

Youth Traditional Song Weekend 2013

Workshop Descriptions



Staff Workshops

Accompanying Yourself (The One-Man Band)

Lissa Schneckenburger

This workshop will be geared towards those that play an unusual song accompaniment instrument (violin, cello, drums, etc.) because often those are the most challenging, but all instrumentalists (guitarists, pianists, etc.) and singers, are welcome. We'll talk about picking songs, practice techniques, and exercises to make your one man band experience more satisfying. Attendees should bring their instruments, and a recording device will help them get the most out of the session.

Harmony

Ian Robb and Ken Schatz

Ian and Ken will help you take your harmonies to the next level, whether you want to try some new things singing along with choruses or come up with mind-bending arrangements to perform. They'll give plenty of demonstrations of approaches to harmony singing, as they get you thinking about how you can use it to create different moods, sustain audience interest or just interact with your fellow singers.

New England Ballads

Lissa Schneckenburger

Lissa will lead a tour of New England Balladry, using the repertoire from Lissa's "Song" CD as a jumping off point. You'll listen to field recordings, look through song books, and hear examples of modern interpretations.

New Songs That Sound Old

Ian Robb

Ian will explore the ways modern songwriters have connected to the tradition. He'll be singing songs by some of his favorite English and Canadian song makers, plus perhaps a couple of his own songs. In addition, he'll talk about why songwriters write songs in the traditional idiom, and why you might want to be singing them.

Performance Craft

Lissa Schneckenburger

Lissa will lead the workshop in looking at the different techniques of giving an excellent stage performance. Attendees will look at examples of great performances, and then get a chance to perform for each other with discussion and critique at the end. You should come prepared with one short piece that you can perform in front of the class.

Song Clinic

Ian Robb

Ian will lead a discussion on all kinds of aspects of unaccompanied singing--from voice production to phrasing to repertoire choice, to just why we sing songs without instruments in the first place. Attendees will sing songs in front of the group, and we'll use your performances as a jumping-off point to talk about subjects like choosing songs to sing, how to introduce a song, finding a key, techniques for learning words, phrasing, tempo, the pros and cons of unaccompanied singing, making a song your own versus singing it as you heard it, maintaining the narrator's distance versus acting out the song, singing songs from outside of your region or culture credibly (dialects, regional styles, etc.)

Start Your Own Song Session

Ken Schatz

Want to learn how to keep the singing going after Youth Trad Song is over? Ken will discuss how to get a successful sing going in your hometown, even if there isn't much of a local folk scene. Building on his experience founding Exceedingly Good Song Night, a New York City session that has become a destination for singers from across the U.S., he'll go over some tips for building a thriving song session (or keeping it that way!), including how to attract both beginners and veteran singers, encourage people to learn and lead songs, keep the energy high and give your session its own personality. Attendees are welcome to bring their own stories of organizing singing communities, or questions on how to get things going.

Work Songs

Ken Schatz

Ken will explore traditional work songs sung in the Southern prison farm system by largely African-American prisoners through the mid-20th century. He will perform and analyze work songs, explaining how they use call-and-response and counterpoint (two melodies intertwining in one song.) Ken will also give context for the songs, including how they were developed and which songs were used for what type of work. Attendees are encouraged to join in on responses and choruses.

Staff Panel:

Where Do My Songs Come From?

Ian, Ken, and Lissa

We all get our songs from somewhere. Ian, Lissa and Ken will hold a panel discussion and song swap focusing on where they found specific songs. Did a song come from an old guy up in the hills or a friend at the local session; from a mouldering 19th-century collection or a favorite CD? They'll be telling stories about the ways they got their songs, how that affects their singing, and the additional meaning that it adds to their music.

Participant Workshops

Advice from Our Mentors

Lisa Null

All of us learn and pattern after singers we admire. We do this through some mixture of conversation, interviews, observation, classes, private study, and workshops. As I get older I think about the insightful friends and mentors I've had that future generations may never get a chance to know personally except through some form of documentation. This is my chance to share what my mentors taught me about singing and about their traditions. This is your chance too to share what you may have learned from some of your mentors.

My own mentors include Seamus Ennis, Jean Ritchie, Joe Heaney, Peter Bellamy, Helen Schneyer, Almeda Riddle, Sara Cleveland, Margaret McArthur, Sandy Paton, Nic Jones, Norman Kennedy, Sandy Ives, and Jack Langstaff. Bring songs and/or nuggets of wisdom or just come to listen and perhaps question or comment. I think of this as a chance to pool together useful knowledge about singing traditional songs. Re-

orders, pencils, pads, videos, instruments are welcome though far from essential.

Ballads & Songs You Don't Get to Sing in the Pub - Song Swap

Julia Friend

This is a space to share those songs that don't fit in at a loud chorus song session. Bring any songs you especially like: ballads, pithy or emotional songs, chorus free songs or ones with incidental choruses or refrains. Choruses are not forbidden, but our method and intent will be to listen to one another rather than to achieve maximum volume. Expect a relaxed but somewhat focused listening session. It will enable you to digest your dinner.

Basic Conducting:

Using Gesture to Lead Songs

Hannah Rose Rommer

Sometimes a song leader wants use hand motions or body language to teach songs, cue singers, or achieve a musical effect. Even if you don't want to "conduct," a few basic concepts can help you communicate clearly. We'll talk about showing a clear beat, cut-offs, cues, pitch registration and phrasing, as well as how body language can help establish a warm, encouraging leadership style. Participants will practice concepts by leading the group in familiar songs.

Basic Harmony Tips & Tricks (w/ harmony-focused session)

Ian McGullam

Do you love the sound of a room full of harmonies, but can't figure out how everyone knows what to sing? We'll discuss the basics of sounding out harmonies on the fly, even when you've never heard a song before. You'll pick up some new harmony "components," little musical moves you can break out while singing along with someone that will produce instant harmony. Then, about halfway through the workshop, we'll switch over to a song session, where we can take turns leading songs that are especially conducive to great harmonies, and you can put the techniques you learned into action. This workshop is open to anyone, from new to advanced singers, but is especially aimed at singers who can follow melodies in sessions and are looking to take the next step into improvising harmonies.

Crosscurrents:**Songs of Newfoundland and the Maritimes***Lynn Noel*

Atlantic Canada has a rich, distinctive, and living song tradition, from ballads and chanteys to topical social commentary. The last twenty years have seen an entire genre arise of "songs of no fish," as well as a resurgence of the tradition among younger singers and songwriters. Lynn Noel has been collecting, interpreting, and studying the music of Atlantic Canada since the 1970s in Cape Breton and the 1980s in Newfoundland, including a M.S. on how traditional song influenced the Newfoundland national parks movement and a decade touring Canada as a performer for Canadian national and provincial parks. Lynn will take us on a multilingual tour of the English, Scottish, Irish, French, Micmac, and uniquely regional sounds of Newfoundland, Cape Breton, PEI, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

Figuring Out The Chords*Jeff Kaufman*

Do you play guitar or another rhythm instrument to accompany singing? Can you manage when you have chords written out but don't know what to do without them? We'll talk about how to figure out what chords to play, both if you're preparing ahead of time and if you need to do it on the fly. Bring instruments, and we'll practice some of the strategies.

Folk and Choral Songs From Around the World*Brian Dolphin*

I will lead the group in traditional Georgian, Ukrainian, and Jewish choral songs and briefly explore some Hindu devotional call and response and South African polyphony. Though we may travel far and wide in song, my goal is to leave participants with three songs we can perform for the larger group. I will provide word sheets with translations and record the session so that fellow songsters can keep the eclectic harmony flowing with their musical friends outside YTS. All are welcome to come learn and share a choral folk song from around the world!

Hello and Goodbye:**Songs for Beginnings and Endings***Laura DeCesare*

I envision the workshop as a song-swap format, where participants share songs they have found

successful to start or end a session or event. Not just for session leaders, it's great for anyone who enjoys attending pub sings, song sessions, or dances that begin or end with a song. Also great for teachers! Attendees should come with a song and anything they need to share it... recording devices and notebooks are welcome.

“Hey, Where'd You Get That?”**Sources for Songs of the Sea***Chris Koldewey*

The workshop will be an overview of some of the source material where many of the common (some uncommon) Sea Songs (Chanties, etc.) came from. Some songs will be demonstrated, and possible sources, or variations, will be explored. Attendees may also ask about some of the songs in which they have an interest, and ask about them. Attendees are also encouraged to bring a song or two where they would like more information. If it's a Chantey, How was it used? Who might have collected it? What is the likelihood that it went to sea? What might have been the country of origin? Where else do variants show up? Appropriate for beginners and more advanced, as well as folks wishing to find out a bit more about Chanties and Ballads having to do with the sea.

Molly Dance and Song*Saralinda Lobrose*

Learn a Molly dance! Or join us to sing for the dancing. While we learn a Molly dance we will also explore the finer points of being the “musician” for a team of dancers, using only your voice. Molly is a traditional dance from the East Anglia area of England and often considered a type of Morris dancing. It is generally done in sets of 4 or 6 dancers and usually performed to singing. Wear clothes that you are comfortable dancing in (unless you plan only to sing). Pants work better than dresses for this and sneakers are good footwear. There is no limit on numbers of dancers for this workshop so come one, come all, and the more the merrier!

New Tunes for Old Words*Suzanne Mrozak*

This will be mostly a discussion illustrated with specific examples from my repertoire, including poems/ballads for which I have written tunes and traditional ballads where I have swapped tunes I didn't like or couldn't sing for ones that suited me better. I will also hand out copies of a short song collected by John Jacob Niles in Kentucky that he

did not publish with a tune for “homework” for those who would like to try writing a tune themselves. Participants are encouraged to share similar material to share with the group. Everyone is welcome, especially beginners. Instruments, recording devices, etc. are welcome too.

Repeat After Me: Call and Response Songs

Sarah Pilzer

This session will feature songs that include call and response as part of their structure. We'll sing many such songs together, as well as delve into discussion of how/why this format exists in various song traditions. Bring a favorite from this genre to share with the group. Anyone can participate, all you gotta do is respond when someone calls!

Sacred Harp Singing

Becky Wright

We'll be singing shape note music, early American hymns with powerful, raw harmonies and a participatory spirit. There will be a 10-minute singing school at the beginning if you've never sung this type of music before, or just need a refresher. We'll be singing from *The Sacred Harp* (1991 Denson Edition), the most common collection of shape note tunes; if you don't have a copy, there will be some available to borrow.

Southern Appalachian Ballads, Knee-to-Knee Style

Saro Lynch-Thomason

This interactive workshop will expose attendees to ballads, or “love songs” from the southern Appalachian region, primarily Western North Carolina. Saro will teach a variety of ballads (“British” and American) in the “knee-to-knee” style- that is, group memorization through repetition of the song, progressing from verse to verse. This workshop will be fairly laid back and requires no previous exposure to the practice of ballad singing. Attendees are welcome to bring recording devices, and will be supplied with lyric sheets of the ballads learned.

Staying Connected: Building and Participating in Online Communities for Traditional Song

Lynn Noel

The internet is everywhere, and so are smart phones. We plan events on Facebook, advertise them on our websites, meet new friends and track

down old songs on Mudcat, collect performances on our iPhones and share them on YouTube and SoundCloud, and swap lyrics and tunes as URLs. There are even Google+ Hangouts for live sessions on air, and virtual choruses of singers from around the world. After a century of recordings and a generation of personal electronics, the discussion of whether technology kills tradition might more fruitfully shift to how technology can further tradition for the Young Digerati. Where and how might we carry on the community created this weekend when we are no longer physically in the same place? Who wants to experiment with live online harmony singing, and what do we need to make it happen?

Themes From a Hat

Heather Wood

A great “mixer” that involves everyone, even non-singers. You'll be amazed at the range of songs people know.

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor: Occupational Songs Brainmeld

Chris Bracken

My plan for this is a great big song session to compile a list of all the occupations we can think of that are referenced in trad/trad-mold songs and sing them along the way. This can be as vague as “sailor” or “soldier” and as specific as “Handsome Cabin Boy” or “Bonny Light Horseman”. Bonus points for songs with wacky/out-there/lesser-sung-about occupations or songs that mention lots of different ones. The plan is for participants to share songs as they're added to the list, but maybe try to keep them a little shorter so we can get the flavor of the songs but still throw out as many as possible. No level of skill/subject expertise or accoutrements necessary. Bring songs as you're inspired, don't feel you have to come with a song (this could be a great place to pick some up, though!).

Working With Amplification

Jeff Kaufman

Through technological wizardry we can make you much louder than you would be otherwise, but at the cost of making things more complex. Learn how to manage that complexity, and help the sound person help you sound your best.