

BILL KEITH & JIM ROONEY

Bill Keith and Jim Rooney began performing in the coffeehouses of Cambridge and Boston in the early '60's. Their first recording, "Livin' On The Mountain" for Prestige Records, recorded in the Fall of 1962, introduced many people to Bill's chromatic style of playing fiddle tunes such as "The Devil's Dream" and "The Sailor's Hornpipe." That recording also marked the first time Joe Val was recorded. In 1963 Bill was asked to join Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys. As a result of his recordings with Monroe and his appearances on the Grand Ole Opry, Keith became well known as a stylist and many people call chromatic playing "Keith-picking."

In 1969 Bill and Jim teamed up with Eric Weissberg and Richard Greene to form the Blue Velvet Band and recorded an album of "country-folk-rock" music for Warner Brothers Records. The album was one of the first records in that style and is much sought after as a collector's item.

In 1970, after years spent managing the Club 47 in Cambridge and serving as a Director of the Newport Folk Festival, Jim Rooney moved to Woodstock, NY, to manage the Bearsville Sound Studios for Albert Grossman. Bill Keith moved to Woodstock as well and eventually Jim and Bill recorded "Mud Acres: Music Among Friends" with Happy and Artie Traum, John Herald, Maria Muldaur and others for Rounder Records. As a result of the success of this album the Woodstock Mountains Revue was formed and recorded several albums for Rounder and toured in the USA, Europe and Japan.

Bill and Jim also recorded solo albums for Rounder, including Jim's "One Day At A Time" featuring Everett & Tennis Lilly and Joe Val, and Bill's classic "Something Auld, Something Newgrass, Something Borrowed, Something Bluegrass," featuring David Grisman, Tony Rice and Vassar Clements, among others.

For many years Bill was a sought-after session musician on both banjo and pedal steel guitar, performing with Jonathan Edwards, Ian & Sylvia, Judy Collins and countless others.

Jim Rooney moved to Nashville in 1976 where he became part of "Cowboy" Jack Clement's musical family. He has produced many Grammy nominated albums for John Prine, Peter Rowan, Tom Paxton and Iris DeMent as well as Nanci Griffith's Grammy winning "Other Voices, Other Rooms." Jim recently received a Lifetime Achievement Award as a producer and engineer from the Americana Music Association.

Bill Keith continues to live in Woodstock and devotes much of his time to teaching and to the affairs of The Beacon Banjo Company, manufacturers of the "Keith Banjo Tuners."