

# **KEN KOLODNER** fiddle & hammered dulcimer **BRAD KOLODNER** clawhammer banjo

"Ken and Brad are both exceptionally talented musicians and they have created a tight, top-notch sound." – *Bluegrass Today*

The dynamic father-son team Ken & Brad Kolodner weave together a captivating soundscape on hammered dulcimer, banjo, twin fiddles and vocals, pushing the boundaries of the American Old-Time tradition into uncharted territory. Sharing a deeply personal and familial bond, Ken & Brad communicate musically on a level that shows in their engaging and hypnotizing live performances. Regarded as one of the most influential hammered dulcimer players in North America and a founding member of the acclaimed world-music trio Helicon, Baltimore's **Ken Kolodner** has joined forces with his son **Brad Kolodner**, a rising star in the clawhammer banjo world and winner of the 2016 IBMA Momentum Award for Industry Involvement. They play with a "creative curiosity that lets all listeners know that a passion for traditional music yet thrives in every generation." They regularly perform as a quartet with fiddler, guitarist and vocalist **Rachel Eddy** and bassist **Alex Lacquement** who locks everything together with his commanding and tasteful choices.



Ken & Brad released their first recording, *Otter Creek* in 2011 which quickly became the most played instrumental recording on the international Folk-DJ Radio charts. Brad's original composition "Otter Creek" was the most played instrumental track on the charts. Ken & Brad released *Skipping Rocks*, their second album, in September 2013 to much critical acclaim. *Skipping Rocks* debuted at #4 on the Folk-DJ Charts and landed in the top 20 on the Roots Music Charts. They released their third studio album *The Swift House* in January 2017. The new recording features Ken & Brad with Rachel Eddy and Alex Lacquement. Rachel Eddy hails from West Virginia, where she grew up steeped in Appalachian music and dance. Rachel's multi-instrumental talents and soulful singing bring an incredibly powerful energy to the group. Alex Lacquement is one of the most in-demand and versatile bass players in the Mid-Atlantic.

Concert appearances for Ken & Brad include performances at The Kennedy Center, The Walnut Valley Festival, The Old Songs Festival, The Birchmere, The Charm City Folk and Bluegrass

Festival, The Champlain Valley Folk Festival, and The Creative Alliance as well as numerous live radio broadcasts, concerts and festivals along the Eastern seaboard from North Carolina to Vermont and across the country from Wisconsin to Arizona. Prior to performing with his son regularly in 2009, Ken toured and recorded for many years with the legendary world music trio Helicon with Chris Norman and Robin Bullock.

Ken toured with the world music trio *Helicon* for over a decade and continued to tour as a soloist. His extensive repertoire of thousands of pieces includes the traditional music from over 30 countries on all continents. Ken has performed in every state in the U.S. and teaches locally in Baltimore with over 75 fiddle and hammered dulcimer students. His three-week Sandbridge Dulcimer Retreats are attended by up to 60 players from all over the U.S. and beyond ([www.sandbridgedulcimer.com](http://www.sandbridgedulcimer.com)). Music was not always in Ken's vision. Kolodner graduated from Lawrence University in 1976 and a few years later pursued a career in public health, working on a PhD in epidemiology at The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. While in grad school, he taught himself first to play the fiddle by listening to recordings. A few years later, he discovered the hammered dulcimer and quickly became recognized among a handful of the best in the U.S. Since completing his PhD at Hopkins, he has worked primarily as a musician (touring as many as 140 dates a year) but has continued to consult in public health, and has published widely with over 100 articles in medical journals.

Rooted in the traditions of Old-Time music, Baltimore-based clawhammer banjoist Brad Kolodner represents the next generation of Old-Time musicians pushing the boundaries of the tradition into uncharted territory. Regarded for his delicate touch, expressive style, and original compositions, Kolodner has rapidly gained national attention for his unique approach to the banjo at just 27 years of age. Clawhammer banjo is experiencing a rebirth in American folk music and Kolodner is helping to lead the charge as a performer, teacher, Strathmore Artist in Resident, DJ for WAMU's Bluegrass Country, jam leader, community builder and ambassador for Old-Time music. He regularly performs across the country in a duo with his father Ken and with the acoustic roots quartet Charm City Junction.

While it wasn't until the age of 17 when Brad first picked up the banjo, he soaked up his father's music throughout childhood. He was introduced to clawhammer banjo when he spontaneously signed up for a banjo-from-scratch class taught by clawhammer legend Richie Stearns at the Meadowlark Music camp in Maine. The following year, Brad started his first year as a student at Ithaca College in New York to pursue a degree in Television-Radio. It was in Ithaca, a hotbed for Old-Time music, where his interest in the music was cemented. Within a couple of years, he began performing regularly with his father throughout the East Coast and competing in regional banjo contests. Perhaps his first most notable early performance came in 2009 when he performed on the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center with his father. The following year, Brad won the prestigious 2010 Old-Time Banjo Festival Contest in Takoma Park, MD, earning a performance slot later that evening at The Birchmere where he opened for Grammy-winning banjo legends Tony Trischka and Cathy Fink. That performance became a launching point for

Kolodner's career as an Old-Time musician. He has since placed in the finals of the banjo contest in 2014, 2015 and 2016 at the Appalachian String Band Festival in Clifftop, WV, one of the most prestigious Old-Time banjo contests in the world. He now tours with the widely acclaimed acoustic roots quartet Charm City Junction, 2016 IBMA Momentum Band of the Year Nominees.

In addition to performing and teaching, Ken and Brad are avid supporters and developers of the Old-Time community in Baltimore. In the spring of 2013, Ken and Brad founded the wildly popular Baltimore Old Time Jam, a bi-weekly gathering of dozens of musicians and Old-Time music fans at the Five & Dime Ale House in the heart of Baltimore City. In November 2013, Brad spearheaded the launch of the bi-monthly Baltimore Square Dance at Mobtown Ballroom. The first two dances were packed with over 200 people at each dance. Both maintain robust private student rosters with Ken teaching hammered dulcimer and fiddle to nearly 80 students and Brad teaching banjo and fiddle to over 30 students.

[www.kenandbrad.com](http://www.kenandbrad.com)



## Reviews of *The Swift House* (Release January 2017)

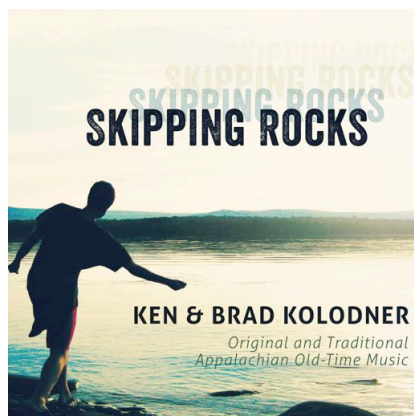


"I welcome each album they release as a letter from good friends. Their new one, *The Swift House*, is the best yet - deeply rooted yet broadly creative music rising from early American string bands. A delight." - *John Weingart WPRB*

"Excellent musicianship, arrangements, and originals. *The Swift House* is highly enjoyable and a pleasure to include on my folk radio show." - *Lilli Kuzma WDCB*

"Ken & Brad have provided a lot of good music to play on my show. It's another excellent album, played very well by this father and son duo. Whether performing traditional or newly composed music, they have a fresh and engaging style to all their work." - *Ray Baumler WRUR*

## Reviews of *Skipping Rocks* (Released September 2013)



"Ken and Brad are both exceptionally talented musicians and they have created a tight, top-notch sound." – *Bluegrass Today*, January 2014

"This father-son duo project is both technically impressive and musically tasteful, a lovely exploration of both tradition and creativity (and of a warm musical relationship)." - *CD Hotlist*

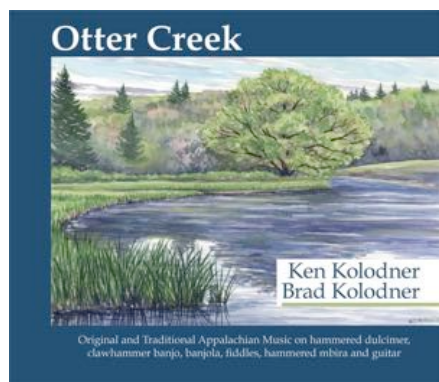
"On Ken & Brad Kolodner's new album, *Skipping Rocks*, the dynamic pulse of their neo-traditional sound is ringed with masterful guest artists, sewing together new takes on old tunes, and new tunes with old slants. Listening to Brad & Ken Kolodner's *Skipping Rocks* not only highlights the magic that 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." - *Hearth Music*, September 2013

"Give me a band that has mastered their music, their instruments, and their vocal approach, and who play with feeling and intensity along with an apparent appreciation for the roots of music from an earlier time, and I'm happy. The group demonstrates that old-time music doesn't need to be a stale, modern reproduction of a relic from a bygone era- a pale reflection of nostalgia for a time few of us can imagine. This music can be and- in the right hands- is a modern sound enjoyed by contemporary individuals played with all the passion that music should include. On their album *Skipping Rocks* they not only treat the music as a living entity deserving of respect and nurturing hands, they bring freshness within their interpretation of old time music. This is a



wonderful album, a complete set of music that runs nearly an hour. It is bright, lively, and thought provoking." - *Fervor Coulee*, January 2014

## Reviews of *Otter Creek* (Released December 2010)



"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* January, 2012

"This is old time music played in the purest way: at home, with family, with heart, and with a creative curiosity that lets all listeners know that a passion for traditional music yet thrives in every generation." -- *Dulcimer Player News* April 2011

## Notable performances

Kennedy Center, Washington, DC  
Old Songs, Altamont, NY  
Walnut Valley Festival, Winfield, KS  
Indiana Fiddlers Gathering, Battle Ground, IN  
Watermelon Park Festival, Berryville, VA  
Strathmore Hall, Bethesda, MD  
Kingman Island Bluegrass Festival, Washington, DC  
Champlain Valley Folk Festival, Burlington, VT  
BlackRock Center for the Arts, Germantown, MD  
Avalon Theater, Easton, MD  
Bluegrass on the Grass Festival, Carlisle, PA  
Peacham Acoustic Music Festival, Peacham, VT  
Deane Center for Performing Arts, Wellsboro, PA  
The Birchmere, Alexandria, VA (with Brad as the winner of Old Time Banjo Festival)  
Lawrence University, Appleton, WI  
The Creative Alliance, Baltimore, MD  
The Charm City Folk and Bluegrass Festival, Baltimore, MD  
Hampshire County Arts Council, Romney, WV  
The Institute of Musical Traditions, Takoma Park, MD  
The Common Ground Festival, Westminster, MD  
Hamilton College, Clinton, NY  
Cornell Folk Song Society, Ithaca, NY  
The Maiden Creek Old-Time Music Festival, Kutztown, PA  
Ashe County Arts Center, West Jefferson, NC