



Professors Michael Smith, left, and Robert George

STRUMMING PROFESSORS

Dueling Philosophies, Music Duets

Even the sharpest of political differences is no match for great guitar playing, as two Princeton professors have proved. Michael Smith, the liberal chair of Princeton's philosophy department, and Robert George, the conservative director of Princeton's Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, teamed up on a cold night last month to present an evening devoted to music, in a collaboration that spans decades.

The two professors capped a discussion of the 2013 film *Inside Llewyn Davis*, about a folk singer in 1961, by performing pieces ranging from Dylan hits to Australian folk music to the blues.

Smith said he and George don't pull any punches when they co-teach a graduate seminar, Philosophy of Law. In music, however, any differences seem to vanish. Their collaboration began in the 1980s, when the two then-junior professors and neighbors played guitar while watching their young sons play outdoors. "I would sit and watch mine, and Michael would walk around playing," George recalled, acting out the scene to the laughter of the audience. ♦ *By Jean Wang '16*