

KRÜGER BROTHERS



"These guys are capable of playing the fingers off a roomful of great players, yet they hold back and concentrate on bringing out the best in their own music."

-Barb Heller
host of String Fever,
North Country Public Radio

"I've never been so moved as I was with Appalachian Concerto ... the concerto invoked every joyous, breathless emotion one can have."

-Larry Clark
Hickory Daily Record

"The Krüger Brothers are just about as fine a band as I've ever played with. ... I love to play music with them."

-Doc Watson

"The Krügers are nothing short of magnificent."

-Bluegrass Journal

Overview

In an ever-expanding body of work, Jens Krüger (banjo, vocals), Uwe Krüger (guitar, lead vocals), and Joel Landsberg (bass, vocals) personify the spirit of exploration and innovation that forms the core of the American musical tradition.

Although initially staying fairly close to a traditional repertoire, the Krüger Brothers later turned to songwriting and composition in order to draw more closely from their personal experiences. The result is a catalog of songs and music distinguished by its rich detail and an insight into the delicacy and complexity of everyday life.

The honesty of their writing has become a hallmark of the trio's work. Another is the banjo playing and composition of Jens Krüger. Happy Traum has described Krüger as "one of the world's most musically sophisticated and technically accomplished five-string banjo players." Steve Martin has described Jens Krüger as "one of the great technicians" of bluegrass as well as "a very expressive player." Krüger plays in a melodic style that, while it may stem from the three-finger bluegrass style popularized by Snuffy Jenkins and Earl Scruggs, is also differentiated by long melodic passages and a more complex compositional foundation, often building on jazz or classical themes and techniques.

In recognition of his style and skill, Jens Krüger is an inductee to the Blue Ridge Music Hall of Fame (2011) and is the fourth recipient of the coveted Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo and Bluegrass (2013).

The recording that cemented the Krüger Brothers' sound and song writing, *Up 18 North*, was released in 2002 on the Double Time label. Included were a number of tracks that signaled the direction that the band was to take in future projects. The title track "Up 18 North" is an instrumental piece, with banjo clearly in the foreground, that remains a prime example of the type of close ensemble playing that characterizes the trio's work. The vocal track "Carolina in the Fall" is an early example of the very personal, resonant, and mature song writing that they continue to this day.

Most recently their music has ventured further into the themes and forms of classical music, most obviously in their 2011 release, *Appalachian Concerto* and the 2015 release *Lucid Dreamer*. Through their numerous CD releases, radio and television performances, workshops, and collaborative efforts, the Krüger Brothers continue to provide a unique voice in the world of folk, Americana and classical music.

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Joel Landsberg
Bass / background vocals



Jens Kruger
Banjo / background vocals



Uwe Kruger
Guitar / lead vocals

"I used to think the banjo was somewhat limited to certain styles, until I heard Jens Kruger. Jens has played some of the most beautiful and expressive banjo I've ever heard."

-Ron Block
Alison Krauss and Union Station

"We can always count on the Kruger Brothers to provide us with an excellent performance every time they take the stage."

-John Adair
Artist Relations (former)
MerleFest

"It's a blast playing with them ... not only are they all superior musicians, they are the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet."

-Adam Steffey

Biography

Originally from Switzerland, brothers Uwe and Jens Kruger began playing North American folk music at an early age and were particularly inspired by recordings of Doc Watson, Flatt and Scruggs, Bill Monroe, and other progenitors of country, bluegrass and folk music. Their first public performances were as a duo, busking on the streets of cities throughout eastern and Western Europe. After gaining a recording contract as well as a radio show on SRG SSR, the Swiss public broadcaster, they teamed up with bass player Joel Landsberg, inaugurating a trio that has been playing professionally together since 1995. Landsberg is an American citizen from New York, NY. The first recording project to include Landsberg was *Behind the Barn, Vol. 2*, released in 1997. The Kruger Brothers moved to the United States in 2002, and are based in Wilkesboro, NC.

The group is highly regarded within the world of acoustic music in North America, in particular by those within the industry. They have also gained the attention of some of the musicians, including Bill Monroe, Doc Watson, Tut Taylor, and Bobby Hicks, that once served as models. Watson has said, "The Kruger Brothers are just about as fine a band as I've ever played with. ... I love to play music with them."

In 2013, Jens Kruger was named the fourth recipient of the Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo and Bluegrass Music. The prize, created and endowed by Martin, recognizes "outstanding accomplishments in the field of five-string banjo," Jens was selected by a committee that included Martin, Pete Wernick, Béla Fleck, Alison Brown, J.D. Crowe, Tony Trischka and others.

Jens Kruger has been inducted to the Blue Ridge Music Hall of Fame, and has been nominated for Banjo Instrumentalist of the year by the International Bluegrass Musician Association (IBMA) in 2014 and has received commissions for his ensemble compositions that include through the National Endowment for the Arts and Chamber Music America.

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Music Academy

Together the Kruger Brothers have instructed thousands of students, ranging from individual instruction, to workshops and master class presentations. To further their teaching goals, the Kruger Brothers launched the Kruger Brother's Music Academy in late 2011. The Academy is a weekend of master class workshops held each spring on the site of Double Time Studios in North Wilkesboro, NC. At the Academy, students have an opportunity to immerse themselves in music as guided and encouraged by the Kruger Brothers.

"It is to have a place where people can come and really talk about music," says Jens of the Academy. "Whether that's over lunch, in the classroom, during a jam...the music comes first."

"People learn music because something grabs them, but it can be hard to find what it is," says Jens. "It's more than just what picks you use or where you put your fingers...for me as a child what was amazing was not how music works, but why."



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Ensemble Work

Music from the Spring

Composed by Jens Kruger

2-2-2-2 / 4-2-4-1, tmp + 2, strings

Complete scores and rehearsal recordings available.

Music from the Spring

In 2007 the Kruger Brothers joined forces with the Bangor Symphony Orchestra to premiere an 84-minute symphonic piece composed and orchestrated by Jens Kruger. Titled *Music from the Spring*, the piece provides a symphonic setting for a number of songs and instrumentals, some of which are new to the Kruger Brothers songbook. *Music from the Spring* premiered at the Orono Center for the Arts with the Bangor Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Maestro Xiao-Lu Li. Since then it has been presented by symphonies throughout the United States. The Kruger Brothers are honored that the work received an award for Artistic Excellence from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Appalachian Concerto

Composed by Jens Kruger

For Banjo, Guitar and Bass and string quartet

Complete scores available.

Appalachian Concerto

Composed in the fall of 2010, the *Appalachian Concerto* is written for traditional string band and chamber string quartet. "It's my romantic idea of the Appalachians," says Jens Kruger of the piece. "When I listen to something like, 'Shady Grove,' there is a loneliness and something mystic about it. There's a [sense of] longing that draws me to the music.I want to reflect some of those ideas" in the concerto.

If there are any real surprises within the work, perhaps the greatest is how entirely natural and obvious it was to pair the Kruger Brothers with a string quartet. The Kruger Brothers' sound is principally an ensemble sound, with each of the players refining and contributing to a singular presentation. In that sense, it's as far from a traditional blue-grass arrangement—with instruments alternating between accompaniments and soloing—as you can get. Likewise, a classical string quartet, with its close harmonies, counterpoint, and the lack of a true "soloist" in a jazz or bluegrass sense, is an accurate analogue for the kind of ensemble playing that Jens, Joel, and Uwe have been doing for years. On hearing the concerto, we're perhaps less apt to wonder why they would choose to pair with a chamber orchestra than we are to wonder why they haven't done it sooner.

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Ensemble Work, continued

Spirit of the Rockies

Composed by Jens Kruger

For Banjo, Guitar, Double String Quartet,
2 horns, 1 trombone, 1 flute, tympani/
percussionist

Complete scores available.

Spirit of the Rockies

The Spirit of the Rockies is a poetic, spiraling tale about ghosts, relationships and guides, both seen and unseen. It is the story about love, spiritual legacy, the sharing of beauty, and the yearning for freedom from restrictions of the mind.

In 2011, the Kruger Brothers were commissioned to write a musical work for the Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada. Jens saw for the first time the Canadian Rockies he had heard so much about. Jens recalls, "I was instantly transformed by the breathtaking beauty of the mountains and lakes and immediately began imagining and creating music in my mind that could reflect such a landscape." He explored the history of the Banff area of the Canadian Rockies and the ancestral ghost stories about the Swiss Alps. From this vision the theme for the Spirit of the Rockies was born.

Jens wrote the piece for a small orchestral ensemble, to recreate a similar ensemble size that might have played at the Banff Springs hotel around the turn of the century. The brothers collaborated on the work, developing a storyline together, with Uwe and Jens writing the lyrics together, line-by-line. Jens would write the melody that supported each chapter. Finally, the orchestration was created, moving chapter by chapter in the process, resulting in a sixty-four minute orchestral work that includes ten songs and eleven instrumentals.

Jens believes that "The precious value of beauty is always given from one heart to another." That belief is what this work is about.

Lucid Dreamer

Composed by Jens Kruger

For Banjo, Guitar and Bass and string
quartet

This commission by the Kontras Quartet has been made possible by the Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Program, with generous funding provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Chamber Music America Endowment Fund.

Complete scores available.

Lucid Dreamer

Lucid Dreamer is a musical interpretation of experiencing a waking state of reverie. The music is a delicate idea that gathers strength and takes flight, releasing the listener from the bonds of earth as it soars, dips and glides like a flock of birds.

"I think this composition is more musically complex, than anything I've ever written, said Jens Kruger about the piece that took more than a year to write. "I don't think it's less accessible, but it has a lot more complex parts."

Lucid Dreamer was composed for banjo, guitar and bass with string quartet, resulting in a thirty-three minute work with seven movements.

In the relativity of life, Jens said, "My dreams were just as important in my memory as actual events." In his dreams, he said, "I see endless beauty overshadowing the immediate. All my dreams have been filled with sounds and music."

"It seems to me that all life is unfolding like a dream, swirling like dance in flight. For all things that have a beginning, I assume they must also have an end. I have a strong sense that dreams don't need a beginning."

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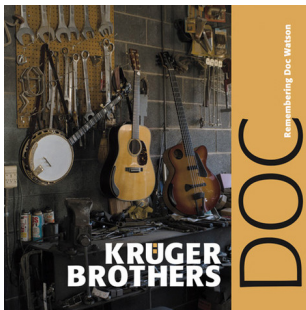
Recent Recordings



Kruger Brothers & Kontras Quartet | Lucid Dreamer

Catalog-No. dtm-026 ©2015 Double Time Music

Lucid Dreamer was a commission by the Kontras Quartet made possible by Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Program. This piece illustrates a dreamer in a waking state. Composer Jens Kruger. says, "It seems to me that all life is unfolding like a dream, swirling like dance in flight. For all things that have a beginning, I assume they must also have an end. I have a strong sense that dreams don't need a beginning."



Kruger Brothers | Remembering Doc Watson

Catalog-No. dtm-024 ©2013 Double Time Music

Doc was a friend to the Kruger Brothers long before he knew them. A vast repertoire of his recordings enabled him to touch the hearts of millions and fill them with a longing for a better world. His infectious enthusiasm, yet humble approach to his art helped fuel the fire for the Kruger Brothers to not only travel the world as musicians, but to finally settle in the same area that Doc lived. This recording is a respectful tribute to a man and his music.



Kruger Brothers | Spirit of the Rockies

Catalog-No. dtm-025 ©2013 Double Time Music

The time and place is the turn of the last century in Banff, Alberta, a town nestled in the Canadian Rockies. It is the setting for a multi-dimensional, elliptical story of a young man, his young love and the native who attempts to pull her away from him. Spirit of the Rockies, said composer Jens Kruger, "is our own falling in love and our own understanding of beauty...[The understanding that] we are part of this world, and it is a part of us."



Kruger Brothers | Best of the Kruger Brothers

Catalog-No. dtm-023 ©2012 Double Time Music

This recording represents a remarkable arc of the Kruger Brothers playing together for 40 years, beginning as musicians busking for spare change in Munich's Marienplatz to an international trio playing with symphonies and in concert halls throughout North America and Europe. As such, this cd symbolizes the Kruger Brothers' range, from folk and bluegrass, to a collaboration with a string quartet.

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Recent Recordings, continued



Krüger Brothers | Appalachian Concerto

Catalog-No. dtm-022 ©2011 Double Time Music

Composed in 2010, the Appalachian Concerto is a work for banjo, bass, guitar, and string quartet. It was composed in the form of a classical concerto, and was written to reflect the cultural history of the Appalachian region.



Krüger Brothers | Forever and a Day

Catalog-No. dtm-020 ©2009 Double Time Music

If you had no idea of what contemporary folk music is, the Krüger Brothers Forever and a Day could easily provide an education into the musical geography of the genre. From blues, to country, to swing— there's even a samba in here—the four musicians featured on this recording use their mastery of their instruments to provide a clean, fresh setting for nine original songs and three reinterpretations of old favorites.



Krüger Brothers | Between The Notes

Catalog-No. dtm-019 ©2009 Double Time Music

The Krüger Brothers recorded Between the Notes sitting in a circle in a comfortable studio with just a few very good microphones to achieve the feeling of an intimate live setting. If you've ever wondered what it might be like to listen along in Jens' living room, in many ways this album is as close as you can get without actually being there. The album is quiet, reflective, and beautiful.



Krüger Brothers | Christmas Magic

Catalog-No. dtm-021 ©2010 Double Time Music

Arranged by Jens Krüger, Christmas Magic with the Krüger Brothers includes eleven Christmas standards and an original Krüger Brothers' composition, "The Lights in Our Village." The arrangements are rich and include a range of instrumentation and musical styles.

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