



STEFAN HOGJUND • Special to the Star Tribune
Garrison Keillor, far left, introduced the members of Trampled by Turtles, who were the featured music guest. From the left: Erik Berry (mandolin, vocals), Ryan Young (fiddle), Dave Carroll (banjo, vocals), Dave Simonett (guitar, lead vocals) and Tim Saxhaug (bass, vocals).

Keillor & Co. feel at home in Duluth

• The "air-conditioned city" played host to "A Prairie Home Companion," with plenty of local flair.

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DULUTH - Most Twin Cities residents head to Duluth in the summer. Not the crew at "A Prairie Home Companion."

"It's been a mild winter in Minnesota," Garrison Keillor said at the start of Saturday's live broadcast from the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center, "so we came up looking for something better."

Keillor and the cast of his St. Paul-based public radio show — who've been more and more nomadic in recent years — did not get the snowfall that was forecast for Saturday. They did, however, encounter a brisk wind off the frozen harbor beside Canal Park and a warm reception from the locals in the DECC's Symphony Hall.

Some of the bits that the sold-out crowd liked best were the jokes aimed squarely at "the air-conditioned city," as Keillor called it.

In a skit titled, "Ten Things to Know Before You Come to Duluth," the show's host advised his 4 million or so worldwide listeners, "Trade your stick shift for an automatic" (in reference to the city's steep, icy hills) and, "Don't ever put your warm clothing away" (in reference to

40-degree trips to the beach in summer). Also, he warned, "Drinking is not a pastime here. It's a lifestyle."

He saved the sharpest barb for Duluth's neighboring Twin Port city, though: "Superior is ... not. It's not even close."

Some of the other Duluth-centric skits included one titled, "Derrick, Dog of Duluth," wherein all the men wore flannel shirts, and another with an obstetrician delivering a black bear. Keillor's recurring detective character Guy Noir also had to disprove he's from Duluth: "I hate hockey," he said, a line that rang especially true with the DECC also hosting boys' high school sectionals and a Bulldogs game Saturday.

Keillor also proudly showed off other facets of Duluth culture. He read three poems by local poet Louis Jenkins, and he recruited a musical guest that got its start in nearby bars, acoustic Trampled by Turtles, whose name also was a cause for comedy ("Trodd on by Termites" was Keillor's alternate suggestion). The Turtles helped the host close out the show with a tribute to the city's most famous native son, trading off verses of Bob Dylan's "I Shall Be Released."

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