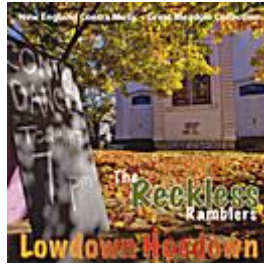


# Mp3 Reckless Ramblers - Lowdown Hoedown



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This is contra music at its best, with fiddle, guitar, mandolin and bass interplay recalling the sound of the jazz greats, yet remaining solidly in the contra tradition. 13 MP3 Songs FOLK: Contra Dance, JAZZ: Dance Band Details: Lowdown Hoedown Reckless Ramblers ++++++ People travel far both to listen and dance to the exciting music of the Reckless Ramblers. Combining creative arrangements with outstanding instrumental performance, Lowdown Hoedown is Contra music at its best. The fiddle, guitar, mandolin and bass interplay recalls the sound of the jazz greats, yet the Ramblers music is solidly in the Contra tradition. ++++++ Sam Bartlett mandolin, tenor banjo, percussion Nat Hewitt fiddle, guitar Ginny Snow bass Larry Unger, guitar, banjo uke, resonator guitar ++++++ TUNE LIST Time 1. Fatal Bert/ Bogans/ Bakers Favorite 3:50 2. The Judge 3:54 3. That Sultry Waltz 3:47 4. Lowdown Hoedown/ Elzics Farewell 3:49 5. Glen Echo Jig/ Robins Bohdran/ Thingama 4:02 6. The Burnt Leg/ The Long Campaign.. 2:58 7. Steve and Bettie.. 3:44 8. Door County #2/ Sweetbriar... 3:55 9. Paddy on the Internet.. 3:24 10. The Slippery Jig/ The Green Reel 3:09 11. La Gima Polka. 2:49 12. Cumberland. 4:14 13. Lad OBeirnes/ The Phone Call. 4:33 Total time: 48:08 ++++++ Sometimes a dance band is formed around one or two stellar soloists, or sometimes its a group of friends who get together regularly and decide to play out at the local dance. Whats not so frequent is the phenomenon of four headline instrumentalists from different parts of the country who meet up and perform at a festival, then decide the music is so good they want to record and tour together. Thats the case with the Reckless Ramblers, and, luckily for the fans of contra dance and music, it works. Like a lot of good things in life, it sort of just happened, says Ramblers guitarist and banjo-player Larry Unger. Nat and I were playing for a dance weekend, and asked Sam and Ginny to join us. The people who heard us really loved the sound, and we decided it could be a pretty exciting band.

That was certainly an understatement, as the music in this recording shows. With a wealth of experience in many kinds of traditional music among them, the quartet set out to record the music, as they would play it for dancers. All four of us are fond of playing in lots of different styles, says Unger, and we tried to include many of those influences on Lowdown Hoedown, but we approach it primarily as dance music. That means playing rhythmically, accenting the different figures, and always keeping one eye on the dance floor. When it comes to fiddling for the dance floor, Nat Hewitts name is usually one of the first to come up. He and Unger have worked together for years, and, since both are multi-instrumentalists, have a special rapport when it comes to blending rhythm and melody. Although he plays old-time, Irish, and other styles, Unger says, Nats really not a genre-oriented fiddler: hes a dance-oriented fiddler. Nowhere is that more evident than in the Sligo reel Lad OBeirnes, where Hewitts intonation captures the listeners complete attention, or in Door County #2, where he switches effortlessly between melody and rhythmic double-stopped shuffles. And in The Judge, he shines on lead guitar, providing a Django Reinhardt-like groove. Improbable licks that you could never write out is how Unger describes Sam Bartletts mandolin improvisations. Hes such a multi-faceted musician, and hell try anything. Some of those licks can be heard in the reel Bakers Favorite, where Bartletts mandolin dances around the melody laid down by Hewitts fiddle. Bartlett also adds the four stringed tenor banjo to the Ramblers sound; both on melody in the jig Robins Bodhran, and as a low-down rhythmic twist to the reel Lowdown Hoedown. The combination of Lowdown Hoedown and Elzics is one of my favorite moments on the recording, Bartlett says. One of the amazing things about that tune, and all of Larrys tunes, is that they sound finished: almost traditional. He has a knack for getting right to the point of a tune. We had such an exciting time during that particular session: theres something really great about the way those tunes sound together. Of the twenty two tunes on Lowdown Hoedown fourteen were composed by Unger, who Bartlett dubs the Irving Berlin of dance music. Listen to the interplay among the fiddle, guitar, and mandolin in the Glen Echo Jig/Robins Bodhran/Thingama medley: the way Unger doesnt just lay down the beat, but actually enhances the character of the tune with the chords he chooses; or to the achingly lovely waltz Cumberland, and you know that its Ungers compositions and playing that are at the heart of the Ramblers sound. Although their instrumentation is similar to the Appalachian string band sound of masters like Tommy Jarrell and Ralph Stanley, the Ramblers sound is unique. Were a contra dance band, first and foremost, says Unger. Within the genre of contra music, its unusual to find a band that succeeds without

a piano. The music has been piano driven for so many decades that, for most of us, it seems to be de rigueur. One of the reasons for the Ramblers strings-only success is the bass playing of Ginny Snowe. Ginnys more active than the average dance bass player, says Larry Unger. Shes such fun to work with because she can add runs in unexpected places, while keeping the beat strong. She can also change the way I play if I listen carefully to what shes doing: she makes me play more rhythmically. Although he cites the skills of Lowdown producer Pete Sutherland and engineer Mark Wessel, Unger admits that recording in a studio lacks the element of the dynamic interaction between band and dancers. Although the four of us love playing together and inventing new ways to approach the music, we always miss the dancers, and the immediate feedback they give us, he says. We certainly love the tunes, both new and traditional, but if it werent for the dancers, well, it just wouldnt be any fun! Mary DesRosiers, Harrisville, New Hampshire +++++ Produced by Pete Sutherland, recorded at Blue Jay Studio, Mark Wessel, engineer, Mixes and Mastered at Charles Eller Studios, Lane Gibson, engineer, Photos by Jodi Zeisal and Tiffany Thompson, Car Illustration by Sam Bartlett, Graphic design by Carolyn Isaac, Keene, NH Contacts for musicians books, CDs and for gigs: Larry Unger larryunger.net, Nat Hewitt nathewitt.com, Sam Bartlett samnabby@bluemarble.net Great Meadow Music P.O.Box 4, Westmoreland, NH 03467 (603) 399-8361 greatmeadowmusic (P) 2006 All Rights Reserved People who are interested in Django Reinhardt Rodney Miller should consider this download.

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