DULCIMER

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Less than a year later she discovered the hammered dulcimer from a street performer in Key West, Florida.

“I’ve dabbled and studied, quiet seriously, a lot of instruments, but I wasn’t going to be a great mandolin player,” she said. “But the hammered dulcimer is unique. People love it. When I started playing it, people would stop and listen.”

Sansone’s music quickly caught on.

In 1980, she moved to Berkeley, California, and produced and distributed her first album on cassette tape. Benefiting from the rise in popularity of Celtic culture from shows like Riverdance, Sansone sold more than 5,000 copies of the album.

Four years later she moved to Annapolis, but was having trouble keeping up with demand for her music. Eventually Sansone decided to sign her first recording artist, current three-time national Scottish harp champion Sue Richards.

Her record label now boasts a catalog of more than 50 albums from a variety of artists, including three-time national Scottish fiddle champion Bonnie Rideout and the City of Washington Pipe Band.

Robin Bullock, who plays acoustic guitar and mandolin, recorded several albums alongside Sansone. Although he has since moved away from the label to Black Mountain, North Carolina, he still plays with members of the label and described the group as a family.

“That was her vision,” Bullock said. “We were this group of artists who all played on each other’s albums and worked on each other’s concerts. It’s unusual. There’s something very special about that.”

“Hammered Dulcimer Collection” continues that tradition, showcasing Sansone’s instrument alongside many of the label’s frequent contributors, including Richards and Bullock.