

YTS 2015 Workshop Descriptions

(Not all workshops are listed — feel free to find & ask the leader to learn more about a workshop that's not on this list!)

Staff-Led Workshops

Building Harmony (Craig Edwards)

Learn or refresh the basics of harmony, with lots of singing and just enough theory that you'll have a framework. We'll talk and sing through the difference between major and minor scales, hearing and singing intervals, how chords are built, cadences, and how you can recognize and even anticipate harmonic motion, then sing songs that will help you practice and remember what you've learned. No previous knowledge of music theory or ability to read music necessary.

Gospel Session (Kathy Bullock)

We will sing gospel songs, drawing from a rich African-American musical heritage of both traditional and contemporary styles that begin in the 1920s. Since we will learn the songs in the oral tradition, you don't have to read music in order to participate. Song lyrics will be provided. Just come prepared to become a member of a gospel choir where we will sing, move and clap together, singing songs of encouragement, thanksgiving and joy. It's a celebration of life.

Mountain-Style Singing (Elizabeth LaPrelle)

This will be a workshop for learning and discussing technique/tricks for Appalachian-style singing, including: Old Regular or Primitive Baptist church singing, ballad singing, and a little bit of bluegrass. I will bring some lyrics-sheets to practice with, but we'll spend a lot more time on capturing phrasing, tone, and ornaments than on learning words. We'll likely do some listening to recordings of different singers as well.

Playground, Summer Camp, and Lullabies: Kids' Song Swap (Elizabeth LaPrelle)

Just for fun, bring those childhood songs that "everybody knows" for a swap! I've learned some really goofy ones at summer camp over the years, and I'll bring some of my favorite Appalachian lullabies as well. Crazy rhymes, call & response, and hand motions encouraged! We'll all participate, and after singing we'll discuss where the songs came from and where we learned them, kids' songs' themes and the similarities between childhood songs from different cultures.

Singing in the Spirit: African and African-American Musical Connections (Kathy Bullock)

I'll share the story of African-American music—from its African heritage to its formation in the U.S. Using lecture/demonstration, songs, stories and movement, I'll provide a foundation for the defining, understanding and performance of this music and of the culture from which it emerged. While we will look at the spiritual, one of the earliest forms of U.S. folk music, this session relates to American folk music in general. The session is

informative, engaging incorporating African rhythms, U.S. melodies and universal messages. No previous knowledge of music theory or ability to read music is required.

Texas Gladden: Virginia Ballad Singer (Elizabeth LaPrelle)

I've got songs and stories about Texas Gladden, ballad-singer from Salem, VA,, and her musical family. I'll bring some lyrics sheets for those want to take home her songs. We'll focus on learning about who she was, and on learning the words to a few songs, not so much on capturing her style. *Bonus: you might get to take home a family recipe!*

The Song and the River (Craig Edwards)

American music took on its characteristics as people in the pre-recording era carried their own music to new places heard other people's music in those places, and adopted and imitated each other's musical sounds. Whether afoot or afloat, people followed watercourses as natural highways, and river towns produced some of America's most distinctive music. Hear and sing a variety of songs that illustrate the complex and sometimes unexpected connections among different styles of American music.

Vocal Improvisation in African-American Music Session (Kathy Bullock)

Want to learn more about vocal improvisation in styles such as blues, gospel and R&B? Here's the place to do so. Using songs taken from those genres, participants will have the opportunity to improvise on them, exploring various methods and approaches. Singing both individually and together, we will share musical ideas and techniques. It's a great venue to compare the style of improvisation in these and other forms of folk music. Most of the music will be done in the oral tradition and some sheet music will be included.

Wake Up Dead Man: Work Song Session (Craig Edwards)

Singing at work probably preceded the development of language. Come expecting to sing. A lot. We'll also move around some. I'll bring some of my favorite songs from several work song traditions, including rowing songs, night-herding songs and axe-cutting songs. You bring some favorite songs. As we go, we'll pause occasionally to consider links between breath, motion, emotion, vocal delivery, power, and rhythm.

Attendee-Led Workshops

3rd Annual Round Singing Extravaganza! (Stacy Dickerman and BDan Fairchild)

A song session dedicated to the noble art of round singing. Everyone is welcome, and anyone can suggest a round. As long as someone in the group knows the round well enough to teach it, we'll attempt it! (Sometimes we'll attempt rounds nobody knows if the lyrics are fun and our books happen to include the tune.) Especially good for people who like to sing along with others but may not have a huge repertoire of their own. Also good for people who like finely crafted harmonies, earworms that will stick in your head all weekend, and opportunities to sing without any pressure to put on a show. We have learned from experience that if the round you want to share is not in English, it's probably a good idea to bring several copies of the lyrics. We'll also have MANY books of rounds, so if you're not 100% on the lyrics to a particular round, you can always look it up.

Blues Song Swap (Heather Livingston)

This will be a blues song swap; we will begin singing a familiar blues song together, and then go around and each have a turn to share a song, as well as a little (brief!) history about the song; who you learned it from, who originated it or is known for singing it, why you like it. People who just want to listen are welcome too! Bring a blues song you love to sing! Also OK if you want to sing a piece of a song, e.g., a verse or two. Instruments welcome, and there will be a handout of resources (singers to explore, jams, historians, workshops) to take home with you. Recording IS allowed in this workshop (but no posting on social media without song leader's consent, as per YTS policy and common consideration).

Bulgarian Harmonies (Hannah Harvester)

I will teach 2-3 traditional Bulgarian songs in two-part harmony (main voice and drone)! Bring a pen or pencil.

Early Country Trios (Monica-Lisa Mills)

Pulling songs from the early country repertoire - The Carter Family, The Stanley Brothers, The Louvins, Jimmy Martin - we'll explore some of the common harmony patterns and how to pick out a third part by ear. This is a mostly-singing, skill-building workshop. We'll start with some exercises, then move into singing a simple duet, and practice adding a third part, then tuning it up and changing the tones to get a great harmony buzz in a group and in trios. If there is time, we can try stacking the harmony in different ways or try picking out the third part on a few more songs. Bring a pen/pencil to make notes on the lyrics, if needed. And if you have a guitar and feel comfortable playing in an early country (boom-chuck) style, feel free to bring it along, just in case!

Experimental Singing and Movement Games (Alex Kramer)

This workshop will introduce a variety of improvised and semi-improvised scores and games for singing and movement. These games are effective for working with people of all ages, and help get people started singing and moving together. No need to bring anything, but recording devices and notebooks are welcome.

Gurian Polyphony (Linnea Sablosky & Jordan Lewis)

Participants will learn one or more three-part songs from the region of Guria in Georgia. Bring a notebook and writing utensil.

Performing with Sound (Dennis Cook)

We'll cover: How to use microphones to help you get the most out of your performance (vocal and instrumental). Where to put them. How to aim them. How to move about them. Manipulating a mic stand. What to do about feedback. How to make the mic work for you. Why. Singers should have a song in mind that they would perform at an open mic, and should bring their instrument with them if they use it in performance.

Re-writing & Reclaiming Songs with Problematic Lyrics (Chris Bracken)

This is hands-on! Bring a song or two that you love but don't sing or feel uncomfortable singing because of a problematic line or verse. We'll work in small groups to tweak them so that they retain their character but lose the squicky racism/sexism/sexual violence. Folk process for the win! Bring a song with a problematic lyric or verse if you can think of one, but feel free to come without one and collaborate with others.

Shy Singers (Heather Livingston)

A safe space to sing and be vulnerable. And a chance to sing that song you've been meaning to sing all weekend. but couldn't quite find an opening. We'll start with a brief discussion about some of the things that scare us about singing in front of people, then sing a familiar song together, and then go around and each have a turn to share a song or even just a verse or two (choruses or not, either way is OK) (with no pressure!), and close out all singing together and feeling just a little bit more confident! Bring a song to share (but no pressure to share; also, totally OK to sing a verse or two or a chorus and not a whole song). NO recording in this workshop. Bring a pen and notebook if you want to, instrument likewise.

Take a Warning by Me (Lynn Feingold)

The long title for this song session would be "Everything I needed to know about life I learned in a trad song." This will be a tongue-in-cheek, audience participation session where participants will share songs that have a moral, or a lesson, in them -- which they may not have chosen to believe/follow in their real life. Expect a fun, fast exchange of songs with introductions such as "this is why I chose to become a pirate" or "it seemed like a good idea at the time." Bring a trad song that teaches a lesson, and some way to capture these songs - electronic or manual.

Take Home Popcorn (Drew Crawford)

Popcorn session with the intent of teaching songs to take home with you. Bring one to share; feel free to ask for a song you would like to take home with you. Recording, for personal use only, encouraged. Bring a song to share, pen and paper, recording device, and patience to teach.

Vocal Fatigue (Greta Rudolph)

Do you notice that your voice gets tired, maybe after singing all night, singing a certain song, or singing in one part of your range? We'll explore some causes of vocal fatigue and consider options to make singing less physically stressful. Please bring a song or two to share. Consider bringing a song that you feel tires your voice, a song that never feels tiring, or both. Please bring a song or two - consider bringing a song that you feel tires your voice, a song that never feels tiring, or both.