



V. GARTE



DAN MCDERMOTT



SUSAN PRESTON

From left to right: Maggie Sansone plays the Irish bodhran (drum), Scottish small pipes and hammered dulcimer; Sharon Knowles plays the harp; Andrea Hoag plays the fiddle.

Patykula has been director of the series since it began 21 years ago. Notable performers have included guitarists Leo Kottke and Charlie Byrd, blues musician John Jackson, and the Del McCoury Band. The current season will also feature Quatro na Bossa, a Brazilian bossa nova and samba ensemble, on July 19, and string band Love Canon on July 26, performing hits of the '80s in a bluegrass style.

For the series' greatest assemblage of strings in one sitting, The VCU Community Guitar Ensemble is scheduled July 28. Formed in 1986, the ensemble currently has 36 members.

"It's really a guitar orchestra," Patykula said. "Most of the members of this ensemble are not professional musicians; they come from other walks of life, but they enjoy playing the guitar and making music."

"A Celtic Tapestry" will offer examples of how Sansone, Knowles and Hoag have been influenced by many types of music.

"My father was a jazz musician," said Sansone, who

plans to play the Irish bodhrán (drum) and Scottish smallpipes along with hammered dulcimer at the Richmond show. "I also listened to a lot of Indian music and Persian music, so we bring a little bit of that, too. So we have the traditional Celtic sounds but we also, because of our different backgrounds, we can bring in other kinds of music. That makes it fun, and for the audience, too, I think."

In the spirit of the concert's name, the trio will play a mix of Celtic music, traditional tunes, and Irish jigs and reels. "Also, music by Turlough O'Carolan, who was an Irish harper from the 18th century, and Sharon Knowles, who is a harp player, will talk a lot about that," Sansone said. "And I will be playing some hammered dulcimer featuring some original music based on Indian and Persian scales called 'Evening Chai' from my newest CD called 'Wind Drift.'" Along with an original waltz written by Hoag, the fiddle player will bring a Swedish-music set that will include the trio.

Sansone's recent recordings have included Irish influenced Americana music from the Civil War, which the musicians will bring to their performance in honor of the Scottish and Irish immigrants who served in that conflict. "We do some familiar tunes, too, that the audience can get ahold of, like 'Sky Boat Song' and 'Loch Lomond,' a beautiful Scottish tune that's also known as 'Red Is the Rose' in Irish circles. We do Scottish hornpipe, in case there's some kids in the crowd."

Since the women began playing together, they've become known for their chamber-folk sound, according to Sansone. "That's what's different for us from, say, a hardcore Irish band. We often say chamber folk combines the energy and spirit of traditional Celtic music, but also has the intricate harmonies and variations that you'd find in a small chamber ensemble group.

"We'll play some hard-driving reels and jigs, but you'll still always hear that beautiful interplay between all the instruments with harmonies and different parts going on."