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COMPOSING A 'TAPESTRY'

TRIO WEAVES TOGETHER IRISH, PERSIAN AND INDIAN SOUNDS

Weekend

STRING THEORY

Maggie Sansone and friends weave Celtic tapestry for VCU music series // E8

BY HAYS DAVIS
Special correspondent

Though Celtic music has ties to Ireland, Scotland and other locales, some of its most avid and able performers came to the music from elsewhere. Multi-instrumentalist Maggie Sansone, with her own Celtic-oriented record label, found herself drawn to its melodic charms after moving to Baltimore.

"I've been playing Irish and Celtic music since probably the '70s," said Sansone, speaking from her home in Shady Side, Md. "I got really involved with Irish music because there's a large Irish community in Baltimore. The Irish immigrants were coming to Baltimore and bringing a lot of their music, and got everybody all excited about the music."

Sansone made her first recording of Celtic music in 1988, when she began playing the hammered dulcimer. Upon relocating to the Baltimore-Annapolis area, she broadened her scope with Maggie's Music, her label that brings together and promotes other musicians from the area.

Through the large folk music community of the Washington area, Sansone came into contact with some like-minded and complementary musicians and formed a trio. Fiddle player Andrea Hoag was a 2006 Grammy nominee for her album "Hambo in the Snow." Sharon Knowles, a performer and teacher of the Celtic harp, runs a house concert series in Gettysburg, Pa.

"I like this trio we have right now because all the different sounds and experiences we have creates a really interesting program of music," explained Sansone. "That's why we're calling our concert 'A Celtic Tapestry,' because a tapestry is kind of like a carpet with different colors, and that's a good image for us, I think: a diverse blend of sounds."

"A Celtic Tapestry" kicks off this year's Guitar and Other Strings Series at Virginia Commonwealth University.

"Over the years, we have had bluegrass, blues, classical, flamenco, jazz, pop, Celtic — just about any style of guitar playing and string playing that you can imagine," said John Patykula, associate professor with VCU's Department of Music.

ETHURSDAY
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