

Mp3 Various Artists - Contra Roots And Branches



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Once a regional specialty, New England's special music now belongs to America. This CD has music from the Roots in New England and the Branches around the country. Joyful and listenable music. 14 MP3 Songs in this album (74:29) ! Related styles: FOLK: Contra Dance, FOLK: Jazzy folk Details: New Englands special music now belongs to America. What was once a New England curiosity is now a national phenomenon. The Roots from New England influenced the Branches across the country and beyond. Musicians, dancers and listeners all share the musical joy. ===== CONTRA ROOTS AND BRANCHES David Millstone Lebanon, New Hampshire ----- Contra music is music for Contra dance, music meant to push you forward, to shape your movement. Listen and enjoy, but dont expect to sit still. As Frank Ferrel, one of the musicians in this collection, says, Dancing is the whole reason for fiddling. So, what is Contra dance? Contra is an Anglo-American dance form, Anglo because it has deep roots in English country dance, American because the older dances and the music changed in the New World setting. By the early 1700s, the majority of these dances were longways for as many as will, the forerunner of the Contra dance formation. Over time, dance figures became simpler. The violins became fiddles, moving from drawing rooms into rougher country kitchens and taverns. Music from England and Scotland joined new tunes brought by French-Canadians coming south to work in the New England mills and by the influx of Irish immigrants in the mid-1800s. The French had adopted English country dances and had coined their own word for them - contredanse. When the phrase came back again into English, it morphed into Contra dance, a construction which hints at opposites, two lines of dancers, men and women facing one another. The French were also attracted to English country dances with four couples; these became quadrilles and then American square dances. By the middle of the nineteenth century, squares were all the rage and Contras faded. Country dancing then fell victim to the

rise of couple dances. The waltz, initially decried for its licentious embrace, was followed by the polka, a dance craze that swept Europe and America. By the early twentieth century, most forms of traditional dance, including both contras and squares, had largely disappeared from the cities of America, pushed out by more fashionable music and choreography, including the Schottische, the Varsovienne, and the Two-step. Throughout the first half of that century, individual dances survived only in isolated pockets; in general, country dancing languished despite several revival attempts. Two men were most responsible for the resurgence and expansion of Contra dances in the United States today: Ralph Page and Dudley Laufman. From the 1930s until his death in 1985, Page became a well-known leader, ultimately respected as the Dean of American dance callers. Page lived in southwestern New Hampshire, the isolated Monadnock region that had held fast over time to its dance traditions, including the contra formation. Commuting by train from his home in Keene, NH, in 1943 Page started teaching squares, folk dances, and Contras at a weekly dance at the YWCA in Boston. Page also recorded numerous albums, taught at folk dance camps as far away as California, and made international tours, including a 1956 trip to Japan sponsored by the U.S. State Department. Accordion player and later pianist Bob McQuillen, heard on this album with New England Tradition, joined Ralph Pages orchestra in 1947 and continued playing for more than 50 years, including a stint with Dudley Laufmans Canterbury Orchestra. In 2002, McQuillen received the prestigious National Heritage Fellowship Award from the National Endowment for the Arts, the first such award to a Contra musician. As Ralph Page and other callers brought old Contras and squares to a new audience, it was Dudley who unleashed an enormous wave of interest in country dancing in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Hippies and young back-to-the-landers flocked to rural New England and discovered the dances and the lively fiddle tunes. From Maine to Connecticut, hordes of dancers appeared at what were commonly called Dudley dances, a name that replaces the earlier designation of square dance or simply the dance. As Dudley recalls, these young people didnt want anything to do with things that were square. Learning that the longways dances were called Contras, some started calling the entire evenings program a Contra dance. Over the centuries, as the dance changed, so did the music played for dancing. A single fiddle around 1800 might be supplanted later in that century by an orchestra with several violins, cornet, clarinet, perhaps a flute or harp, with the rhythm being kept by a tuba or a string bass. Ralph Pages New Hampshire orchestra in the late 1940s included two fiddles, a string bass, piano and accordion. Dudley introduced a new model with the Canterbury Orchestra; in the 1970s there

might be 20 musicians crowded onto the stage. Dudley introduced new music to the dance world, from tune books he obtained through the CDSS and from the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Canterbury recorded the first LP of contra dance music in 1972 and Canterbury musicians formed the house band at the Fox Hollow Folk Festival in upstate New York, where folk music enthusiasts from around the country encountered Contra dancing. As part of that folk revival, musicians also learned tunes from recordings. For example, the musicians in Swallowtail learned The Tar Road to Sligo, the jig that opens this CD, from a 1975 Bothy Band album. As Sarah Bauhan, a pennywhistle player active in the 1970s, recalls, We were just hungry for new material and it was coming at us faster than we could learn it. There was the Irish wave, and then there was the Scottish wave, and then there was the French-Canadian wave, and the Nova Scotian or Cape Breton wave. Contra musicians also started composing original tunes in the form needed to fit the dances. The subsequent spread of Contras can be traced directly to many Dudley dancers who with almost evangelical zeal carried an enthusiasm for country dancing as they moved from New England to other parts of the country. In the 1970s, Dudley dancers and musicians introduced contras in such far-flung locales as southern California, the Pacific Northwest, and the Midwest. By the 1980s, Contras began to spread through Appalachia and the South, northern Contra tunes challenged the old-time mountain fiddle tunes and square dances. The Canterbury Orchestra released additional albums on its own and in collaboration with the young musicians of the Farm and Wilderness Camp in Vermont, another dance hotbed. Scores of musicians, more than one hundred in all, played with Dudley at one time or another and they started forming their own bands. Rodney and Randy Miller released two albums of New England Chestnuts, traditional dances that formed the backbone of the dance repertoire at the time. In the Boston area, fiddler Donna Hbert joined Peter Barnes and Tony Parkes to form Yankee Ingenuity, and with Tony and Ted Sannella sharing the callers microphone, they soon were attracting crowds of 300 for the Tuesday night dance. These musicians, joined by other groups such as Swallowtail and Wild Asparagus, began touring nationally, bringing the New England sound as far away as the West Coast. In the mid-1980s, Rodney Millers two Airplang albums marked a pronounced shift away from the more traditional sound, helping lay the groundwork for the musical innovations and variety heard on this CD. Contra Roots and Branches refers in part to the geographical spread of Contra music. This compilation includes bands from far-flung North American locales. More than that, though, it demonstrates the new influences as contra spreads to new audiences

and as musicians introduce different musical elements. Repeating the same set of figures over and over again lets avid dancers fall into a trance; since an individual dance might last ten or twelve minutes. Listen to Dominos set that finishes this CD. A working dance band plays the same tune many times. As Dave Bartley comments, Playing for Contra dances forces us to improvise in ways we would never have the time or space to do in a concert setting. Musicians today commonly meld one tune with another to create vibrant musical textures. This album presents the sort of musical mix that you'll find at New England style contra dances around the country today. Most of these tunes are French-Canadian and Celtic, which form the heart of the traditional contra music repertoire. With the hammered dulcimer providing a subtle drone, Swallowtail plays Tar Road to Sligo several times through, gradually adding melody instruments and only bringing in the piano's bass accompaniment after more than a minute. As Contra dances have dispersed, the tunes and the arrangements here move farther afield, as musicians draw on different traditions. Next is a polka from Finland by way of North Carolina and Footloose, before jumping into Morpeth Lasses, a tune from Northumberland that is also used at a slower tempo for the Ampleforth long sword dance. A Band Named Bob opens with a piano introduction laying down the rhythmic underpinning, which is then joined by fiddle and accordion sharing the melody. The Hillbillies version of Old Man Old Woman, a standard from Quebec fiddler Louis Boudreault, starts out straightforward enough and gradually takes on Afro-pop styling. In contrast, Grand Picnics Romanian Invirtita goes the other direction, starting with a melody and rhythm from far away, jumping into a more familiar beat, and then adding clarinet and tuba for a jazzy arrangement of an old-time Appalachian tune. KGB has some fun with a well-known Quebecois tune, Frenchies, and then jumps across the Atlantic to include the Habanera from Carmen, neatly squared off to fit the 32-bar structure of the dance, complete with gypsy fiddle flourishes and operatic vocalizations. The banjo and fiddle in Eli Greenes Cakewalk offer up a light-hearted feeling from an era a hundred years ago. In contrast, savor the driving and rock-ribbed sound of the marches played by New England Tradition. For their set of original tunes by Al White, the Berea Castoffs dip into the contra musicians bag of tricks, switching from a jig to reels to raise the energy level on the dance floor. Then it's time for a short waltz around the floor to a tune from the Shetlands, with George Wilson's fiddle backed by Bill Spence's hammered dulcimer. Frank Ferrell's fiddle sparkles in a set of reels drawn from Boston dance halls in years past; while the Guys Can Talk fellows let the accordion take the lead in a set of French-Canadian reels at a relaxed dance tempo. Contratopia shares three

original reels by band members Erik Sessions and John Goodin. And we end the evenings dancing with the joyful sound of Quebecois reels, a lengthy medley by Domino that keeps everyone moving. What is Contra music? The definition is changing, expanding, evolving. Interspersed with the straight-ahead style of bands such as New England Tradition, you'll also hear ethnic dance undertones, rhythmic syncopation, jazzy riffs, that were not part of the contra music sound even twenty years ago. This sampler is a snapshot of the music as it's being played these days in many locales. As Daniel Steinberg notes, Ultimately, the sound of good Contra music is the sound of good music. ===== CONTRA ROOTS AND BRANCHES Produced with the assistance of Country Dance and Song Society. Continuing the traditions, linking those who love them The Country Dance and Song Society is the organization that, through its resources, programs, and enthusiasm, celebrates and preserves traditional English and Anglo American dance, music, and song, promotes their new expression, connects people who enjoy them, and supports communities where they can continue to thrive. Founded in 1915, CDSS sponsors 11 week-long summer Dance and Music Camps for adults and families. A wide selection of books, recordings and ritual dance equipment are sold from our Mail Order Store. CDSS offers individual and group membership benefits and services, including a bimonthly newsletter and annual Group Directory. We are supported by donations and memberships. Please join us! PO Box 338 Haydenville, MA 01039-0338 413-268-7426 office@cdss.org cdss.org ===== Tunes, Tunewriters, Bands, CD Names and Musicians 1. Tar Road to Sligo/ The Wild One (Mer Boel)/ Apples in Winter Swallowtail/ After the Dance Amherst, MA 1999 Ron Grosslein mandolin, fiddle, David Cantieni winds, oboe, flute George Marshall concertina, bodhran, Tim Van Egmond hammered dulcimer, Timm Triplett piano. 2. A Finnish Polka/ Morpeth Lasses Footloose, Chapel Hill, NC 1992 Ted Ehrhard fiddle, David DiGiuseppe accordion, Dean Herington clarinet, Pete Campbell piano 3. Paddy Killorans/ Gallaghers Frolic A Band Named Bob/ Philadelphia, PA 1994 Barbara Greenberg fiddle, Bob Pasquarello Piano, triangle, Bob Stein synthesizer, 4. Old Man Old Woman Hillbillies from Mars, San Francisco Bay area, CA 1993 Ray Bierl fiddle, Kevin Carr fiddle, electric guitar, Paul Kotapish mandolin, electric lead guitar, Daniel Steinberg keyboards, guest: Eric Nielson drums, 5. Romanian Invirtita/ Grasshopper Grand Picnic, Brooklyn, NY 2002 Michael Gorin fiddle, Sam Zygmuntowicz fiddle, mandolin, Jody Kruskal concertina, Marco Brehm bass, Bill Peek piano, Danny Elias clarinet, Karen Geer tuba 6. Frenchies/ Habaera (Bizet) KGB, Volga Notions Seattle, WA 1999 Julie King piano, Claude Ginsburg fiddle, voice, Dave Bartley mandolin, voice. 7. Eli Greens Cakewalk A

Portland Selection, Portland, OR 2002 George Penk fiddle, Clyde Curley tenor banjo, Susan Songer piano 8. Year-End Two Step (Ralph Page)/ O'Donnell Abhu New England Tradition, Farewell to the Hollow, Peterborough, NH 1988 Bob McQuillen piano, Pete Colby banjo, April Limber fiddle 9. Jig Mania/ Tuba City Truck Stop/ Yesterdays Noodles (all Al White) The Berea Castoffs, Berea, KY 2000 Al White fiddle, mandolin, Alice White Bass, David Witherspoon flute, Charlie Pilzer piano, 10. Morags Waltz (Tom Anderson) George Wilson Friends, The Royal Circus, Albany, NY George Wilson fiddle, guitar, Bill Spence hammered dulcimer 11. Erin Reel/ The St. Lawrence River/ Oliver Tremblays Reel Frank Ferrel Friends, Yankee Dreams, Boston, MA 1991 Frank Ferrel fiddle, Peter Barnes keyboards, John McGann guitar, mandolin. 12. Montmarquettes/ Pique Bois/ Set Amricain (Thodore Dugay)/ G Tune Guys Can Talk, Minneapolis, MN 1999 Eric Mohring fiddle, mandolin, Dan Newton accordion, Larry Siegel keyboard, mandolin 13. Aly On the Plains (Erik Sessions)/ Hay to Market (John Goodin)/ Just 4 Guys (John Goodin) Contratopia, Smitten, Iowa/Minnesota 2004 Erik Sessions, violin, Patrice Pakiz piano, percussion, John Goodin mandolin, Pat O'Laughlin banjo, English concertina 14. Reel du Tricentenaire/ Reel Arthur (Marcel Messervier)/ Reel de Port-Joli/ Reel de Moosonee (Richard Forest)/ Set Amricain (Thodore Dugay) Domino, Montreal, PQ - Richard Forest fiddle, Sabin Jacques Accordion, Rejean Brunet piano double bass.

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