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# Prairie Home Companion 40th Anniversary Collection



## Synopsis

Since A Prairie Home Companion first went on air, July 6, 1974, a steady stream of great musicians has crossed its stage --- The Steele Sisters, Gillian Welch and Dave Rawlings, Peter Ostroushko, The Wailin Jennys, Robin and Linda Williams Iris DeMent, Howard Levy --- plus the radio detective Guy Noir, the Cowboys Dusty and Lefty, the librarian Ruth Harrison, Duane and his Mother, and the good people of Lake Wobegon, Minnesota. An all-star roster of favorite performers joined to celebrate the anniversary on the lawn of Macalester, College in St. Paul, a stone's throw from the hall where the first broadcast was made. Some highlights from that show are presented here, interwoven with archival performances by Doc Watson, Odetta, Pete Seeger, Helen Schneyer, Chet Atkins, Bill Hinkley & Judy Larson, Soupy Schindler, and Tom Keith, With a memory-filled souvenir booklet.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I purchased this 25th anniversary collection with great anticipation and, have to say, I was surprised and disappointed to find that this compendium consists ONLY of Garrison's monologues with a few musical selections thrown in. This collection has none of the short skits, Guy Noir bits, or cast-inclusive pieces of brilliance that punctuate and vary the pacing of the live radio show. Don't get me wrong, Garrison's stories are wonderful in themselves and quite enjoyable, but I feel that a 25th anniversary collection should consist of more than just this one aspect of the show. If, like me, you want a more rounded Prairie Home experience, you'll need to buy some of the other Prairie Home CD releases to supplement this purchase which, I think, is a shame. This collection should be

clearly labelled as monologues & music, not as an overall collection of the show.

Garrison Keillor is nothing less than a genius. I listen to his stories while I clean my Northwoods cabins and they take me completely away from the fact that I'm making 33 beds and scrubbing kitchens and bathrooms. They whisk me to the lovely place known as Lake Wobegon and make me laugh out loud. I highly recommend this collection. Michele Cozzens, Author of I'm Living Your Dream Life and The Things I Wish I'd Said.

We listened to this CD set on a recent trip between California and Colorado. The time just flew. Garrison Keillor moves so smoothly from hysterical silliness to poignant truth-telling. He's an absolute master storyteller... we keep thinking he just can't get any better, but he does.

This collection does a good job of mixing in old classics and newly released stories. Many people prefer only stories, and I can't blame them, but if you appreciate all phases of "A Prairie Home Companion," then you will enjoy this compilation.

Whether heard over the radio or read on the page, Garrison Keillor never fails to delight. He's literally a national treasure and his insights, humor, and brilliant storytelling make life a little easier to get through. Also recommended: A Walk in the Woods and Bark of the Dogwood by Jackson McCrae

The unique genius of Garrison Keillor is shown to be ever present in this audio collection. This is the latest compilation collection in the "A Prairie Home Companion" series. The only way not to consider purchasing this is if you only wish to have a series of stories instead of the music and other skits, which I think are also splendid.

This set of four compact disks presents the listener with an aural anthology of skits, sketches, songs, stories, mirth, music and commercials for companies that exist only in the mind of their creator, that quintessential Minnesotan, Garrison Keillor. Culled from four decades of recordings of the Minnesota Public Radio show "A Prairie Home Companion," this set is an excellent introduction for anyone unfamiliar with the weekly broadcasts, and a wonderful way to reminisce over long forgotten shows for those who are. Representative samples include monologues by "Guy Noir," Keillor's hard-boiled private detective; an advertising jingle from "Sponsor"; Powdermilk Biscuits; an ode to rhubarb. The lion's share of these 85 tracks, however, is devoted

to music and song: instrumental numbers, polka, gospel, blues, bluegrass, you name it. Some are merely quaint, while others awe the listener. The power and glory of the unadorned human voice washes over the auditor like a sonic tsunami in the rousing a cappella rendition of "When I Wake Up to Sleep No More" (Disk 3, Track 2). This set is rounded out by a lovely little booklet containing both color and black/white photographs of some of the many musical stars to grace the stage at the Home's home, the Fitzgerald Theater in downtown St. Paul. A complete list of tracks is given and a look back over the history of some 1,400 live broadcasts by the show's creator and driving force, entitled, "Forty Years: An Essay from Garrison Keillor." Simply put, this is \$25.59 very well spent.

The title is a little misleading, as A Prairie Home Companion: 25th Anniversary Collection is essentially a collection of Garrison Keillor's closing "News from Lake Wobegon" monologues from over the years. And for a supposedly representative collection, there are only about fifteen of them with a good quarter of the time taken up with musical interludes (which are not my favorite part of the show). But, even given that, A Prairie Home Companion: 25th Anniversary Collection is an excellent collection. Keillor's humor has obviously matured over time and this is a "time capsule" with which to revisit those older days. Although I would have liked a few of the funny commercials and some Guy Noir episodes sprinkled in for good measure, I really enjoyed listening to Keillor's soothing baritone tell about the ostensibly fictional but so real-feeling people of "my hometown." Now you don't have to wait for Saturday evening (or Sunday afternoon) to enjoy A Prairie Home Companion. Just pop this in whenever you yearn for that homespun feeling and want to revisit the town "where the women are strong, the men are good-looking, and the children are above-average."

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