is better than sex. At least that's what people tell me," said the Minnesota native.

Keillor and the quartet are on the Paolo Soleri Amphitheatre stage Wednesday night.

The quartet grew out of the radio show, where they all performed separately. They were waiting back-



CARMEN QUESADA PHOTO

MUSIC AND HUMOR: Noted radio show host Garrison Keillor, center, shares his humor and his voice in a concert Wednesday night at Santa Fe's Paolo Soleri Amphitheatre. Keillor also sings bass with the Hopeful Gospel Quartet, whose other members are shown here.

Garrison Keillor and the Hopeful Gospel Quartet

WHEN: 8 p.m. Wednesday

WHERE: Paolo Soleri Amphitheatre, Santa Fe Indian School, Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe

HOW MUCH: \$37 and \$50 at Ticketmaster outlets or at the gate

stage for a program to start when they passed the time singing. They discovered they all liked gospel songs and they sounded just fine in a stairwell.

The other quartet members are Linda Williams, Kate MacKenzie

and Robin Williams.

They have already recorded two albums, a self-titled recording in 1992 and a new one called "Climbing Up on the Rough Side."

They've toured with Chet Atkins, performed at Carnegie Hall and Radio City Music Hall and at the Prairie Home Hymn-Singing Festival in Moorhead, Minn.

Keillor hosts "A Prairie Home Companion," which is heard each week by more than 2 million listeners on more than 425 public radio stations. Keillor also hosts a daily five-minute radio program, "The Writer's Almanac," and has written four books, including "Lake Wobegon Days," "The Book of Guys" and last year's "Wobegon Boy."