

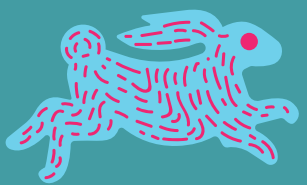
# Story Guide

## THE HUMAN ORCHESTRA AND SONGS FOR MY KIDS BY John McCutcheon

Watch the video of storyteller John McCutcheon live at the 2018 National Storytelling Festival [here](#).  
(Right click on link to open it in a new tab.) All videos include ASL interpretation.

Story run time is 3:15 - 33:31.

Now, enjoy exploring the story with the activities outlined below.



### explore it

- When John begins, you can see four different instruments on stage: a banjo, a keyboard, a hammer dulcimer, and an autoharp. Can you identify all four? Which ones have you heard before and which ones are new to you?
- John is not a typical storyteller. Instead of using music to enhance his stories, he uses stories to enhance his music. How do you like this mostly musical style of storytelling?



### think it

- What problem does John identify at the beginning of his opening song? How does he fix it?
- What does John say you need to make music? If you don't have to be talented, what do you have to be?
- Tell the story about where the lyrics for "If I Ran the World" came from. What does John do when he forgets the lyrics?
- Why do you think the U.S. Postal Service wanted to use the song John always sang as a lullaby to his children?



### create it

- Gather some friends or family members to be part of a "human orchestra." What can you use besides your hands to create similar music? Direct your orchestra to use different volumes and speeds with their music.
- Illustrate the lyrics to John's version of the Woodie Guthrie song, "Mail Myself to You."  
I'm gonna wrap myself in paper,  
I'm gonna daub myself with glue.  
Stick some stamps on the top of my head,  
I'm gonna mail myself to you.  
I'm gonna tie me in a little red string.  
I'm gonna tie blue ribbons, too.  
Climb up into my mailbox,  
I'm gonna mail myself to you.



### tell it

- John tells stories about what his songs mean to him. Choose a song you like and write a story about what it means to you. Then share the story and song with a friend.
- John tells stories to introduce his songs while he is playing his instruments. Try telling a personal story while you play an instrument, clap or dance. Does it make telling a story harder or easier for you?