



Folk singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist John McCutcheon brings his new CD "Ghost Light" to Riverwood on Saturday, February 10, 2018. Tickets for the 7 p.m. show are \$35 for reserved seats and \$25 for general admission.

John McCutcheon's clear baritone voice, instrumental mastery, talent for writing lasting songs and ability to connect with audiences have made him one of the most beloved folk musicians working today.

Over the past 40-plus years, McCutcheon's songs have reflected and then been incorporated into the nation's heritage. The subjects of his songs range from the poignant sweep of history ("Christmas in the Trenches") to daily life ("Room at the Top of the Stairs") to events both outrageous ("Ashcroft's Army") and inspirational ("Sara Tucholsky," "Streets of Sarajevo").

McCutcheon has said that returning to Riverwood for a third time will "keep me on my toes" and that "it's a project of developing new material, dusting off long-neglected stuff, and balancing the new with the nuggets in a way that keeps folks happy and returning."

For the second year in a row, McCutcheon has an album's worth of new material to weave into the mix, including songs from the forthcoming album "Ghost Light," his 39th. Even though many tracks have drums and a few have electric guitar, the lyrics and the majority of the arrangements make this undeniably a folk album.

On "Ghost Light," McCutcheon hits his stride in the character-driven story songs and their occasionally oblique social commentary. A World War II veteran rails against the rise of American fascists in "The Machine."

The connection between the plight of European Jews seeking refuge from Nazism 80 years ago and Muslims seeking (and being denied) refuge now is hinted at in "Story of Abe." The informal "Me and Jesus" just may hint at the disconnect between Jesus' teachings and some of what's now done in Christ's name.

Songs of toddler granddaughters dancing and memories of perfect days leaven the collection.

McCutcheon has a loyal following that crosses generations. Called "the most impressive instrumentalist I've ever heard" by Johnny Cash, McCutcheon moves between six instruments (guitar, fiddle, banjo, piano, autoharp and hammered dulcimer). He has received seven Grammy nominations, and was a 2017 nominee for Artist of the Year at Folk Alliance International.