

Mara Shea has been playing with violins since her mother decided her child had a really good sense of pitch and enrolled her in music schools in Westport and New Haven, CT. After studying classical violin for 10 years and then taking a 15-year break, she discovered folk and dance music. Mara has been happily playing for dancers since the 1990s—various styles of English, Scottish, contra, ceilidh—and is frequently heard at balls, dance weekends and concerts throughout the US and Canada. She has been on the music staff at Pinewoods, TAC Summer School, Ramblewood, Scottish Weekend, and at the [John C. Campbell Folk School](#), in Brasstown, NC. In 2014 and 2016, with Dean Herington, Mara led a three-day musicians' workshop for the Scottish country dance group in Lisbon, Portugal. Mara plays regularly at the English country dance weekend at John C. Campbell each Spring, and organizes the music for the [Sun Assembly](#) English country dance group in Durham, North Carolina. She has several recordings with her contra dance band, [The Elftones](#), as well as with other wonderful musicians such as Dave Wiesler (*Heather Hills*) and Rhiannon Giddens (*All the Pretty Horses*). In 2013, Mara, Julie Gorka (keyboard), and Walt Robinson (recorder) formed **Syllabub** (www.syllabubmusic.com), and they are becoming well-known at English / Regency dances throughout the US. In 2014, Mara and Julie released an album of waltzes (*In ¾ Time*), which also includes several English country dances. The latest Elftones album, *The Elftones, Naturally*, will be released in July 2017, celebrating their 20-year band anniversary. Mara lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, where she teaches Celtic fiddle, and works as an occasional freelance technical writer and editor. For more on Mara, and to listen to some of her music, visit her website: www.MaraShea.com.