

# KEN & BRAD KOLODNER

# SKIPPING ROCKS

1. The Orchard (2:25)
2. Down on my Knees (4:39)
3. John Brown's March (4:09)
4. Falls of Richmond (3:00)
5. The Reunion (2:23)
6. Grub Springs (3:18)
7. Skipping Rocks (2:43)
8. Caspian's Dream (3:54)
9. The Cowboy Waltz/  
Tombigbee's Waltz (4:48)
10. Boatman (2:46)
11. Reuben's Train (2:38)
12. Red Rocking Chair (4:23)
13. Billy in the Lowground (3:28)
14. Garfield's Blackberry Blossom (3:20)
15. Lost Indian (2:43)

There's something intensely satisfying about skipping rocks across the water. Each ripple rings away in perfect circles as the stone breaks the water's surface, like a needle pulling thread tightly through cloth. On **KEN & BRAD KOLODNER's** new album, **SKIPPING ROCKS**, the dynamic pulse of their neo-traditional sound is ringed with masterful guest artists, sewing together new takes on old tunes, and new tunes with old slants. As a whole, it is exactly the album you need in order to pull a peaceful sunset lake right up to your front porch.

If the Kolodners sound so in-synch for only a sophomore album, that's because they have a uniquely deep connection: they are father and son. "Playing as a father-son duo feels very natural," says **Brad Kolodner**, who plays banjos, fiddle and adds vocals. "Besides being musical partners, we're great friends. When we're rehearsing, jamming, performing on stage or in the recording studio, we're always locked in. Our musical sensibilities are very aligned." Their previous project, *Otter Creek*, found itself on in the top 50 albums in rotation on the Folk DJ charts and Brad's self-penned title song was the most-played instrumental for 2011. For *Skipping Rocks*, Brad and Ken decided to add to their sound by bringing in **Robin Bullock** (of *Helicon*) on guitar and mandolin, **Alex Lacquement** (double bass), **Elke Baker** (fiddle, viola) and **Kagey Parrish** of the *Honey Dewdrops* on harmony vocals.

Widely regarded as one of the most accomplished hammered dulcimer players in the US, **Ken Kolodner** shines more than ever on *Skipping Rocks*. His gentle groove is

the calm water over which Brad's percussive banjo skips. Drawing extensively from Appalachian old-time, the duo can blaze through a melody with wicked precision or carefully deconstruct a tune, such as "John Brown's March," with inventive new arrangements. They also compose new tunes to add to the tradition, such as Brad's "The Orchard," and

Ken's "The Reunion," each with a backstory that you can almost hear through each note.

There is a special quality to the overall sound of the album, perhaps because each track was recorded in the warmth of the Kolodners' living room. "There was something very special about recording our album in the house where my father raised me," says Brad. "My father and

I will stay up some nights until the wee hours playing tunes in our living room. Being able to capture those magical jams in the same living room was ideal."

From the faint creaks in the worn floorboards to the chirps of the tree swallows outside the window, the Kolodners bring us right into their home and family, surrounding their listeners in a warm Baltimore summer.

Listening to **Brad & Ken Kolodner's** *Skipping Rocks* not only highlights the magic that seems to spark in musical families, but also transports its listeners to the soft shores of a summer lake, where each skip of the rock is a moment that ripples out; from father to son, from a duo to a musical community, from old tunes to new ones. It's a moment in life and time that will have you pushing play again and again.



*"Father and son have reached that musical telepathy that family members can sometimes achieve. The blend of the hammered dulcimer and banjo is exceptional."*

— *The Old Time Herald*