

Trout Fishing lets loose its inner child

By Lynne Heffley
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Keith Grimwood, a bass player, is a shade over 5 1/2 feet tall; guitarist Ezra Idlet is 6 feet 9 - but when it comes to powerhouse instrumental and vocal talent and some of the most sophisticated and witty family music-making in the field, they're a perfect match.

Otherwise known as the Arkansas-based musical duo Trout Fishing in America, Grimwood and Idlet rocked the house in a rare Southland concert over the weekend at the Orange County Performing Arts Center's Founder's Hall, where kids and parents grooved to the pair's robust sound. Grimwood and Idlet, who have been playing together for more than 25 years, are both dads, and the fodder for their lyrically inventive songs comes from everyday observances -- and some wild flights of fancy.

They gave voice to kids behaving badly and relishing it ("Mine!") and painted a vivid picture of a bad hair day ("My Hair Had a Party Last Night"). An 18-wheel big rig made for a comic lesson in counting, which included verses using Roman numerals and odd numbers. Assembling a play set inspired a soulful ballad ("11 Easy Steps") about the power of a child's imagination. Classically trained Grimwood, bow in hand, gave an astonishingly beautiful performance on electric upright bass.

The duo cooked like crazy, creating multiple layers of sound as Grimwood slapped the heck out of the bass and Idlet played hard-charging guitar. It's impossible to categorize this pair's no-holds-barred acoustic-electric style; they served up country, classic rock 'n' roll, blues, jazz and reggae rhythms with conviction. Their G-rated subject matter deferred to the tender ages of many in the audience. Comic anarchy -- particularly in a riotous, Spike Jones-style take on nursery-rhyme characters ("Window") and in a sly ribbing aimed at kids who think adults have it made ("It's Better Than That") - was as edgy as it got.



G-Rated Duo: Keith Grimwood, left and Ezra Idlet appeal to kids and parents alike.