

Keillor serves up bittersweet final 'Prairie Home Companion' show

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Writer and humorist Garrison Keillor served up a bittersweet farewell for some 18,000 fans at the Hollywood Bowl, as he hosted his final episode of the old-style radio variety show, "A Prairie Home Companion."

Keillor's swan song Friday night wasn't markedly different from most of his nearly 42 years of "Companion" episodes, offering a rich mix of Americana music and often tongue-in-cheek comedy. (Although U.S. President Barack Obama did call in for a special segment recorded earlier Friday, but not even the Bowl audience heard that until Saturday's broadcast.)

The "last-show" aspect of the doings was so subtle that, at one point, even Keillor's cast mates began to prod their boss, asking, "How do you feel (about leaving)?" Keillor eventually, reluctantly replied, "It feels like something ends and something else is about to happen."

The 73-year-old Keillor delivered one last "Lives of the Cow-boys" comedy sketch as well as the show's best-known segment, "News from Lake Wobegon," a folksy report from a fictional town where "all the women are strong, all the men are good looking, and all the children are above average"

Keillor sang a few more songs and closed out the show as if it was any other.

Only during the encore did he truly take time to say goodbye, engaging the crowd with a moving medley of songs running the gamut from classic



AP
Writer and humorist Garrison Keillor hosts his final broadcast of the weekly radio variety show "A Prairie Home Companion" on Friday at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles.

spirituals to pop ballads.

"Companion" attracts more than 3 million public-radio listeners in the U.S.; many more counting the show's Armed

Forces Radio audiences worldwide.

After Saturday's season finale, it will return with new episodes in October with an

updated format and new host, Chris Thile.

Keillor will do concerts and is working on a "Wobegon" screenplay.