

Keillor event in Minneapolis canceled

Fallout continues for Garrison Keillor, who was dropped by MPR in 2017.

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Former "Prairie Home Companion" host Garrison Keillor, who was dropped by Minnesota Public Radio in 2017 after being accused of "inappropriate behavior" with a staffer, has canceled his Feb. 29 fundraiser for the Woman's Club of Minneapolis.

"I told my friends at the Woman's Club that it should be canceled and they agreed," Keillor said Thursday. "I love the club, which is a grand old institution in my neighborhood, and when they asked me to do a benefit there, I agreed to, but social media folks have come down hard on them and I don't want damage to come to a fragile organization."

Keillor became a MeToo pariah in 2017 when news of the accusations broke. Even so, he still draws a crowd and continues to perform across the country. He had a two-night stand at the Dakota in Minneapolis on Tuesday and Wednesday, joined by singer Heather Masse. Keillor is scheduled to play Las Vegas in May.

At the Woman's Club, Keillor was slated to be joined by pianist Dan Chouinard and soprano Maria Jette for an evening of "love songs" and "maudlin" poetry.

The Woman's Club of Minneapolis was founded in March 1907 to provide a space for women "to step into serious discussion and still more serious action concerning public doings," according to its founding president, Alice Ames Winter.

"The club needs to appeal to younger women and younger women tend to see me as a convicted felon and kidnapper of small children, so I am bowing out," Keillor said. "It will not be rescheduled. It is a nonevent. I'm a writer, not a fighter. I am very good at retreat."

Those who bought tickets will get refunds, Woman's Club general manager Belia Jiménez-Lorente said.

The canceled event was to raise money for refurbishment of a 630-seat theater that hosts comedy shows and concerts. Jiménez-Lorente would like to see the theater used for plays, musicals and film screenings, as it has been in the past. The club will seek other ways to fund the upgrade.

"We've been trying for years to revamp and renovate our theater," Jiménez-Lorente said. "It's our most precious jewel and an asset to the Loring Park community."

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