

FreePlay Vocal Workshops

Below are a list of possible workshop topics. Workshops are highly flexible, and can be custom-arranged to suit your group's needs and interests. A typical workshop will "mix-and-match" from 3-4 available topics.

Beyond The Page: Making Music By Rote

This is our most in-demand workshop, and combines several of the topics below. This 2-hour workshop covers the following subjects:

- vocal warmups and technique, focusing on choral blend, balance, intonation, rhythm and musicianship
- introduction to Jazz/Blues Improvising
- teaching a song "by rote"
- Latin vocal percussion

Repertoire Workshop

Dylan and Suba will work with your existing repertoire, giving performance advice to get your music to the "next level."

Vocal Percussion: The Art of Vocal Drums

This is a hands-on workshop on how to create percussion sounds using the voice. This is a useful tool for small and large vocal ensembles to aid in keeping the rhythm intact, or to simply add variety to any given song. Sounds include traditional drum kit sounds, and Latin/African percussion.

Rounds, Rhythms and Circle Songs: An Approach to Vocal Group Improvisation

This workshop can include physical, breathing and vocal exercises to begin. Various rounds and multi-layered rhythms will be taught in a call-and-response fashion. The Circle Song is a vocal group improvisation extracted from the previous rounds and rhythms. Informally performed in a circle, various vocal ideas (melody, harmony, rhythmic variance, ostinato patterns, basslines, chord progressions) are given by the leader and incorporated/improvised by the singers.

Jazz/Blues Improvisation: An Approach to Scat Singing

This workshop discusses the basic blues form. Chord progressions will be taught and sung. The basic blues scale will be shown and sung as well. Different patterns will be presented in call-and-response fashion, placed in different rhythmic spaces. Some examples of blues songs will be performed as an added listening component. Scat singing (improvised syllables sung within the structural framework of the song) will be introduced. A vocabulary list of commonly used scat syllables will be given. The singers in the workshop can “jam” at the end with Dylan and Suba accompanying (time permitting).

Writing Techniques: The “How to” Crash Course in Vocal Jazz Arranging

Dylan and Suba will speak about the art of arranging and how to develop ideas towards arranging. Specific examples will be played, deconstructing and reconstructing the song through arranging techniques. A new song could be introduced in a workshop format, giving it different treatments: change in tempo, feel, dynamics, syllables, etc.

Indian Vocal Music

Suba teaches the basic elements of classical Indian music: raga (melody) and tala (rhythm). This includes specific vocal techniques such as gamakas (microtonal inflections), solkattu (vocal drum language), and some songs taught by-rote to demonstrate these techniques.

Warm Up Exercises: Tricks, Tips and Techniques

- *Physical exercises* - concentrating on the upper half of the body, singers will be taken through several exercises to engage the head, neck, shoulders, chest cavity and torso, paying special attention to balance (Yoga-related), stress release, and connecting all exercises through breathing.
- *Breathing warmups* - These exercises include the rationing of the breath, concentrating on staying relaxed in the body while testing the limits of the air supply.
- *Vocal exercises* - these include a wide range of various exercises serving different purposes. For example, minimal jaw movement exercises, range-building exercises, ear training exercises, part-singing exercises (similar to rounds, but built on Bach counterpoint and voice-leading, using scales and arpeggios)

The A Cappella Evolution: The Musical History of Vocal Jazz

Discuss the history of vocal jazz ensembles punctuated by specific musical examples.

Sound Survival for Singers: Working with PA Systems

Many groups rehearse acoustically, then have difficulty when adjusting to performing with microphones, monitors and speakers. As a world-renowned a cappella producer, Dylan can take your group through the details of sound setup, equalization, and other technical aspects of the PA system. Suba will demonstrate and teach proper use of microphone technique.

Live Looping in A Cappella

FreePlay makes extensive use of “live-looping” techniques in live performance. In this workshop, Dylan and Suba give a “behind-the-scenes” look at how these complex arrangements are put together, and how you can use live looping with your vocal group. You’ll learn the following:

- how to choose the right equipment
- song selection
- arranging the song to fit the loopstation
- tips and troubleshooting

On The Road Again: How To Manage A Tour

Dylan and Suba have toured over twenty-five countries across six continents... and they do it all themselves. From finding the gigs to booking travel, from setting realistic touring budgets to exploring the “why” of touring, Dylan and Suba take you through all the steps of building your own tour... and seeing the world.

Mentorship Workshops (for advanced/professional groups)

When you’re at the top of your game, who can teach you? For advanced and professional groups, Dylan and Suba offer customized mentorship workshops on everything from advanced musicianship to touring advice, the complexities of managing a band, or finding and improving upon your own unique voice as an ensemble. Previous mentorship clients include Maybebop (Germany) and Spectrum Vocal Band (Bulgaria), two of the most celebrated groups in their respective countries.