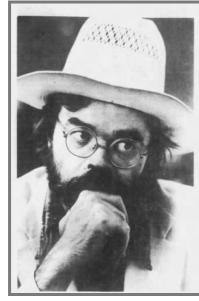
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Keillor calmly facing national 'Prairie' show

By MARSHALL FINE

ST. PAUL—Sitting in his homey, cluttered, afterthought of an office at Minnesota Public Radio, Garrison Keillor seemed singularly underwhelmed by the prospect of his impending national radio broadcast.

At 8 p.m. Saturday, listeners to lational Public Radio will be exscood to the residents of the mythial town of Lake Wobegon, Minn., then Keillor's "Prairie Home Comanion-All Star Review" takes the irwaves from Northrop Auditorium in the University of Minnesota camus. The program can be heard on ICRUEM (8) 18.

Sponsored by Lake Wobegon chief industries (Jack's Auto Repain and Powdermilk Biscuits). "Prair! Home Companion" kicks off the pull in entwork's pledge week. The 4.00 persons who attend the show will per an admission that will benefit per lar Saturday evening broadcasts of the old-time radio variety show of Minnesota Public Radio.

With the large audience and the arger network listenership, the rany, bearish Kelllor would seem the ideal candidate for the launching pad syndrome, that excited state which precedes major national exposure. "Oh. I'm excited about the show."

"Oh, I'm excited about the show," Keillor says with meliffluous understatement. "I'm pretty good at not showing excitement. What I have been coping with ever since! was in college is the idea many people seem to have that, to be successful, you have to go and make it someplace else. For a writer, that's New York City. For a musician, it's one of a number of nlaces.

"But radio is such a depressed medium—I mean, it may be making more money than ever but, as far as the craft of radio goes, it's nothing. There's no place to go to make it in this kind of radio. So you make it

Keillor's sense of humor centers on a certain sly whimsy; he is deft at pricking pretensions. He may make you laugh, but don't call what he does comedy.

"I distinguish humor from comedy," he said. "Comedy is laughs.

more a point of view, characterized by tolerance and patience. It's also characterized by paying attention and observing the world, listening to people. It has its expression in stories, which don't necessarily have a

"That's much more interesting to me than comedy. Comedy is a knack with formulas; it's simply word play. Comedy is very nervous to me; homory is very heavalent."

Reinor wonders whether his humor might be too regional to entertain a national audience: "So much of what we do seems special to this region. I have no idea what to do with my stories or with the sponsors. I suppose I'll just go ahead. I don't know what people in other parts of the country will make of that."

He worries also about degenerating into that nervous species known as the comedian.

"I think people outside of Minnesota are more likely to respond to the stuff I do that I like the least, which are the jokes. I don't want to come together in an audience an someone stands up in front of ther and does humor, people feel nervou if you don't give them something i laugh at. They figure I must be

Although "Prairie Home Compai ion" follows the tradition of radio variety shows of the 1930s and 1940. Keillor doesn't foresee a resurgent of interest in national radio broat casts, particularly with the dom nance of television in modern socie.

"I'm pessimistic by nature." Keillor said. "I really doubt that radio can come back. It would be nice to see. What gets spread over television and radio today is some sort of amorphous national culture, which is no culture at all. It's industry. It's commercial culture.

"Radio can serve regional culture and cultural traditions much bette than television can because radio i so much simpler to do. You can hay more sophisticated equipment or les sophisticated equipment. Essentially sophisticated equipment product."

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