

# The Sweet Lillies

**The Sweet Lillies'** music is, first and foremost, heartfelt and collaborative. Those defining traits are given life by the trio of musicians who make up the Lillies, Julie Gussaroff, Becca Bisque, and Dustin Rohleder, who have combined their individual strengths together to deliver powerful narratives of life in song. With their acoustic string-band lineup of guitar, viola, and upright bass given flight by ethereal, vocal harmonies that float like a dream, the **Sweet Lillies'** music has an old-time soul with a forward-looking eye. **The Sweet Lillies** have incorporated all of their cumulative life-experiences into their music, their songwriting, and their artistry, crafting an uncommonly beautiful style they have christened String-Americana - a nod to the band's all-encompassing musical tastes and willingness to experiment with genres. As Gussaroff explains, "Some musicians learn from teachers, some learn from family members, and some are self-taught. Some musicians are classically trained, some come up through folk, some draw from multiple springs, from hip hop through pop to bebop. In the **Lillies'** all of these skill sets are valuable, relevant, and appreciated."

**The Sweet Lillies** are built upon their collaborative ideals and are always ready to share a stage or develop a project with any musicians who share the same no-holds barred creative approach. This has made each one of their inventive, energetic live-shows a wholly unique event as setlists are changed on the fly, songs are given new life and shape, and guests are always welcome to join in the creative explosion. Those on-stage partnerships create a space for incorporating instruments, arrangements, and styles that aren't necessarily typical of the genre, but that help create a rich, compelling sound that defies easy categorization. Over the years they have been joined onstage by a number of legendary performers including, Sam Bush, George Porter Jr., Peter Rowan, Sally Van Meter, Andy Hall from the Infamous Stringdusters, Kyle Hollingsworth and Jason Hahn from the String Cheese Incident, Jennifer Hartswick, and Natalie Cressman from the Trey Anastasio Band, among many others. Andy Thorn from Leftover Salmon, who has sat in on many of those live adventures, says, "It's always a joy to play with the **Sweet Lillies**. Over the years, I've seen them evolve from a folk-and-bluegrass group into a genre-bending powerhouse. Today, at a **Lillies** show, you'll hear everything from their beautiful, soulful originals, to creative reinventions of your favorite 90s hip-hop tracks. They're always ready to have fun - on stage and off - without losing an ounce of their professionalism."

**The Sweet Lillies** were born from Gussaroff's desire to form a band in which each member would be an equal participant in terms of songwriting, singing, and creative input. After years of accompanying other artists, serving as a side player, and writing songs for others, multi-instrumentalist and classical trained vocalist Gussaroff wanted to establish a true musical collective that would highlight the best qualities of all involved. In 2014 Gussaroff met Bisque, who was a classically trained violist. The two found an immediate and deep musical connection and the **Sweet Lillies** were born. In 2017 at a campground jam at the Hangtown Ball they heard guitarist Rohleder. That night the three played for what they remembered as, "Ten magical hours." The following year in 2018, Rohleder joined the **Sweet Lillies** full-time completing Gussaroff's vision.

Since forming in 2013 the **Sweet Lillies** have released two albums, 2016's self-titled release, and 2018's *A Lighter Hue* produced by Leftover Salmon's Vince Herman. They are set to release their new album, *Common Ground*, produced by Railroad Earth's Tim Carbone, later this year.

*Common Ground* stays true to the beliefs that Gussaroff and the **Sweet Lillies** adhere to. She explains, "String band music is compelling. What makes it so universally appealing is the way it lends itself to effective fusion of diverse styles, skill-sets and conceptions." On *Common Ground* the **Sweet Lillies** take that notion to heart and do just that with an album that exemplifies their collective spirit and pulls from all the varied arrows in the band's quiver. On *Common Ground* the **Sweet Lillies** stay true to the string-band soul that is at the heart of their music, but prove they are also unafraid to explore all corners of their distinct musical experiences. The album moves seamlessly from the horn-driven title-track "Common Ground," to the gentle "Breath to the Birds," to the hard-driving "Brother's Hill," to the band's own unique, rootsy take on rap "In Love With the World," (with a beat made by Jeff Franca from Thievery Corporation). *Common Ground* masterfully incorporates those diverse genres and voices into their own universe, creating an aural soundscape that is at the same time both new and familiar. Producer Carbone sums it up best, "The world needs a band like **The Sweet Lillies**, whose music is positive without denying the darkness in the world. Their songs are uplifting but they also invite the listener to be introspective and draw their own conclusions. Like all great music it does so while taking you on a journey of joy. I live to make records like this with dedicated, focused artists and I can't wait for the world to hear it."

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P.O. Box 1568 · Ann Arbor, MI 48106

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