

Elixir Workshop Offerings

The members of Elixir are all experienced teachers who can lead a variety of workshops at your camp or festival. In addition to calling and playing for contras and squares, and playing for English Country Dance, swing dance, tango, and other couples dancing, here are a few workshop topics we enjoy:

Dance Sessions

- **Singing Squares:** Experience this unique American dance form with Nils teaching and calling and Elixir providing music. Take a popular American tune from the early to mid-twentieth century, change the lyrics so they refer to standard square dance figures, and...promenade and sing!
- **Kerry Sets:** Owen loves teaching these fast-paced dances from the Southwest of Ireland, danced in four couple sets (as in square dancing) to lively polkas, slides and hornpipes.
- **Chestnuts:** Classic centuries-old contra dances like Chorus Jig, Money Musk, Petronella, Rory O'More, and others have stood the test of time and had a dramatic impact on our modern choreography. Elixir renders these classic tunes with characteristic creativity and bravado. Nils pairs each chestnut with a modern dance that uses similar choreography, giving dancers the opportunity to experience history through their feet.
- **Challenging Contras:** Nils's favorite mind-bending contra dances from the best, most twisted minds experimenting with contra dance choreography today.

Instructional Workshops

- **The Art of Lyrical Playing:** Learn to play waltzes and other pretty melodies in a most beautiful manner on any instrument. **(Jesse)**
- **Dance Band:** Work with the members of Elixir to learn how to create exciting, dynamic, and danceable music. Get a glimpse into Elixir's inner workings and participate in the process of making up horn lines and crafting arrangements. All instruments welcome.
- **Callers' Workshop:** Nils can structure a calling workshop based on the wants and needs of the participants. Possible topics include: Contra Dance Calling 101, Pairing Dances with Music, Programming, Calling Square Dances, How to Work with New Dancers, Looks Good on Paper: Contra Dance Analysis, and more.
- **Fiddle:** Learn tunes and techniques for awesome fiddling at all levels of experience. **(Ethan)**
- **Woodwind/Brass Styles:** Play a woodwind or brass instrument? Curious how to fit into a jam or dance band? Learn how to approach fiddle tunes on wind

instruments, how to make up riffs and accompaniments, and how to work as a horn section. **(Anna, Jesse, and/or Nils)**

- **The Joys and Delights of Music Theory:** A class for singers and instrumentalists who want to get a better feel for what chords and chord progressions are all about. Working with well known songs and dance tunes, participants make up bass lines, harmonize and improvise. A safe and fun place to ask questions and conduct harmonic experiments. **(Anna)**
- **Guitar:** Owen is an experienced teacher of many styles of guitar music. He offers workshops in accompanying fiddle music, playing for dancing, and flat-picking melodies.
- **Making Stuff Up:** Learn to depart from the melody and the written music to invent new musical ideas on the fly. **(Owen or Anna)**
- **Foot Percussion:** All you need is your feet to accompany yourself on any instrument. **(Owen)**

Singing Workshops

- **Swing Harmony Singing:** get caught up in catchy melodies and close harmonies of popular American songs from the 30s and 40s, jug band numbers, and contemporary songs in the same spirit. The arrangements are a capella, with a bit of kazoo and ukulele. All parts are taught by ear and singers of all backgrounds are welcome. **(Anna)**
- **Singing workshop:** Nils is a passionate and skilled leader of community singing, drawing on various traditions from around the world. No music reading or prior singing experience necessary. This is a great workshop to schedule during a weekend-long event, to give tired bodies a chance to rest while still delivering an exciting, community-building experience.