

Mp3 Susan Kevra With Mary Cay Brass - Full Swing

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Susan Kevra, one of America's best contra dance callers, is joined here by Mary Cay Brass and friends to provide a varied, swinging, totally enjoyable session of New England contra music. 8 MP3 Songs FOLK: Contra Dance, FOLK: Traditional Folk Details: SUSAN KEVRAS FULL SWING Susan Kevra Caller, Mary Cay Brass Piano, Sara Blair Fiddle, Mary Lea Fiddle, Becky Tracy Fiddle, Stuart Kenney Upright Bass -----A frosty October moon shines over Pierces Hall in Putney, Vermont. It is Saturday night. The contra dancers are in full swing. Some of the best contra musicians in the Green Mountain area are playing. That great music is here, in dance length cuts. Hold your own barn dance or kitchen junket to the sounds of jigs and reels, Irish, Quebecois and Cape Breton tunes. You will also find chestnuts, enduring tunes first popular when America was young. Square dance tunes, both New England and Southern style, are on the recording. Internationally known Vermont caller, Susan Kevra, calls the dance figures on several cuts and has written a complete caller and dancer instruction booklet, which is included with the CD. A diverse sampling of contra tunes is offered here, played with high spirits and superb musicianship. Follow the Connecticut River to where Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts come together and you'll find yourself in the heartland of contra music and dance. This is a place of great natural beauty, its hills dotted with small villages, simple white churches next to pottery collectives and vegetarian restaurants. It is also the home of an impressive number of contra dance musicians whose music filters from the open windows of grange halls and church basements like wood smoke that perfumes a winter night. This recording captures the exuberance and virtuosity of five of New England's most sought-after contra dance musicians. An example for aspiring contra pianists across the country, Mary Cay Brass playing blends rock-solid rhythm and exciting chord progressions which elicit whoops of delight from dancers. She teams up with Stuart Kenney on bass, forming a rhythmic heartbeat unparalleled anywhere. Mary Cay and Stuart have been fixtures with the Greenfield Dance Band for years, and both are featured on Rodney Millers Airdance. Stuart is also the bass player with Wild Asparagus and The Sevens, two top New England contra groups. Mary Lea, one of the country's most versatile dance fiddlers, is able to take dancers on an international musical tour playing folk music from the British Isles to the Balkans. Mary is

noted for her fiddling on her two CDs *Gypsy Wine* and *Cascade of Tears*. She is a member of Yankee Ingenuity, Bare Necessities, BLT and Orijent Express. Sarah Blair began playing fiddle in Providence, Rhode Islands thriving traditional Irish music scene. She honed her fiddling as a session leader in Bostons Irish pubs, and today plays frequently for contra dances around the country, notably as a member of The Sevens. Becky Tracy, fiddler with Nightingale and Wild Asparagus, is the consummate dance fiddler. She adds integrity with her clockwork rhythm and keen sense of how dance music should be played, a talent passed down from her dancing family. Susan Kevra is a Vermont caller and musician in her own right. Susan brings her rich voice to the music while imparting the joy of the dance through her teaching. Dancers all over North America and Europe have come to love her calling. This recording differs from most contra recordings currently available. The medleys are meant to be danced to and represent a slice of life at a contra dance. Most are seven to eight minutes in length without changes in tempo. The tunes are played with the full range of musical emotion for which New England contra is famous. Cut One is a medley of three Quebecois tunes. *Le diable vert*, playfully diabolical as its name suggests, is a reminder of the role of the fiddler in Quebec folklore, able to seduce and cajole with the magic of his bow. Mary and Becky continue their musical seduction with *Le 24 juin* by Quebec accordionist Phillipe Bruneau. They finish the medley with *Galope de la Malbaie*, first recorded by Quebec fiddler Jos Bouchard around 1938. It is a standard tune in the Quebec and Franco-American fiddle repertoires. In New England and the Canadian Maritimes, the tune commonly goes by the name, *Mackilmoyle*. Cut Two is a medley of Irish reels, featuring the Sarah Blairs soaring Irish fiddle. Mary Cays rhythm and dramatic chord choices joined with Sarahs fiddling acrobatics create an amazingly full sound. *The Green Mountain*, *The Sligo Maid* and *Rakish Paddy* are all old traditional Irish tunes. As is often the case in traditional music, the same tune can masquerade with a number of names. For example, *Rakish Paddy* is also called *Barmaid* and *The Haymaker*. Mary McNamaras was originally known as *Have a Drink with Me*. A young concertina player named Mary McNamara recorded it, and the tune became associated with her. *Carraroe Jig* is a very old tune upbeat, very danceable and extremely joyful. Susan Kevra sings a singing square, *Goodbye My Lady Love*, on Cut Four. Cajoling and commanding, Susan demonstrates why she is one of a small group of callers winning dancers over to the charms of singing squares. Boston area caller, Debby Grey, composed the dance, which is relatively simple, and always a crowd pleaser. It is delivered here with style and clarity. Cut Five is an exciting medley of Cape Breton

and Scottish tunes, featuring Sarah Blairs fiddle virtuosity. Sarah learned Souwest Bridge from Cape Bretoner Joe Cormier, who now lives near Boston. Written in G minor, it twists and turns like a road cut through a forest at night. Racing forward, the fiddler carries you through a dark and enchanted place, delivering you back into daylight with the next tune, in a major key written by Dan MacDonald. As fun to say as it is to play, Spey in Spate is surrounded by etymological uncertainty. Spate means flood in Scottish, but also refers to a river in Scotland. One thing is clear. Sarahs plying is sure spectacular! The Cape Breton Fiddlers Welcome to the Shetland Islands was written by Shetland Islander Willie Hunter in 1982 to welcome a group called the Cape Breton Symphony. He wrote the tune in Cape Breton style. Since then, it has become an integral part of the Cape Breton repertory. Cut Six is a medley of traditional New England reels, starting with perhaps the most enduring chestnut of all, Chorus Jig. A favorite since the middle of the nineteenth century, this is one of a few dances set to a specific tune which we continue to dance today. Experienced dancers instantly recognize the dance within the first few bars of this driving reel. Despite the name, it is indeed a reel. It is followed by the soaring Opera Reel, a standard companion tune to Chorus Jig. The last tune in the medley, Growling Old Man and Woman, comes from Quebec. Becky and Marys dueling fiddles growl and wrestle with the spark and ease of an old couple whose debating skills have been finely tuned. Sarah Blairs virtuosity is heard again on Cut Seven with another Irish medley, this time fusing a jig with a reel. Tatter Jack Walsh has about eight different names, and is a standard for most contra musicians. Paddy OBrien, the great accordion player from County Tipperary, composed Dinny OBriens reel. He made many popular recordings in the 1940-60s. On Cut Eight, Susan Kevra demonstrates a square dance patter call, November Breakdown, to the accompaniment of Mary Lea playing two traditional Old Time tunes. Sandy Boys comes from Edden Hammons of Pocahontas County, WV. Mary learned North Carolina Breakdown from Bruce Molsky, who learned it from Arthur Smith. It offers southern warmth with its less-phrased timing. The piano in the rhythm section is more New England than southern in flavor. Susan composed November Breakdown, on a raw, drizzly day, the start of that rainy season in Vermont. It is based loosely on a dance by the late, great caller Ted Sannella, but with timing more typical of Western style squares than those of New England. People who are interested in should consider this download.

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