

Introduction to the Hammer Dulcimer

Undoubtedly the best-known hammer dulcimer player in North America, John McCutcheon is an acknowledged world master of this rare and beautiful instrument. He is, likewise, a widely published and recorded instructor of hammer dulcimer technique. His Homespun Tapes audio and video instructions methods are the bestselling hammer dulcimer instructional materials in the world. This workshop offers the beginning or potential player an opportunity to become familiar with the set up, tuning, and basic playing techniques of the dulcimer.

Time: 90–120 minutes

Limit: none

No experience necessary, dulcimer is encouraged but not required, audio or video recorder recommended.

Technical Requirements: flip chart & markers, PA for groups larger than 30

Hammer Dulcimer Master Class

This workshop is for advanced and professional hammer dulcimer players. It will examine arrangement ideas, performance techniques, repertoire and professional considerations such as travel, amplification, recording and troubleshooting.

Time: 60–120 minutes

Limit: 10

Participants should be prepared to perform at least one piece for critique. Recording, both audio and video, is encouraged.

Songwriting for Dummies

Few writers have a catalog of songs so diverse and so large. John is an award-winning writer of songs that are historical, family songs, instrumentals, political satire, love songs, children's songs, etc. He has written songs with 2nd graders and with poet laureates. His ability to make the mechanics of songwriting learnable and useable has introduced hundreds of people to the joy of their own songwriting.

Time: 60–120 minutes

Limit: 30

No experience necessary, instruments are encouraged but not required, audio or video recorder recommended.

Technical Requirements: flip chart & markers. There will be handouts.

Songwriting Master Class

This workshop is for advanced and professional songwriters. Enrollment is very limited. Participants should be prepared to present both a completed song for critique and a work-in-progress for input.

Time: 60–120 minutes

Limit: 12

Participants should provide their own accompanying instruments. Audio and video recording is encouraged.

Writing on Purpose

Every piece of writing has a purpose. It can inform, inspire, distract, and delight. Establishing a goal is not enough. Finding a course from concept to completion requires skill, insight and, like it or not, hard work. John McCutcheon's writing ... songs, instrumentals, poetry, children's books, and short stories ... has covered a wide range of subjects. Most notably in recent years he has written extensively on both politics and spirituality. What is most striking is his lack of predictable means and ideas. Looking at difficult and potentially divisive subjects from fresh perspectives using humor, history and hope has created something decidedly different. "I hate the idea of a 'protest singer,'" says John. "Likewise, whenever someone starts singing about God I get all itchy. Both of them are proselytizing. My guard goes up and I can start to feel the wool being pulled over my eyes. Still, I've always figured that spirituality and politics are way too important to be left to the so-called 'experts.' Something so basic to community and personal life: there's got to be a better way to write and sing about them." This workshop will be both a demonstration and a discussion about approaches to writing that will challenge both the writer/singer and the listener in exciting ways. Enrollment is open to writers of all sorts but the focus will be on songwriting and poetry.

Time: 90–120 minutes

Limit: none

Technical Requirements: flip chart & markers, PA for groups larger than 30

Culture & Community: the Arts & Social Movements

This workshop explores the connection between art and social movements. It is both an historical and a practical guide to the use of cultural tools in the process of unleashing the potential for change in individuals and in communities.

Time: 90–120 minutes

Limit: none

Technical Requirements: PA for groups larger than 30