

# 'Prairie Home' celebrates birthday

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — An audience of about 2 million was expected to tune in Saturday to hear the creator of the "Prairie Home Companion" present the 10th anniversary edition of the show over 236 National Public Radio stations.

Tickets for the anniversary show, performed live at the Orpheum Theater in St. Paul, were sold out a month ago, so fans unable to get tickets planned to gather on the mall in front of the state Capitol to listen to the broadcast.

The anniversary show, broadcast live by American Public Radio to the NPR stations, followed Friday night's benefit performance, which also featured Garrison Keillor, cast and crew with the latest news from Lake Wobegon.

"It's been 10 years since we sang this song and talked about Lake Wobegon," storyteller Keillor warbled as the theme "Hello Love" opened the two-hour, 20-minute concert Friday night.

Proceeds from Friday night's show will go toward a \$1.5 million effort to renovate the 74-year-old World Theater, where Prairie Home shows were produced until falling plaster forced a move to the nearby 1,600-seat Orpheum.

Keillor reminisced about moving into the 900-seat World in 1978, after producing the weekly show at "educational auditoriums" around the Twin Cities.

"There were dressing rooms in this joint...and footlights," Keillor said. "A lot of what we did at that time didn't deserve illumination — but they (the surroundings) were theatrical."

Backed by the Night O'Rest



Associated Press photo

Quaintance Eaton of New York, N.Y., a two-year fan of 'A Prairie Home Companion,' was among the 1,600 persons attending a 10th anniversary benefit performance of the show at the Orpheum Theater in St. Paul. The benefit was to raise money to restore the World Theater, former home of the popular program created by Garrison Keillor.

Motel Orchestra and Chorus, Keillor referred to the musicians and singers as "the sort of people I wanted to hang out with in high school, but they were in grade school at the time."

The performance included a Scott Joplin ragtime tune by long-time Prairie Home pianist Butch Thompson, a folksong medley by the bluegrass band Stoney Lonesome (attired in tuxedos and evening gowns instead of their usual jeans and plaid shirts) and a

salute to "the tinfoil age of radio, after the golden age of radio had passed."

Among the parody radio shows were "Jack Armstrong, the Normal Boy," "The Saturday Night Kandiyohi County Bean Feed" (live from the Willmar, Minn., Municipal Auditorium), and the inspirational program, "Lutheran Whispers."

"I feel so boring and full of guilt. Why was I born Scandinavian?" sighed Keillor during "Lutheran Whispers."