

Mp3 Eleven New England Contra Bands - Contra Music: The Sound Of New England

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Here are cuts from the CDs of ten leading New England Contra Bands, including Rodney Miller, Bob McQuillen, Wild Asparagus, The Moving Violations and others 12 MP3 Songs FOLK: Traditional Folk, FOLK: Contra Dance Details: CONTRA MUSIC: THE SOUND OF NEW ENGLAND is a full length sampler CD featuring cuts from the first eleven CDs released by Great Meadow Music. Great Meadow Music focuses on the recording, appreciation and promotion of New England's special music. ----- "There is magic in the music that you have to hear to understand why people keep on wanting to do it. When you see somebody come in a hall who hasn't danced before, their eyes just light right up. They get swept up into it physically. You all of a sudden are being involved in this music - besides playing it or listening to it, you are doing something to it. And it's something you are not doing solo. It is something you do with other people" Taken from Together in Time - A Contra video ----- Contra is the special sound of New England in that it remains active social dance music. This is participatory music. Contra musicians come into full glory in the dance hall, where people still listen as they dance to the music as they have done for centuries. The clean phrases of the music are cut to suit the dance. New England contra has been around since Colonial times, surviving through the centuries because it brings communities together. Contra's distinctive characteristics are stylistic flexibility built on a dance rhythm framework. These rhythms are those found at any New England contra dance; from jigs and reels to waltzes and polkas. Tunes can be New England traditionals, British and Celtic dance tunes, American folk and parlor songs, or inspirations from other musical cultures. Fiddle and piano are core instruments of today's New England contra dance music. The mark of good contra music is a steady beat, generally provided by the piano, and a clearly phrased melody line, usually carried by the fiddle. Piano is central to the sound of New England dance music as the banjo is to Appalachia and the accordion to Tex Mex. But contra is accessible to musicians as well as to dancers. Few other genres welcome such a variety of instruments. From penny whistle to bodhran, almost any string, wind or percussion instrument can be heard in a contra band. Another signature of New England contra music is phrasing. Phrasing fits the

melody to the figures of the dance. Because New England contra is a social dance based upon a simple, yet flowing, walking step, its tempo is slower than Bluegrass, Irish or Old Time music. Contra is not just for dancing. It is great listening. We hope you enjoy our special sound. ***** Words and ideas of David Kaynor, Andy Davis, Peter Amidon, Scott Alarik, David Millstone and others in the northern New England Contra Community

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