A harmonious relationship is not always the norm between brothers, but in the case of Jimmy and Stephen Gefroh, harmony is their specialty. Shaggy-haired, warmly polite with ready, dimpled smiles, the brothers are sincere on stage and off. During a recent Gefroh Brothers show at Bismarck’s Peacock Alley, they performed a wide array of songs accompanied by Jimmy’s guitar.

They harmonized easily on brand new pop songs and some well-known oldies. Stephen calls it a naked sound, “two stripped down voices and one guitar.”

Logistics mean the two can’t practice together too frequently – Jimmy lives in Grand Forks and Stephen in Bismarck – and yet their performance was the musical equivalent of a two people so close they can complete each other’s sentences.

According to their mother, Jean (Dunn) Gefroh, ’83, that closeness is a hallmark of their relationship, and music comes easily.

“They’ve been crazy about singing since the beginning,” she says.

Both brothers have long music resumes.

Jimmy started playing violin at age two through the Suzuki school in Bismarck before “going crazy for guitar in middle school” Jean says. He began writing songs at age 13, and was chosen for All-State choir and vocal jazz groups in high school and at BSC, earning numerous awards. At UND, he has sung in the concert choir, Varsity Bards and Varsity Gentlemen.

Stephen “just always sang” according to Jean. He performs in the BSC Concert Choir, Chamber Singers and Men’s Ensemble. He followed the same performance path as James through middle and high school, earning a slew of awards at state music competitions.

A music teacher at Mandan Middle School, Jean says she never pushed music on her sons, but music is clearly a family tradition. All three cite music-filled car trips, campfire sing-alongs and family gatherings in which singing was front and center. Stephen says dad, Scott, ’83, was a major influence with “a lot of singing along to country songs in the car.”

The senior Gefrohs, as well as Jean’s three sisters, all attended BSC, performing in various choirs as well as some theater. The Dunn sisters performed as a group frequently at area churches and local events, including the 1996 BSC Alumni Banquet. In a 1996 article in the Update, BSC’s old alumni newsletter, Jean notes that BSC was the first step in “figuring out what was right for me.”

Conversations with her sons offer up similar sentiments, along with raves for BSC’s music department.

“I’m hoping BSC will become a four-year college so I can finish here,” Stephen, who graduates in May, says.

Jimmy, a 2011 graduate, now a senior at UND, is equally effusive. “The professors constantly reached out, and wanted me to learn and do well. Conversations with her sons offer up similar sentiments, along with raves for BSC’s music department.

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BSC hosts a variety of spring and summer events

Celebrating spring with commencement

Nearly 1,000 students will graduate this spring from BSC. The 73rd BSC Commencement is scheduled for Friday, May 10 at 2:30 p.m. at the Bismarck Civic Center. This year’s graduation speaker is BSC alumnus and Denver Nuggets general manager Masai Ujiri. Ujiri played basketball for BSC from 1993-95. A native of Zaria, Nigeria, Ujiri is the first African-born general manager for an American major league sports team.

President’s Cup Golf Classic

The BSC Foundation along with the Athletic department is once again hosting the President’s Cup Golf Classic date at Prairie West golf course in Mandan on June 21. Team registration begins at 8 a.m. with tee off at 9 a.m. Money raised goes to athletic scholarships. Following the tournament, participants sponsors, and volunteers are invited to the social and the 2013 BSC Mystic Hall of Fame induction ceremony on the Prairie West patio. For more information or to register, contact Amy Brown at the BSC Foundation, 701-224-5700 or Amy.Brown@bismarckstate.edu.

Summer Ag Academy – register by May 10

Anyone interested in a career in agriculture is invited to attend the BSC Summer Ag Academy July 16-17. This free two-day event will help incoming college students explore careers in agronomy. Pre-registration deadline is May 10. Contact bobbi.bingeman@bismarckstate.edu to learn more.

Online exclusive! ND Legislative summary

The 63rd N.D. Legislature should wrap up its session at the end of April. At press time for this publication, the higher education budget and funding model were undecided, potential building projects still up in the air, and a number of other pieces of legislation affecting BSC and its students were yet to be finalized.

We will publish a summary of the session in our online edition of Connections by early May. You’ll find it at bismarckstate.edu/Connections.

Gefroh brothers, continued

My best academic years were at BSC and I still miss it,” he says.

Both brothers graduate this spring, and the goal is for Jimmy to land a job somewhere that will provide a base as the brothers take some time to focus on their music. Graduation and the release last winter of their first CD, “This Dream” make the timing right.

Recorded at Makoche studio in Bismarck, the brothers launched their CD with a concert in the Sidney J. Lee Auditorium in December.

“It was the first place we thought of,” Jimmy says.

Neither brother is putting a timeline on their upcoming musical journey. “We’re living in the moment a little, and ready to handle whatever comes our way,” Stephen says. “We want to show what we can do.”

To see the Gefroh Brothers perform two of their original songs, visit bismarckstate.edu/Connections. Their CD can be purchased in Bismarck at Eckroth Music, Stringbean Music and the BSC Bookstore.

President’s Run in July

Join President Skogen on July 12 for the 6th Annual President’s Run. Motorcycles and cars will travel to Garrison Dam for a tour. Lunch will be provided. Your $100 donation will help fund the Dean D. Gunsch Toolbox Program. For more information, contact Amy Brown at the BSC Foundation at 701-224-5700 or amy.brown.1@bismarckstate.edu.