

Trout Fishing in America: family entertainment

MUSIC PREVIEW

By STEPHEN A. IDE

The Patriot Ledger

One is short, the other tall, but their music is extra large. The musical duo that makes up Trout Fishing in America has been entertaining adults and children for more than a decade.

They'll be in North Andover June 5 and in Natick on June 6 for family concerts.

Keith Grimwood (the short one, at 5-foot 5½ inches) and Ezra Idlet (the tall one at 6-foot 9 inches) are known for their tongue-twisters, for their insightful, intelligent lyrics, their clever humor and wonderfully addictive melodies.

In styles that vary from acoustic-folk to pop-rock and a multitude of other sounds, the Arkansas duo sings of dinosaurs, dead Egyptians, the perfect cup of coffee, and the last moments of thought before Mt. Vesuvius consumed Pompeii.

They perform fast-paced singalongs that count in Roman numerals ("18 Wheels on a Big Rig") or celebrate the freedom of a breakup ("After You've Gone").

Winners of many kudos, including a Parent's Choice Award in 2003 and a 2002 Grammy nomination, the duo seems eager to take chances.

With Idlet on guitar, Grimwood on standup bass and both singing, they say they keep fresh because they are different musically and in personality.

"There's not competition between us on any level," Grimwood says. "We share a love of different kinds of music, and we're well-versed in different styles.

"We enjoy what we do, and that they're still letting us do this after all these years."

Trout Fishing's 2002 release, "inFINity," was nominated for a Grammy for musical album for children. It slyly introduces young listeners to an array of styles - from funk to jazz to African rhythms - all built onto the group's basic folk style.

Their most recent album, "It's a Puzzle" came out last fall. In it, anything is fair game, including gross school lunchrooms ("Why I Pack My Lunch") with their mystery food: "Cream of tea bags, wombat pelt ... lizard lips, What's that? Smelt?"

In 1990, they formed their own Trout Records label (www.troutmusic.com). Since then, they have released 11 CDs, alternating them for children and adults.

They seem to live by the credo expressed in one of their songs: "Do we learn from our mistakes? I surely hope not. / Takes all the fun out of making them again."



Ezra Idlet, left, and Keith Grimwood of Trout Fishing in America play two local shows next weekend. (Jim Holland photo)