

Pandemic Panaceas

Engaging the body. Engaging the mind.



RUSHFEST WORKOUTS

By Emily Rush

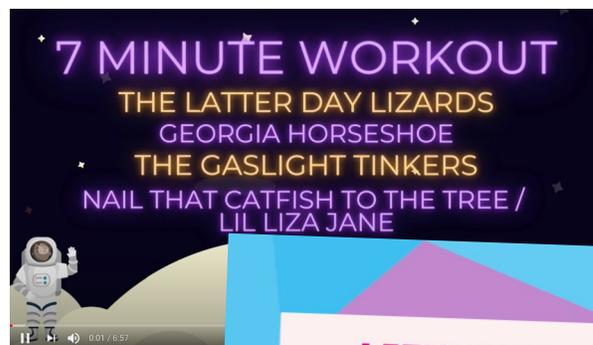
In non-pandemic times I run a contra dance series called Rushfest. I take all sorts of pop music—everything from Kool and the Gang to Beyoncé—edit it just enough so that it's square, overlap a few songs to make a contra-dance length track, and call to them at dance weekends across the country and in my Durham/Carrboro, NC, home community.

In April Alex Deis-Lauby (contra dance caller) and Audrey Knuth (fiddle player) got on Zoom and did the *New York Times* 7 Minute Workout together. They liked it enough to put out an invitation on Facebook, and a handful of dancers started working out together every day. Eventually we added the *New York Times* 9 minute workout, and then a third workout after that.

One day someone asked if I would bring some Rushfest tracks to our workouts, and not being one to do things halfway, I made videos with music, but also silly gifs of the moves and whistles for start and stop times. (Watch a workout video with DJed music at bit.ly/Rushfest1.) It was a great fit. But as much as we love Kesha and Journey, we are contra dancers first, and adding contra tunes to our workouts was the obvious progression.

So I started asking contra dance musicians if I could bring their tunes to the workout videos. I added tip jars and links to buy the albums, hopefully adding some extra income while in-person events aren't happening. (Watch a workout video with contra music at bit.ly/Rushfest2.) If you are a dance musician and would like to contribute music, I'd love to hear from you!

Our workout group has grown to between 12-20 people every (every!) day, with around 30 people that come on a regular basis. We span the U.S., Canada, and Germany, and are mostly but not exclusively contra dancers. It's



been a wonderful way to check in with each other, get encouragement, and meet new people. We modify the moves to make them as easy or as hard as we need. And we laugh a LOT. In June we banded together and raised \$2,500 for the ACLU.

Feel free to get in touch if you'd like to join our workouts—all are welcome! Find all the workout videos and learn more at rushfestcontra.com/workout, and email me (emily@rushfestcontra.com) or Audrey (audreylk24@gmail.com) for info on how to join the live Zoom workouts.



STARS IN THE RAFTERS

By Julie Vallimont

I've started a podcast! It's called "Stars in the Rafters" and is a podcast of comfort—of music and poetry contributed by people in the dance and music community. And you are welcome to contribute to it, too! We currently have passed 3000 listens after 19 episodes, with 100+ listens per episode, and listeners from more than 20 U.S. states and 10 countries.

The idea came to me in early April. I was up late at night, sick, stressed, and couldn't sleep. I found myself looking for some comfort. And I thought maybe other people might be looking for comfort, too, especially because so many of us are cut off from dancing or singing or playing music, and it might be a while until we see each other again.

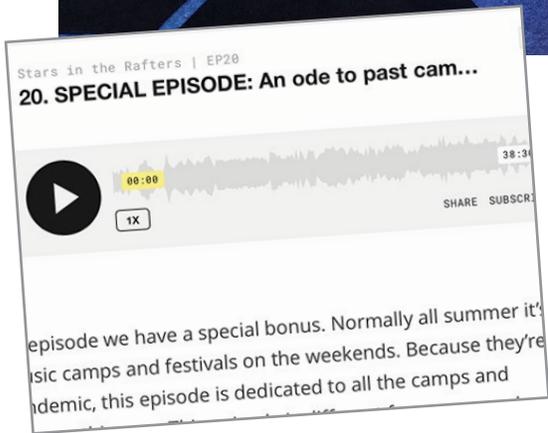
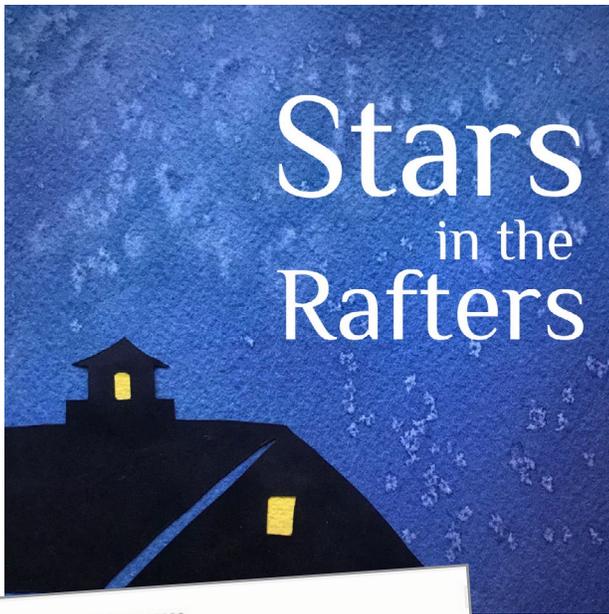
The concept is that this podcast is by the community, for the community. Each episode is 20 to 25 minutes long, just enough to unwind to or even fall asleep to. It's made up of music and poetry from our friends in the music and dance scenes, trying to shine a little light in these trying times. I am really loving listening to what people have been sending in; it is a joy.

A lot of us are missing the joy and community we have on the dance floor and in music halls, and it's going to be some time until we can be together again. Though we can't celebrate together in the same way in person, we can still be here for each other. I hope you enjoy the podcast, and please do feel free to send in music or poetry, or just reach out to me and say hi!

🔊 Listen at starsintherafters.com.

Artwork by Nicole Singer. Logo design by Julie Vallimont and Alden Robinson.

This series is supported in part by the Country Dance & Song Society, Pinewoods Camp Inc., and NEFFA.



Pinewoods

