

Silly songs usher in new school year

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Prior to their performance at the Lied Center's free outdoor concert, Trout Fishing in America presented a Song Writing Workshop for students at Prairie Park Elementary.

Students at Prairie Park School were captivated by the creativity of the Texas-based duo Trout Fishing in America. "My Hair Had a Party Last Night" and "Alien in My Nose" brought giggles and smiles among the children. "It's great," said Tristan Rethman, 8. "They have really funny songs." Louie Farris, 8, said the alien invasion song was the best.



Photo by Nick Krug. The Lawrence -World

Keith Grimwood and Ezra Idlet have worked together for 30 years and have released 12 albums and earned three Grammy nominations. They travel across the country presenting song-writing workshops for students, teachers and adults. Before performing Friday night at a free outdoor concert at the Lied Center, they gave a writing workshop through the Lied Center's "Adventures in Imagination" program.

Grimwood and Idlet shared writing tips with elementary students and channeled their enthusiasm into song lyrics. All ideas were welcomed, including gym socks, the theme "I can't take it anymore" and money. After several shouts of creative inspirations, the band and class created a song about "things that are out of place" such as a monkey in the sink and a whale in a fish tank. "They are hilarious," said David Williams, Prairie Park principal. "They are so good at being able to bring out kids' creativity."

Karen Christilles, associate director at the Lied Center, decided to invite them to play at the outdoor concert after she saw them 15 years ago. "When my husband and I had our son we were looking for some sort of music that wasn't Barney," she said. "They are phenomenal. Our kid loved them, my husband loved them. I had to bring them to Lied."

In 1994, the Lied Center partnered with U.S. Bank and the Lawrence school district to form the "Adventures in Imagination" program to help create opportunities for art education. "It's a great interaction with artists instead of sitting passively in an audience," said Anthea Scouffas, director of education for the Lied Center. "Especially now with a lack of art education in schools."

One of the teachers, Carrie Murphy, said she was impressed with how well the duo captivated the students. "It's neat to hear them create a song," she said. "It's a good way to kick off the year."