

CONCERT: Free event wraps up SFF Summer Concert Series

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get partners and come up with cheesy 1950s-style names for the night. The two made fun of themselves by describing their song as being reminiscent of '50s prom rock music.

"We named ourselves Freddy and Francine for the night, and after the song, the crowd was chanting those names, so it just stuck as the band name for us," said Ferris, the guitarist and vocalist for the duo.

"We thought it was a really organic way to come up with a band name and it stands as an homage to duos such as Johnny and June and such," said Caruso, the female singer of the duo. Often, people assume Bianca and Lee's actual names are Freddy and Francine, but they clarify during their shows and use it as a conversation starter.

Over the past 10 years of playing together, their music has changed styles, but remained at the same root. They describe their music as being "Americana soul music."

"At first we were more heavily influenced by that 'cute pop' sound, and then we got influenced by some gritty Americana bands," said Caruso.

Their latest album, "Moonless Night," she described as "having a very retro Americana feel."

"All of our sound fits underneath that large Americana umbrella with influences of R&B and soul music," she said.

As far as the lyrical aspect of their songwriting, Ferris describes their goal to explore and capture the struggle to connect with others.

"Connecting with fellow people can be complicated, and as artists we try and capture the struggle and joy that is involved in learning to connect with people, not only in relationships, but friends as well," said Ferris.

Ferris and Caruso recently moved to Nashville and love

being in the music city.

"It is fun to come home to a community and people who get the music thing," said Caruso.

They recorded their latest record in their home in Nashville in order to get the most organic and unique sound for them.

"Being in Nashville and recording there makes me want to be a better musician. The community is so tight and really helps to keep us going," she said.

Freddy and Francine have three full-length albums and three EP records over the course of their career playing as a duo. They now also tour with a band behind them.

"One of my favorite parts of playing together is we have so many songs to choose from when we perform and we both know them like the back of our hands and we have a well of information and lyrical tunes to pull from," said Caruso.

One thing that the duo focuses on in their sound is their harmonies. They are known for the overtones that come out of the combination of their voices together on a tune.

"When we are really on during a show we create these overtones and this beautiful

sound that we love to have happen," said Caruso.

When they play with a band and sometimes as a trio with another band member, their goal is to always be improving their harmonies.

"All aspects of our sound are important, but we really anchor our sound in our voices," said Ferris.

Ferris and Caruso have been touring the nation on and off for the past 10 years.

"As an independent grass-roots band who has been touring a lot, it is fun to see the growth in ourselves while seeing these new places," said Caruso.

They appreciate the experiences where they are treated well as artists at a festival or show.

"When it happens at places where people respect us and give us the space that we need and help us with anything we need; it helps keep me going on long tours," said Caruso.

Caruso described Sisters as being one of those places where they had a good experience and felt appreciated as artists.

"We love Sisters and we appreciated the respect we got while at the folk festival. It has a very good reputation in the artist community for



PHOTO PROVIDED

Bianca Caruso and Lee Ferris are Freddy and Francine.

hospitality," said Caruso.

Another aspect that keeps them going on the road is the special stage connection they can have with the audience being a small band or duo group.

"We love our crowds and interacting with them, it is one of the most special aspects," said Ferris.

Freddy and Francine will be playing at Fir Street Park

Wednesday, August 21, at

6:30 p.m. as the third and final installment of Sisters Folk Festival's free Summer Concert Series brought to the Sisters community by First Interstate Bank. The public is invited to bring blankets and low-back chairs and enjoy some "Americana soul" music with glowing harmonies from Freddy and Francine.

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