

**COMMENTS FROM STUDENTS IN  
SHAY BLACK'S FOLK SONG REPERTOIRE CLASS**

Following are comments from students who have taken Shay Black's Folk Song Repertoire class at the Freight and Salvage in Berkeley (You can find more information about the class here: <http://www.thefreight.org/folk-song-repertoire-shay-black>, and more information about Shay here: <http://www.black-brothers.com/library/shay.htm>):

**“This class has a hard working, knowledgeable, well-prepared and professional instructor and assistant. I appreciate the class website, the links sent during the week, the collaborative teaching style and the welcome to newcomers.**

**“The class format is efficient and effective; the offers for getting together for “field trips” are very generous. Wouldn't change a thing.”**

---

**“I've been taking Shay's class for a few years, and it continues to be a source of joy and connection. The participants are wonderful and supportive, the songs we learn enrich my life, and Shay is a gift to this community! Our class is a light in my week. I'm grateful for the chance to spill love into the world through the fun we have and the songs we sing!”**

---

**“Shay is meticulous, knowledgeable, patient, has a sense of humor and is an excellent teacher – I am one, so I recognize it. Highly recommended. And Shay's TA Ellen is great. Her hard work adds great value to the class and makes learning easier.”**

***(In response to: What did you like best/least about this class?):***

**“Best: The encouragement and sense of community that developed, as well as the mutual respect and tolerance of foibles.**

**“Least: class just gets over too soon – not that you don’t get great value for the cost, but it seems the fun just starts, and we are done.”**

---

**“My husband ... and I have been attending Shay Black’s Folk Song Repertoire class for 4 years now, and we love it! Shay is a great teacher, not only sharing his vast knowledge of traditional folk songs, but also encouraging us to have the confidence to sing out and improve our voices, and helping each of us find our range. He’s very generous with his time and energy. This class has become a community for us; everyone encourages each other, and Shay’s generosity of spirit creates that atmosphere. That’s what keeps us coming back for more.”**

---

**“This class is a lot of fun. There are 3 good reasons to take it: the teacher, the students, and the songs.**

**“The teacher is Shay Black, who performs internationally. He has a beautiful voice and is a wonderful guitar player, and it's a treat to sing with him in a small-classroom setting. The class is mainly about learning songs, but Shay teaches in such a way that we all learn about our own voices, as well (e.g. we learn what range is best for us). Shay moves the class along quickly--we learn about 5 songs per class--and the atmosphere is always lively.**

**“Secondly, everyone in the class likes to sing. We are of varying abilities, and coming from different perspectives, but everyone is enthusiastic, and it's fun to sing with others in such a setting.**

**“Lastly, the songs, themselves, are both lovely and varied; they are ones that we're unlikely to learn anywhere else. They are mainly songs of the Celtic tradition. My favorites are the sad and beautiful Irish and Scottish songs of love and loss. But Shay teaches a huge variety of songs from a seemingly bottomless repertoire, including Scots fighting songs, sea chanteys, political and historical songs, Child ballads, emigration songs, and contemporary folk songs. There are songs for all tastes.**

**I highly recommend this class!”**

---

**“Shay is consistently warm, kind, supportive . . . and a dynamic instructor with a great sense of humor! He is a treasure, and I deeply appreciate that he teaches this wonderful class . . . “**

***(In response to: What Did You Like Best About This Class?):***

**“The people! Shay and Ellen are a fantastic team in putting on the class. And the students are interesting, creative, and supportive.**

**“The music! The songs are diverse and lovely . . . The music uplifts me and takes my mind off of the challenges in life . . .**

**“Class #6! I love hearing the songs other students bring in . . . I love witnessing their courage, if they feel nervous about singing solo . . . I love witnessing them grow, as singers . . . I love how Shay creates such a safe and supportive environment for us, each week. Every session, I become more comfortable singing in front of people. “**

**“The continuity! I appreciate being able to come again and again to the class, over time . . . developing connections with other students, meeting new people, and building my collection of songs.**

**“THANK YOU, Shay and Ellen!!!!”**

---

**“Shay’s style is so easy to follow and learn, and he’s so humble and great. “Lots of material in a short time, lots of variety.**

***(RE: the recordings/lyrics files posted for students):***

**“Very clear, very useful. Perfectly done. “**

---

**“Thanks for yet another delightful series of classes...More than ever, I know the congenial spirit of camaraderie and warmth was really a help during what might otherwise have been some really dreary times.**

**“Thanks to you both more than words can say for offering all this to our little crew, and sharing your gifts of song and fellowship elsewhere outside the walls of the old F&S. We in class and the larger community are all better for your presence in it.”**

---

*(In response to How Do You Feel About the Instructor?):*

**“Knowledge, commitment, professional, hard working and great access to having questions answered during the week. And so much fun!**

*(In response to What Did You Like Best?):*

**“The way tunes were broken down; the “listening” aspect.”**

**“Thanks for making [the lyrics and recording files] accessible so early in the week. Saving all the documentation was simple, as was the ability to create playlists on iTunes. Thanks Ellen, for all the help with that part of the class – very organized. I also appreciated the way you aggregated useful links from everyone, and sent them out once/week.”**

---

**“Shay is meticulous, knowledgeable, patient, has a sense of humor and is an excellent teacher – I am one, so I recognize it. Highly recommended. And Shay’s TA Ellen is great. Her hard work adds great value to the class and makes learning easier.”**

*(In response to: What Did You Like Best About This Class?):*

**“Best: The encouragement and sense of community that developed, as well as the mutual respect and tolerance of foibles.**

**“Least: class just gets over too soon – not that you don’t get great value for the cost, but it seems the fun just starts, and we are done.”**

---

**“I will say every time I fill out an evaluation that Shay is a treasure.**

**“Wonderful people, wonderful songs, wonderful teacher, very supportive environment!”**

**“In a very crazy world, making music with others makes so much sense, and is very healing. Thank you!”**

---

**“This class was great. I really enjoyed Shay’s style of teaching! He made the sessions so fun that I looked forward to them every week, and the pace was just perfect for me. He obviously knows an enormous lot of folk music, and I was really impressed with the repertoire he kept churning out. I was also impressed by how he created a really welcoming and supportive atmosphere for everyone to sing by themselves at the end of group.**

***(In response to: What Did You Like Best About This Class?):***

**“I loved the enormous amount and range of repertoire we got through - it was exactly what I wanted from the group! I liked that we learned the songs fairly quickly, and then were left to go over them in our own time - it suited my style perfectly, as I get bored going over things again and again!!! I loved the selection of songs, and the fact that Shay made a big effort to cater towards people’s interests. I also loved the group itself and the social aspect - it really felt more like a community than a class!  
☺**

**“Oooh, and I very much enjoyed the karaoke night too!!!”**

**“I found the [recording/lyric files posed each week] enormously helpful - it was great to be able to go over the tunes during the week, and have access to a recording of Shay singing them! Also good to be able to download another copy of any sheets of music if needs be!”**

---

**“I like Shay’s encouraging style.”**

---

**“Shay keeps the class lighthearted and pressure-free. He never makes anyone feel self-conscious about their voice or ability to sing folk songs. And he doesn’t take himself too seriously either.”**

***(In response to What Did you Like Best/Least About This Class?):***

**“BEST - getting to sing great folk songs with people (including Shay) who share my enthusiasm for the art form.”**