

Arts in the Schools & Gualala Arts Present: Willson & McKee

Saturday, November 8, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.
Gualala Arts Center

Sketches 3

Willson & McKee, a nationally touring duo specializing in traditional Irish, Scottish and original acoustic music, will be performing on Saturday, November 8th, at 7:30 p.m.

Willson & McKee are two voices with hammer dulcimer, mountain dulcimer, guitars, Irish bouzouki, bodhran, Celtic harp, accordion, dance and stories - all with an emphasis on having fun.

A Colorado native, Kim McKee began performing at age five! Her great grandmother was a piano and organ teacher so the family made sure that Kim began her musical education early. Classical training was her foundation, but traditional folk music became her passion. Attending Celtic festivals while gathering instruments and information along the way, she was obsessed with the music of her ancestors. Kim has won numerous awards including the National Mountain Dulcimer Championship in 2002, and four time award winner at the Milwaukee Irish Festival songwriting contest.

Ken Willson grew up in rural Minnesota and North Dakota. The early musical memories for him were cherished local events like variety shows, church music, family-made music and other grassroots experiences. Self-taught and determined, he passed through several musical lives, performing with many rock, country, bluegrass and other types of bands. Winning performance awards in such far away places as Australia, Ken has honed his skills on stage through decades of performance and dedication to his "roots" of acoustic folk music.

Ken and Kim met in Phoenix, Arizona. Ken was the booking agent for a local acoustic performance venue, and Kim had to audition for him to perform there. Needless to say, the audition went well, she got the job. A year later, they moved to Montana and immediately began performing and touring their new mixture of music.

Since that beginning, they have concentrated on providing excellent educational and cultural programs, residencies, lyceums and workshops, along side energetic audience friendly concerts. A Willson & McKee performance is not really a performance, but a two-way journey... between past and present... between audience and artists...



"Willson & McKee both have clear sweet voices... and are accomplished and versatile musicians! ... impressive and expressive!" - Dirty Linen Magazine.

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