

## Educational Offerings – workshop/masterclass/clinic

**moira smiley & VOCO** is a vocal group whose original music is rooted in Appalachia and Eastern Europe. The impressive experience of each member of **moira smiley & VOCO** creates fertile ground for virtuosic and innovative music for voices. VOCO brings great skill and passion to its performance and teaching of improvisation and harmony singing, and is distinguished by its unique, joyous physicality on-stage. Its considerable innovation, integrity, and sense of humor draws a broad audience into its sound.

Formerly represented by the prestigious IMG Artists (Management Company) in New York, director Moira Smiley is a unique force in the study of voice in culture. A graduate of Indiana University's School of Music, Moira combines a keen sense of the demands of classical singing with an ongoing study of the traditional singing of several ethnic groups - especially Eastern European, Irish and Appalachian. Moira is joined by Jess Basta (vocals, body percussion), Jessica Catron (cello, vocals, body percussion), Christine Enns (vocals, body percussion).

### WHAT IS IN A VOCO WORKSHOP:

VOCO offers workshops, clinics and masterclasses that are a truly unique offering of Conservatory training, ethnomusicological grounding and fierce creativity. Each member of VOCO is a strong teacher. A residency or workshop with VOCO teaches improvisation, vocal technique, rhythmic interplay with the voice and using the body as an instrument. VOCO tailors a workshop to the level of its participants and makes use of its work as an ensemble to break down and share the mechanics of creating music with other people with just the voice and body. Other aspects VOCO enjoys teaching are the expanded role of the cello and arranging for the unusual combination of cello, banjo and percussion.

### ASSEMBLIES:

VOCO pulls the audience in with laughter, participation, improvisation and percussive movement, and their joyous and moving story songs. Singing new spirituals, old ballads and dance-songs, these improvisors leap high across vocal bounds while cello and banjo weave in the funk and grace at the low end.

In their school assembly programs, they show their playful use of the voice, and both the quirks and beauty of the banjo, accordion and cello. VOCO touches on the folk traditions that celebrate how people sing together (North American, Balkan, South African especially) – with harmony, improvisation and ornamentation.

### EXPERIENCE:

Members of **moira smiley & VOCO** have been on faculty, led vocal workshops and residencies at: University of Birmingham (England), California Institute of the Arts, Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto), UCLA, UC Santa Cruz, Northwestern University, Scripps College, Warren-Wilson College, Indiana University, Omega Institute, Swannanoah Gathering, California WorldFest, Virginia Waterfront Festival, Bishop-Auckland Early Music Festival, and many other fine gatherings and institutions.