



The Hopeful Gospel Quartet performed in the third annual farewell tour at Symphony Hall.

## Goodbye (again) Keillor

By Ruth Lepper  
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Folksy. That's the word. That's Garrison Keillor.

Dyed-in-the-wool Keillor fans probably came away with, or rather went in with, a much different view of the much-

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acclaimed "A Prairie Home Companion: Third Annual Farewell Tour" than someone who humbly admits to being a novice of the program. The troupe's San Diego appearance played to a sold-out audience Tuesday night at Symphony Hall.

While I must confess to having never heard his popular program that dominated the PBS Radio airways for over 13 years nor read a single word of his many publications, I did cram in over seven hours of listening to his tapes in preparation for this interview/review. I was not, therefore, too terribly disappointed when my scheduled telephone interview fell through when Keillor reportedly overstayed a luncheon appointment in Wisconsin and missed

calling me.

I arrived early at Symphony Hall to chat with a few devoted fans before curtain time. Many had traveled from all areas of the county as well as parts north to be witness to this historical event. They dropped names from Keillor's fictional town of Lake Wobegon as if they were long-lost friends. They spoke of various events and special occasions that happened there as they would of relatives' birthdays or weddings.

Keillor presents himself as the town humorist and the kind of fellow one would want to visit with on a Sunday afternoon. He is joined on stage for his tour by singers Robin and Linda Williams and Kate MacKenzie, who along with the congenial host, form the Hopeful Gospel Quartet.

The stage production offers a glimpse into the nostalgic days of radio, showing us a time that electronic media seems to have forgotten.

The San Diego performance will be broadcast at noon Sunday on KPBS. For a live performance from Los Angeles, tune in 4:30 p.m. Saturday when Keillor and company will be joined by several yet-to-be announced celebrities.