



RADIO ADD DATE November 18, 2025

Irene Kelley

“Coal Dust”

Featuring the Kruger Brothers

Irene Kelley says that her grandparents, Paul and Justyna Verchuck, inspired her new single featuring the Kruger Brothers, “Coal Dust.” “They were Polish immigrants who worked a farm in Western Pennsylvania and made it their home. My grandfather descended into the Westmoreland County coal mines each day while my grandma raised eight children, distilled moonshine, and fed Depression-era drifters who slept in the barn after jumping off trains.

“I shared this story with Bobby Starnes, who was moved to help me tell not just my family’s story, but so many others. Those slag dumps once towered on both sides of the road all the way into town — now they’re gone, replaced by flat grasslands. My grandparents’ vintage wedding photo became the perfect cover. The Kruger Brothers laid down a beautiful track — I’m blessed to work with them again — and Wayne Southard’s harmony vocal completed it.”

Kelley and the Kruger Brothers most recently collaborated on “Come Some Winter Morning” from her fourth full length bluegrass album, *Snow White Memories*. Veteran bluegrass artist and hit country songwriter Kelley went from singing lead with the bluegrass band Redwing to Nashville and a pair of major label singles. There her songwriting career took off. She had her hand in songs recorded by Alan Jackson, Trisha Yearwood, Loretta Lynn, Little Big Town, and Bill Anderson. Returning to bluegrass with 2014’s acclaimed *Pennsylvania Coal*, her solo career finally soared, establishing as a well-rounded bluegrass vocalist and performer as well as a top songwriter. The Kruger Brothers are members of the Blue Ridge Music Hall of Fame, the International Banjo Hall of Fame, and the American Folk Music Hall of Fame. They have received numerous awards including the Steve Martin Prize for excellence in banjo and bluegrass. Since settling in North Carolina in 2003, The Kruger Brothers have since released more than twenty-five CD’s on their own label. They have performed with numerous symphony orchestras, string ensembles, and guest musicians on their extensive touring schedule throughout the USA, Canada, Europe, and Australia.

COAL DUST Irene Kelley/Bobby Starnes

Irene Kelley - Shiny Stuff Music, BMI

Bobby Starnes - It Says What It Says Music, BMI

In 1885 they struck coal in a mountain side
Stripped the earth and all the wood
They weathered every storm, overnight a town was born
The work was hard but life was good

*Coal dust, coal dust

2 miles underground they put their faith, they put their trust

Coal dust, coal dust

Ashes to ashes coal dust into coal dust

He caught a boat across the sea

Joined the mines at 23

Never once went back to his homeland

It’s hard to breath when the air is black

It’s hard to dream when you can’t pay back

The company store and the man

(*)

Life moved on from that ghost town

The tipples gone, the mine closed down

The story’s told the secret’s kept

The graveyard reads the faded names, black lung and the mountain claimed

No going back now all that’s left...

(*)

Jen Kruger: Banjo, Mandolin and accordion

Uwe Kruger: guitar

Joel Landsberg: Bass

Jody Call: percussion

Vocals: Wayne Southards & Irene Kelley

Folk Radio Promotion By

Art Menius
Radio

artmeniusradio.com

art@artmenius.com

443-605-4355