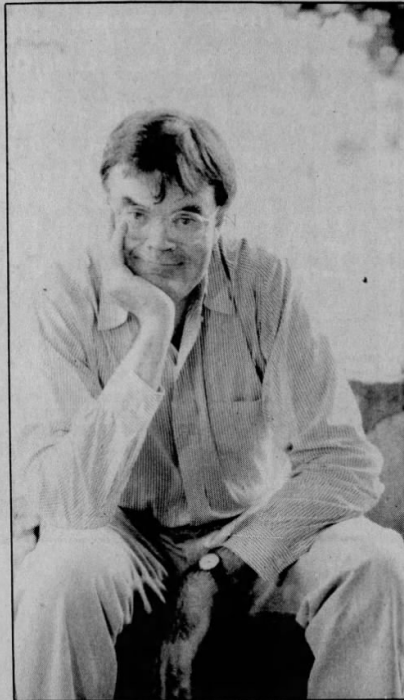


Guy talk

Keillor rails about travails of '90s males but his humor seldom fails



You didn't have to be male to enjoy Garrison Keillor's show — but it would have helped

By JEFF RODRIGUEZ
FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

DALLAS — Garrison Keillor wrote the book on guys. last night, he dropped by to talk about it.

The fabled humorist was at McFarlin Auditorium on the SMU campus last night, telling a few tales, singing a couple of songs, and talking about guys, which, not by accident, coincides with the title of his newest literary effort, *The Book of Guys*. And although you didn't have to be male to enjoy the show, it would have helped.

Keillor likes things simple: his songs, his sets, and even his attire (black tux, red tie, red socks covering ankles that were a bit too long for his pants). Aided only by skilled pianist Richard Dworsky and deft vocalist-guitar player Kate MacKenzie, Keillor took a long, tall look at the state of the American male. What he found wasn't pretty, but it was pretty darn funny.

Keillor pines for a different era, a time when men were more noble and adventurous. A time, he says,

when they had "the courage to be dumb." It's time to let women take over things, he says, so men can get back to doing the things they do best. And, just to make sure no one missed his point, he reiterated it in the form of a hilarious stream-of-consciousness poem about the pleasures of men urinating.

There was a little rough sledding. Keillor sounded slightly hoarse at times, and a few of his comments about women had a tinge of spite in them. And a story from the book about a cowboy named Lonesome Shorty dragged on too long; the ensuing brief intermission was probably more needed by the audience than by the performer.

But Keillor quickly recovered, launching into another entry from the book, with a delightful twist to the classic *Casey at the Bat* poem; this time, it's a road game, and Keillor connected from the first pitch.

He also finished the show in excellent form, telling a story about his being a middle child, and about his first talent show in school. More

than in any previous segment, he was expressive and animated, perfectly capturing the rhythm of the story and the attention of the audience. Those few minutes effectively debunked anyone who stayed at home because they figured they weren't missing anything by not seeing him in person.

When it was all said and sung, there was little doubt that Garrison Keillor can still tell a tale as long and endearing as the humorist himself.

ABOUT LAST NIGHT

Tuesday night
Garrison Keillor
McFarlin Auditorium, Dallas

ATTENDANCE: Rough estimate of 1,600; not quite a full house, but as Keillor repeatedly noted, there was a snowstorm heading in.

THE CROWD: Keillor's favorite type — the men were good-looking, the women were strong. It looked like a casting call for L.L. Bean catalog models.