

Staff-Led Workshops

Alex's Workshops

Writing Songs Within The Tradition (T)

How do you make a new song that sounds old? Join Alex for a discussion of the techniques they use to write new songs within the tradition. We will discuss how to utilize rhythm and song structure effectively, methods of changing the tradition from within, and the power of tropes. Feel free to bring works in progress that you are interested in working on!

Arranging Songs for Performance (T)

In this workshop, Alex will talk through their process for taking a song from its most basic form to an arranged version for performance and recording. We'll talk about methods for incorporating instruments, arrangement techniques and philosophies, and the 'big arc'. We'll then take a song or two and arrange them on the spot - bring instruments if you have them!

Songs from Newfoundland (S)

A song share focused on the rich song tradition of Newfoundland and Labrador. Ballads and chorus songs will be equally welcome, as will discussion of the history of some of the songs we sing.

Emily's Workshops

The Wonderful and Wacky World of Whistling (T)

Pucker up for this whirlwind exploration of whistling! Two-time whistling champion Emily Eagen will show us some tricks of the trade, talk a bit about the history of the "puccolo" as an art form around the world, and get us all whistling solos and in three-part harmony. We'll explore various techniques for whistling fast, slow, low, high, in, out, you name it. We'll try out some of whistling's "greatest hits" from popular culture, and see what it's like to whistle a little opera and jazz. Peppered with anecdotes and tips, this workshop will get you up and tweeting, and - we hope - let you take home a few new tunes to add to your performance sets. Open to experienced, casual, and non-whistlers alike. Give a little whistle and join us!

Sing with your Ears (T)

Let's get down to the basics! What is a fourth? Is that chord major or minor? This hands-on (ok, voices-on) workshop will let you explore some of the fundamental aural skills you need to sing. With a playful, dive-in approach for all levels, we'll make use of the group context to explore the building blocks of scales and harmonies together: we'll go from unison to chords to dissonance, play around with intervals and scales, and do some rhythm work as well. We'll play a few circlesong-style improvisation games that let you freely and openly explore what your ear is guiding you to, synthesizing this into "news you can use" to go further. You'll walk away with tip sheets for recognizing intervals and harmonies in well-known songs so that you can keep trying

things at home. All backgrounds welcome: this workshop is designed to fill in some gaps to expand your comfort zone, whatever it may be. Come sing with your ears!

Learning from Lullabies (T)

In this workshop, we'll explore the magical, mysterious, spellbinding world of lullabies: lullabies ancient and new, lullabies from around the globe and close to home, lullabies that are surprisingly virtuosic and lullabies that anyone and everyone can sing. Along the way we'll ask questions: How do lullabies help us connect and soothe? How do lullabies teach us language? Why are lullabies sometimes scary? We'll sing as many lullabies as we can as a group, and share stories along the way about lullabies from our own lives and what these mean to us. But wait! Just when you thought this workshop would put you to sleep, we'll gather it all up as inspiration for the brief but beautiful creation of our very own new lullabies.

Stefan and Zara's Workshops

Marvelous and Uncanny: A Dip into the Harry Smith Anthology (S)

Harry Smith was a collector, an artist and a philosopher who, with Smithsonian Folkways Records, put together an Anthology of American Folk Music. It speaks to universal themes in the language of religion, love, loss and nature through a wild variety of vernacular music. It was an ear-opening entrance point for many musicians in the '60s folk revival, and many songs are standards of the folk canon. We'll be demonstrating some of these songs, and singing others with you. Bring your voice and an instrument if you like.

The Waterson Way (S)

No one sounds quite like the Watsons, the singing family and folk juggernaut from 1960s England. Aside from their individual voices, what was it that made their interpretations of folk songs so unique and powerful? We'll be learning a few of their songs in the way they sang them. Parts will be taught, but we'll also take a bit of time to play with their style of selective harmonizing, where all are on the melody, except for choice notes where a harmony note pops out. Come learn a few of their arrangements and see if we can't get a little closer to understanding the Waterson way.

Ins & Outs: Breathing for Vocal Stability (T)

We breathe every moment of every day, but there's so much more we can do with air to strengthen our singing. This class will be a great way to warm up for the weekend as Zara shares simple techniques and exercises to harness your power and control the flow of breath to provide vocal stability. Please come hydrated.

Attendee-Led Workshops

Animal and Silly Songs - Charlie McGullam & parents (S)

Come sing songs about animals and silly songs with us! All ages.

Adapting Pop Songs for Social Singing - Mog Youngberg (T/S)

A well-deployed pop song can be a great mood changer and can add fun and silly energy to a social sing. But they don't always have a ready-made teachable chorus, and what the heck are you supposed to do with the bridge? In this workshop we'll talk about how to take that absolute bop that's been in your head and adapt it to the social singing sphere. Bring your questions, specific pop songs to this workshop, or share the song you've already made into a folk-crossover hit.

Family Dancing & Singing Games - Alex Cumming & others (S)

A chance for kiddos and adults to have a bit of a dance party and do some singing games.

Music of Unions and the Labor Movement - B.K. Bady-Kaye (S, short P/D)

Song session beginning with very short presentation, and space for short discussion.

Shape Note Singing (S)

Open singing from the Shenandoah Harmony, a collection of several hundred years of shape-note style hymns.

Songs With Boisterous Shouting! - Red Kovatch (S)

Call-backs! Hoots! Hollers! We got 'em all! Have you ever been to a sing, and enthusiastically shouted out the best part of the song, only to find that no one there does that call-back? Well, come on down and share all the best hidden surprises of your favorite folk songs.

Texas Song Swap - Lindsey Smith (S)

Let's sing and share folk/trad songs about Texas, from Texas, or with a witty connection to the Lone Star State! Think Townes Van Zandt, Lightnin' Hopkins, Nanci Griffith, Leadbelly, Texas-Mexican songs, outlaw country, collected songs from Lomax and other field recordings...