

## Mp3 Rodney Miller - Greasy Coat



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Rodney Miller plays swinging contra fiddle with friends from the West Coast, continuing in the style of Airplang and Airplang II. 13 MP3 Songs in this album (44:31) ! Related styles: FOLK: Contra Dance, FOLK: Jazzy folk People who are interested in Van Kaynor Dave Langford should consider this download. Details: GREASY COAT The Rodney Miller Band Rodney Miller fiddle Paul Kotapish mandolin,guitar Daniel Steinberg keyboards,woodwinds David Cahn electric bass, octapad ----- Rodney Millers Greasy Coat continues in the style of the groundbreaking Airplang and Airplang II recordings. It represents the meeting of old and new contra dance music, of urban and rural styles, and of traditional and modern instrumentation. Joined by outstanding West Coast musicians, Rodney shows that exciting contra music isnt limited to the hills of New England. ----- Contra music and dance came to these shores over 250 years ago with the first European settlers. Evolution of this music has shown that tradition and innovation can coexist. Contra continues to satisfy peoples innate desire to move in rhythm while absorbing and reflecting the changing regional backgrounds of the dancers and musicians. It is a living tradition. Nowhere is this more evident than in the playing of fiddler Rodney Miller and the creative west coast musicians he has assembled for Greasy Coat. Continuing in the mold of his ground-breaking Airplang and Airplang II, this collection of tunes represents the meeting of old and new dance music, of urban and rural styles, and of traditional and modern instrumentation. I was really impressed with the work Daniel and Paul were doing with their band Hillbillies From Mars, says Miller says of the recording, and I felt that a collaboration with them would be a logical extension of what I had done in the Airplang recordings. Bassist David Cahn agrees. The CD was very much a collaboration. Daniel did most of the arrangements, he and Paul brought in some French and Latin influence, and Rod added his swingy and jazzy style. My favorite parts of the CD are the improvised ones: the electric bass

and electric piano give it a little punch and a fuller sound. Daniel, Paul, and I have played a lot of southern music, and that shows up, too. The bedrock of this music, however, lies in the virtuosity Miller and his cohorts bring to it. As any jazz player will tell you, improvisation and experimenting will get you nowhere if you don't have the chops. And the Greasy Coat band has honed those chops at dances and music festivals throughout the country. From the first notes of Miller's fiddle in the opening tune Liza Rose, you hear the rootedness of the music. Although recently composed by David Cahn for his daughter, the tune has all the hallmarks of an old-time tune. And the lovely Bouree Des Moutons takes us on an excursion into some of the contradances of southern European origins. The varied and exciting keyboard work of Daniel Steinberg is showcased in his two jigs, Hare In The Hat and Mollys Hop. As the melody passes from Miller's fiddle to Paul Kotapish's mandolin and finally to Steinberg's piano, not a beat is missed: you can really feel the dance in this music, and you want to move. Steinberg has been involved in the traditional music scene since the 1970s, and brings African, Latin, and jazz influences to his playing. Listen to his gorgeous Dragonfly Waltz, reminiscent of early Brubeck; or the reggae off beat emphasis he gives the playful Chorus Jive, teasing the chords out of the straight delivery of the chestnut Chorus Jig. Paul Kotapish, who plays mandolin and guitar on Greasy Coat, seconds David Cahn's emphasis on the serendipitous nature of the recording. The four of us were pals from various festivals and dance camps, and the band just fell together into a kind of quirky-east-meets-wacky-west kind of thing. There was a lot of experimentation that happened during the course of the recording and some of that made it onto tape. The album sounds rather delicate and sweet to me now, but, at the time we recorded we had a real spirit of adventure; and we even got folks mad at us for being so wacky. Check out the range of Kotapish's playing and you'll know why so many of the band's instincts were right. His simple and delicate guitar work on Susie's Waltz is the perfect warp for the fiddle and flute to weave a melody upon; and his electric guitar soloing on Rockabilly Reel is, well, rockin'. Adventuresome in the 80s, Greasy Coat has since set the standard for the many bands that take the music in new directions today. The band returns to home base several times too. Miller pays homage to the great Shetland musician Gary Peterson in the reel Pete Da Mill which he pairs with the Irish reel The Pinch Of Snuff to follow up Russ Barenburg's Reunion Jig. The death-defying speed of his setting of John Kimmels 1911 composition American Polka keeps it to its vaudeville origins as do Steinberg's barrelhouse piano playing and Ed Hartman's inventive percussion. Warning to dancers: check with your cardiologist before trying to polka to this! Mary DesRosiers,

Harrisville, New Hampshire

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