

SWEET PROSPECT BAND

The Instruments and Music:

The love of playing traditional music on acoustic instruments led to the formation of Sweet Prospect Band. Their first public performance was on March 17, 2000. The trio plays a variety of instruments: two hammered dulcimers, acoustic guitar, mountain dulcimers, bowed psalteries, mandolin, pennywhistles, recorders, and various percussion instruments.

An interesting repertoire features a wide variety of Celtic music - merry jigs, reels, and hornpipes from Scotland, Ireland, England and Wales. Listeners also enjoy the gentle pace of beautiful slow airs and waltzes. Early American folk, Appalachian, old-time mountain music and contra dance tunes bring smiles to audiences everywhere. Sweet Prospect's energizing and relaxing music appeals to persons of all ages.

The Musicians:

Melissa Allured plays Celtic music and Appalachian tunes on hammered dulcimer, mountain dulcimer, pennywhistle, recorders, and percussion. Melissa also enjoys performing Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque music with an early music ensemble. She is a member of the Dogwood Dulcimer and Southern Appalachian Dulcimer Associations, and played hammered dulcimer in the production of "The Quilters" with the Pensacola Little Theatre. Melissa, originally from Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, resided in Birmingham, Alabama for many years before moving to Pensacola, Florida in 1994. Melissa teaches students on hammered and mountain dulcimers, and recorders. Melissa's husband, Donald E. Allured, an accomplished composer and clinician for English handbells, has written many lovely song arrangements for Sweet Prospect.

Sheryl Bragwell is a native of Pensacola, Florida. Sheryl's early love for music was encouraged by participation in church and school choirs and piano lessons. She first heard and fell in love with the sound of hammered dulcimers at a concert in North Carolina in 1991. Sheryl plays hammered dulcimer, mountain dulcimer, bowed psaltery and percussion. As a member of the Dogwood Dulcimer and Southern Appalachian Dulcimer Associations, she has performed Traditional American music for special events and regional festivals throughout the Southeast. As an ensemble instrumentalist, Sheryl has accompanied church choirs performing "An Early American Service of Lessons and Carols" by Tim Sharp with orchestrations by Keith Christopher. Sheryl's husband Bill Bragwell travels with the group, is their sound technician, and on occasion plays percussion and sings.

Gary Diamond, also a native Pensacolian, began studying music at an early age. Gary is the guitarist for Sweet Prospect and also plays trumpet for Pensacola Civic Band, in churches and for other events. Through the years he has performed many musical styles as a member of several local groups ranging from a brass quintet to a variety dance band. Gary's intuitive playing and finger picking style of the guitar enhances Celtic music, blends perfectly with the hammered dulcimers and recorders and provides solid foundation upon which the other instruments build.

