



Garrison Keillor, host of National Public Radio's "A Prairie Home Companion," will be telling tales aplenty when he visits Pullman for two shows today.

ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

Keillor unscripted

Talented storyteller brings creative energy to Pullman for two shows

BY JIM KERSHNER
Staff writer

Garrison Keillor says he feels creatively "fertile, ambitious and restless" these days - and he will doubly demonstrate these traits in Pullman today.

He will present not just one, but two separate shows at Beasley Coliseum. The afternoon show will be a live

broadcast of his public radio show, "A Prairie Home Companion," featuring area musical guests Wylie Gustafson and Charlie Sutton. This show is mostly sold out - although you can hear it live at 3 p.m. on KPBX-FM (91.1) in Spokane and KWSU-AM (1250) in Pullman.

The second is billed as "American Songs, Nattering and the Story of the

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Keillor's shows

The live broadcast of Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion" is today at 2:45 p.m. at Beasley Coliseum in Pullman. The show is mostly sold out, but about 160 obstructed view seats will go on sale today at 10 a.m., at the Beasley box office only, for \$20. A second show featuring Keillor and the Guys All-Star Shoe Band will be tonight at 7:30, also at Beasley. Tickets are \$25, available only in person through TicketsWest outlets, including the Beasley box office.

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Pontoon Boat," featuring Keillor and the Guys All-Star Shoe Band. Plenty of tickets remain for that evening show.

"We'll do some songs, the band will play, and I will do a couple of extended monologues," said Keillor, by phone from his St. Paul home.

"One will be a long Lake Wobegon story and another will be a sort of Guy Noir monologue. It's a completely different show, and will not be taped and used (for radio). It's just for fun."

As for the afternoon broadcast, Keillor wants the show to have a distinct Western theme - which is why he booked Gustafson, the yodeling cowpoke from Dusty, Wash., and local singer Sutton.

"I wanted to have somebody who our listeners out in New York and L.A. and Atlanta and Chicago could listen to and know this is not coming to you from St. Paul," said Keillor.

"This is out in the mountains."

Will he do a "Lives of the Cowboys" segment?

"I would think we would," said Keillor. "I really haven't started to write it yet, but, you know, it's only Thursday."

As for his weekly Lake Wobegon monologues, he never writes those at all.

"I make notes for it throughout the week and I jot down ideas," Keillor said. "And when I get closer to Saturday I try to connect them."

"You go out and improvise from what you remember of what you have written down over the past week. It's a very simple trick. There's nothing difficult about it."

It borders on working without a net, but the alternative - writing the entire thing out and reading it - is worse.

"Then it will sound polished," said Keillor. "I hate that sound, of people reading a script that was written to sound like speech, because they never quite do it believably."

"Whenever our minister on Sunday morning looks up from his text and just talks to us, I feel as if that's the way it ought to be. You shouldn't have to read words off a piece of paper about the sanctification by Christ - you should have something to say about that."

Keillor does write scripts for the show's sketches, such as his comic Guy Noir segments about a private eye. He was working on one Thursday.

"Guy is being called in to help a congressman who is in trouble," said Keillor. "His campaign literature that he's just come out with says, 'Turning Over a New Page in 2006.'"

Keillor is absurdly prolific and, as usual, he is working on several other big projects besides his weekly radio shows.

"I'm in the third draft of a screenplay for a Lake Wobegon movie that I very much want to direct myself and shoot in Minnesota this winter," he said.

As for this summer's "Prairie Home Companion" movie, which he wrote, (and which came out on DVD Tuesday) Keillor said he felt "moments of satisfaction and moments of intense pain" when he saw his work up on the screen.

"I wished I could go back and rewrite it," he said.

In addition to the new movie, he is working on a new Lake Wobegon novel and on a memoir co-written with his stepdaughter.

Where does he get all of this creative energy?

"A kind of restlessness takes hold of a person, maybe later in life," Keillor said.

"I am 64 and I find it troubling to be at an age when friends and people I know are retiring. ... I just feel like I haven't amounted to what, you know, what I meant to do. There's only one life, at least here on Earth, and work for the night is coming."

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