

THEATER REVIEW

In Garrison Keillor's Book, Guys Are Free to Be Dumb

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Garrison Keillor is a guy's guy, and proud of it.

Sunday night on the last stop of a 20-city tour, the humorist, from Lake Wobegon paced UCLA's Royce Hall like a minister preaching sermons. In a deep Johnny Cash voice, he sang duets like hymns with Kate MacKenzie, accompanied by pianist Richard Dworsky (both from Keillor's nationally syndicated radio show, "A Prairie Home Companion"). Wearing a tuxedo, with red bow tie and red socks, the 6-foot-2-inch author quoted parables from "The Book of Guys," his latest collection of comic sketches.

Keillor's sermon had a moral: "Being male—once one of the

world's great genders—is now a problem to be overcome. . . . We're expected to be vulnerable . . . to participate in recreational weeping."

But guys can't. "Guys know nothing about girls except they want one—desperately. We were brought up to adore women—by our mothers. . . . Men can be taught monogamy as bears can be taught to ride bicycles, but it's not natural."

Keillor offered a solution: "Girls do it better. Women have to take over the world and do it quickly, so guys can be guys again."

And what does being a guy mean? The freedom to be "spectacularly dumb."

Keillor gently mocked the men's movement. He recalled at-

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tending a male-bonding session in the Wisconsin woods where half-naked guys howled at the moon that "... most women believe deep down in their hearts that everything wrong is the fault of men. . . . Self-betrayal never works! I say nuts to sensitivity! I say go ahead and fart!"

They can fart, but: "Why can't men talk?" One of Keillor's Significant Others scolded: "Silence is a form of anger. A man can commit aggression with silence just as surely as he can with a gun. I think we need counseling. I think we have a dysfunctional relationship. I think you suffer from Conflict Avoidance."

Sound familiar?