

Dylan Bell

Available Workshops

Below is a list of possible workshop topics. Workshops are highly flexible, and can be custom-arranged to suit your group's needs and interests. This is just a sampling of what Dylan can offer... if you don't see something here, just ask!

Repertoire Workshop

Dylan 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 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 accompanying (time permitting).

(more...)

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

Dylan 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.

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, eartraining 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

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