

---

---



A PRAIRIE HOME  
COMPANION®  
WITH CHRIS THILE

---

Fellow Public Radio Lovers,

First of all, thanks for reading this. Starting a conversation with you is one of the most exciting parts of what I'm finding to be a roundly exciting endeavor.

Here's a little too much about me: I grew up in Southern California and Western Kentucky (we moved when I was 14), the eldest of three boys. My folks were and are devoted public radio fans, who started listening to *A Prairie Home Companion* in the 1980s; Garrison and Co. were the permanent headliners of their weekends. Many of my earliest memories feature my little brothers and me frolicking (quietly, by request of Mom and Dad from the couch) to performances from the likes of Chet Atkins and Jethro Burns, listening to the News From Lake Wobegon, and singing along to the Powdermilk Biscuit jingle.

Those Saturday evenings were topped off with a drive to a nearby pizza place for a couple more hours of live entertainment, provided by a locally beloved bluegrass band. Suffice it to say, anyone who spends the first 200 or so Saturdays of his life thusly is bound to become utterly obsessed with music.

I've picked up a few other obsessions over the years: Tolkien, baseball, Wodehouse, coffee, Federer, cocktails, and perhaps obsession itself. (I figure the more completely one is preoccupied with weird, wonderful things, the better one's chances of making new weird, wonderful things!)

And speaking of weird, wonderful things, there was that voice mail I received two years ago from one Mr. Keillor: "Hi, Chris. It's Garrison Keillor. I'd like to discuss something with you that I think you may find interesting. Or maybe you won't. Either way, call me back." I nervously obliged and listened dumbstruck as Garrison began laying out his plan.

So here we are, smack dab in the middle of that plan. And frankly, I'm chuffed as all get out.

*A Prairie Home Companion* is such a profound, transcendent variation on the grand theme of the variety show. My job is to compose/improvise variations on that theme, and a good variation never strays so far that the listener loses sight of the source. With that in mind, we'll be changing the actual format of the show very little. (If it ain't broke ...) But I also look forward to expanding our reach. Not that the show will suddenly be geared specifically toward millennials, mind you! It will be for anyone who loves good music and good fun.

There will still be musical guests, drawn from the width and breadth of music new and old. We'll add a spoken-word guest to every show — maybe a comedian or actor, novelist or poet. And look for all involved to weave those talents together.

For now, please let your local public radio station know your hopes for *A Prairie Home Companion* as it moves forward. It is indeed a conversation, and we want to hear what you're thinking. Here's what I'm thinking: Garrison Keillor has given us a truly extraordinary, immortal radio show that is for and about all of us. LET'S GET PSYCHED!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Thile".