

But Why: A Podcast for Curious Kids

[But Why Live: A Musical Celebration](#)

June 26, 2020

[Jane] This is But Why: A Broadcast for Curious Kids.” I’m Jane Lindholm. Since the beginning of May, we’ve had the distinct pleasure of coming together with you here on the radio for a call-in show designed just for kids. We were asked by Vermont’s Agency of Education to see if our home station, Vermont Public Radio, could help kids who are suddenly out of school this spring find connection and educational opportunities that didn’t necessarily require a strong Internet connection. So we made a slight tweak to our normal every-two-weeks podcast to make a weekly radio show. And it’s been so much fun. We’ve gotten calls from all over the United States and Canada and even over in Europe, and we’ve been able to talk to some pretty cool people as guests, including the chief scientist at NASA and Vermont’s governor for a live kid’s press conference. But now most kids, at least in the United States, are out of school for the summer. So it’s time for us to wind down these live shows.

But before we do, we’re going to have one last celebratory program. And it’s a musical one. We have invited you to make up a song or play a rhythm or a melody on an instrument that you have at home or maybe even make something out of junk you have lying around or use your own instrument, your voice. And many of you have sent us some great recordings in advance of the show. If you’ve been waiting to perform your musical creation, live on the radio with us, now is the time. Grab your adult to help you give us a call. Or if you don’t feel like sharing your voice or your music or maybe you feel too shy to do that, you can send an email to questions@butwhykids.org.

We have some special guests planned for this hour. And the first one is Mr. Chris. Chris Dorman is a musician and a music educator. And you might know him from the Vermont PBS show, *Mr. Chris and Friends*. He’s also created the *Mr. Chris and Friends Family Hour*. It’s a half hour episode of learning, exploration and fun for the entire family that has been airing Thursdays at six p.m. on Vermont PBS’s Kids Channel. And he also runs a live program in Vermont called Music for Sprouts. Hi, Mr. Chris, nice to talk with you again.

[Chris] Hi, Jane. So glad to be here.

[Jane] Well, I’m excited to have you here. And I know that you have very strong feelings about the power of music. So since we’re doing this sort of musical finale and musical celebration, why do you think celebrating with music or coming together around music is so important and fun and powerful?

[Chris] Oh, I do feel that way. And I’ve seen the power firsthand in sharing songs and listening to songs, you are feeling feelings in real time. And sometimes there’s feelings that are hard to put into words, or sometimes it’s hard to share them any other way than with a song. So I think that a song or music can be a wonderful way to have a conversation with your friends and your family and your community and to share those deep and big feelings that you’re feeling.

[Jane] Yeah, I’ve been using music to help me feel really good, big feelings and to help me feel and express some sad feelings. ‘Cause things have been really different over the last

couple of months and kids haven't been in school, our jobs have changed, sometimes it's hard for us to see friends and family that we really care about. And, you know, the news has sometimes been difficult to understand and to try to figure out, you know, what's happening. And so sometimes I put on music and I dance, but sometimes I put on music and I cry. And actually, Chris, I think both of those feel really healthy.

[Chris] Oh, I agree. And when you put on music and cry and you dance, your feelings feel very real. And when you do that with other people, you don't feel alone. Sometimes when you're feeling a really big feeling, you can feel like you're the only person in the whole world that could possibly be feeling that feeling. But music is a way that we can remind ourselves that we're not alone.

[Jane] Well, in fact, you brought some music with you, not - you're going to play some live music at the end, but some music that you had already made that we can play. And one of the songs that you brought is called "Together on a Day Like This," and it talks about how we can all be together, right?

[Chris] That's right. The story of this song is a real-life memory in real time, watching my own children grow and start to lead their own lives as well as the children that I work with every day. And the feelings in the song are very big for me. There's deep joy, worry, longing and missing the past and just happiness for what's happening right now.

[Jane] All wrapped into one.

[Chris] Yeah.

[Jane] Let's listen to some of it.

CHRIS *[singing]*: A few stars still out, the moon hangs low in the sky. Can't see the sun, yeah. The birds are singin'. And you are dreamin'. And I am waiting for the moment you open your eyes.

This is the day, together on a day like this. Feelin' the love, feelin' the time, forever on a day like this. This is the day, together on a day like this, feelin' the love, feelin' the time, forever on a day like this

[Jane] That's a beautiful song, Mr. Chris.

[Chris] Thank you, Jane. I really appreciate that compliment and appreciate you sharing it with all the kiddo-kiddos out there.

[Jane] Well, let's listen to a question from a kid, because one of the things that came up for me listening to that music again was the, um the - oh, how many different layers there are. There's your voice. There's another voice. There's what we might call percussion, there are other instruments. So let's listen to a question that we got here from Nora.

[Nora] I am six years old, I live in Sharon, Vermont, and my question is, does all music have to have instruments?

[Jane] So what do you think, Mr. Chris? Does all music have to have instruments?

[Chris] Well, I've often heard it say that we are walking, singing instruments, right, that our bodies are instruments.

So I would say that all music does not have to have an instrument outside of yourself. And I would even go so far to say that music can be something that you hear inside yourself.

So, yes, you could stand and you could sit and you could sing a song with no instruments around. But you can also feel that music inside you.

[Jane] Year, and we're going to talk a little bit more with The Junkman in a little while about how to make instruments out of things that you have in your own house or your yard. But as you said, Mr. Chris, you can also, you can use your voice, but you can make rhythms with your body, too. You know, you can sort of tap on your chest or snap your fingers. I mean, there are a lot of ways to make instruments out of your own body.

[Chris] Absolutely. And just hearing your rhythm, I feel inspired, too. And I loved that question from Nora and *[singing]* Nora, Nora, you can explore-a explore-a a song just with your body and the rhythm from Jane.

[Jane] How do you do that? How do you make up a song just like that?

[Chris] Well, I feel that listening is probably one of the things that I try to do most actively when writing a song.

Inspiration is all around. It's an Nora's question. It's in your rhythm, Jane. It's in the sound of the rooster that I can hear, but maybe you can't hear, on the farm and you can spin all of those beautiful things all around you by listening and feeling how you feel about those things and then try your best to express them in a musical way.

[Jane] You know, I don't know if, you know, I mean, there there probably is no official answer to this, but we got a question from Emmy, who is 10 and lives in Chatham, Ontario, who wants to know who invented music.

[Chris] Oh, I don't know the answer to that either, but I do know that each one of us experiences music right from the start of our lives. Music is with us from the very beginning. And I believe it's something that's inside of us as well.

[Jane] Let's listen to a song. And before we listen to a song, I'm going to remind our young listeners today that we want to hear your questions about music. We want to hear you talk about what you enjoy or how music makes you feel. But also, if, like Mr. Chris, you are one of those kinds of people who can make up a song on the fly, what do you want to sing for us? What do you want to play with your body or play with other instruments that you have at hand? We'd love to hear your music. This is a musical finale to our live radio shows. So join us. Make your own beautiful noise. And here's a song from Lennie. Lennie's five, and she lives in Vermont.

[Lennie] *[singing]* I ride with my unicorn all day. Swing with the monkeys all the way. I ride with the fish and seahorses. No more icky stuff!

[Jane] Mr. Chris, what do you think? I love that song from Lennie about unicorns.

[Chris] I do too. Oh, it's wonderful. And I heard some really wonderful ideas in there. I heard feelings. I heard rhyming as well.

[Jane] Yeah.

[Chris] Incredible.

[Jane] And I like imagining where Lenny is going with that. This idea of riding with the unicorn all day, swinging with the monkeys all the way and riding with fish and seahorses. Can you just picture yourself going into all of these unique places with these animals, Mr. Chris?

[Chris] I can. The moment I hear those lyrics, I feel like I'm in those places. And what a wonderful group of friends that she's brought together. Nice work, Lennie.

[Jane] Let's see if we can go to a phone call. We have Kaelyn calling in from Houston, Texas. Hi, Kaelyn .

[Kaelyn] Hi.

[Jane] Hi! So I understand you make music. Are you going to play something for us?

[Kaelyn] Yeah.

[Jane] OK. What do you - what instrument are you going to play?

[Kaelyn] Ukulele.

[Jane] Oh, ukulele. That's so awesome. All right, so, so see if you can play us a tune and we'll see if we can hear it. I can't wait.

[Kaelyn] Okay. *[ukulele music]* This is something I learned.

[Jane] How did you learn how to play ukulele?

[Kaelyn] My Dad's teaching me.

[Jane] Oh, cool! Kaelyn, that is so awesome.

Say that again, Kaelyn?

[Kaelyn] He knows a few songs and he's trying to teach me how to play ukulele. And this girl named Bernadette online and I'm taking lessons with her and she has a 30-day challenge and I'm taking it.

[Jane] Oh, that's so cool. What do you like the best so far about learning to play ukulele?

[Kaelyn] Probably all the chords.

[Jane] Oh, wow. That's impressive. Kaelyn, thank you so much for playing with us today. I really appreciate it. Mr. Chris, you play ukulele, too, don't you?

[Chris] I do. Kaelyn and I have that in common. And I really love the sounds that you made with the chords on the ukulele, Kaelyn.

[Jane] Do you have your ukulele with you, Chris?

[Chris] I do. I do.

[Jane] You want to play us a few chords to, to sort of talk to Kaitlyn's ukulele.

[Chris] So I'll see if I can talk in a similar way to the sounds she made.

[ukulele music]

[Jane] Ooh, that does sound similar. I love that.

[Chris] Oh, beautiful, beautiful conversation, a musical conversation.

[Jane] So, Mr. Chris, let's get a question that we got from Aiden and play it for you now.

[Aiden] And I'm nine years old and I live in Cupertino, California. My question is, how does music calm minds?

[Jane] So how does music calm minds? We're talking about feeling emotions and how music can help you feel or maybe even make you feel bigger emotions. How do you think it helps calm our minds, Mr. Chris?

[Chris] Oh, that's a great question, Aiden. I think sometimes for me, when I hear music, again I start to feel like I'm not just me stuck inside my head with my thoughts or my worries or my feelings, but that I can share those thoughts and feelings with the world around me. So I start to feel, you know, bigger. And sometimes I'll hear a song that has calming sounds as well. Whether it is a beautiful violin or a whole string section of an orchestra or even just a voice, a single voice singing something sweetly like a lullaby, I - my love for that music, and the way I feel about that music, can help change the way I'm feeling inside.

[Jane] Let's play a few more songs that our young listeners have sent us, because it's so cool to hear other people making music. It inspires me to make more music. So first, here's one from Hadley, who's eight.

[Hadley] Today I will perform a song that I made called, "The COVID Song." My Dad's playing guitar in the back. Thank you. *[singing with guitar]* Seems like we're livin' the day. Friday all the kids at school. No idea that it was about to end. But then Monday Mama said they cancelled school. The governor says we have to stop. They put us on lockdown and social distancing. Couldn't even leave my house. Say hunker a while and maybe someday we'll let you out and doctor, please tell me I don't have the virus. Right now I'm staying at home just like everyone else is. Once stay home and it's gettin' low. And if you want to find me I'll be six feet away, just wonderin' when I can see my friends again. School on the computer doin' Zoom with my class. And I'm done, done, done.

[Jane] That was Hadley! Hadley, who's eight, and I think already has a career here in music. And, Mr. Chris, one of the things that I love about Hadley's song is, you know, we've been talking about how music can help you feel things, but making a song like

Hadley did about the experience that she's going through kind of helps you maybe understand how you're feeling a little better or move through that experience in a different kind of way. That's really impressive.

[Chris] I think so, too. Hadley, I think that's an absolutely beautiful song. I even feel like - like crying a little bit when I hear your song in one of the best ways. I think that a lot of parents and caregivers can relate to that feeling, too.

[Jane] Yeah. And it's hard to think about, you know, Hadley, who's 8 and is experiencing all this stuff that a lot of us think, well, none of us want to experience this. And for, I think, you know, for an adult listening as a parent, Mr. Chris, it kind of feels like, oh, I wish I could protect Hadley from this, but Hadley seems to be, you know, managing and navigating her way through things with the help of music in a really great way.

[Chris] I think that's one more example of how incredibly resilient children are. I have such a deep respect for kiddos' ability to express themselves and to manage times like these.

[Jane] All right...

[Chris] Thank you for sharing that.

[Jane] Before we go to a break, we have another, another piece of music we want to play. This music comes from two kids and one adult who live in Beckett, Massachusetts.

[Alia] I'm Alia and I'm three and I'm playing the drum.

[Nora] I'm Nora. I'm seven. And I'm playing the violin.

[Mama] I'm Mama. And I'm 38. And I'm playing the Native American flute.

[Nora] "Always Here Standing in the Middle of Forever." *[sound of violin, flute, and drum]*

[Jane] Well, I love that all of those types of instruments coming together, all of this sort of cacophony of noise that can come together to make music in a beautiful way. Thank you for sending us that. And thanks to other kids who have been sending us music, we're going to hear more throughout this hour. And we're going to be joined when we come back by a guy who calls himself The Junkman. So get your pots and pans and buckets and other things that you think might be able to make a beautiful noise ready. We'll be right back.

[Jane] I'm Jane Lindholm, and this is "But Why: A Broadcast for Curious Kids", we're having a musical celebration today with Mr. Chris of Vermont PBS's *Mr. Chris and Friends*. And we're hearing from lots of you who are sharing your music with us as well. Here's a song now from Charlie, who's six and lives in Massachusetts.

[Charlie] *[singing with percussion]* Down by the mountainside. Down by the mountainside.

[Jane] That was Charlie. I love that song, Charlie. And I like whatever rattle it was that you were using in the background. Here's Deon. Deon is seven and lives in Ann Arbor,

Michigan. His dad says he makes a lot of recordings using synthesizers borrowed from the public library. So here's Dion's synthesizer song.

[Dion] *[singing with percussion]* I love pizza. I love pizza ...everyone should like pizza. But I love pizza. I love pizza.

[Jane] I guess Dion really loves pizza. Thank you for that, Dion. We're joined now by another musician who makes music out of objects that aren't always considered instruments. Donald Knaack is better known as the Junkman. He's an award-winning, classically trained percussionist, composer, environmentalist who uses some really unique instruments to make his sounds. He's joining us from Bristol, England, where he acts as arts and education ambassador for UNESCO, English Riviera Global Geopark. Donald Knaack, Junkman, thank you so much for joining us.

[Donald] Hello, Jane. Good to talk to you as well.

[Jane] And you have a connection to Vermont, right? Mr. Chris and I are here in Vermont. And you lived in Vermont for a long time, I think.

[Donald] I lived in Vermont for over 25 years and yes, in Manchester, actually. And, you know, I, I miss Vermont. But I also love living in England.

[Jane] And what do you do as this arts and education ambassador?

[Donald] Basically, the global geopark is part of UNESCO. There are seven global geoparks in the UK.

And this is one of the seven.

And they are all extremely old sites that have something distinct in their geography that goes back to the particular periods that we're talking about in history.

And my job is to basically bring in art and music-type events that have a connection and make connections so that students can learn about the geopark and learn about music or learn about art or whatever at the same time.

[Jane] How do you see music as having a connection to something like the environment or environmentalism or taking action politically?

[Donald] Well, music for me is actually, I would call it, the universal language. Music is the one thing that I have in my life, and I believe I can go out on a limb and say it's the one thing all of us have in life that most of the people in the world agree upon. And it doesn't matter what the age of a person is, where they live, what their nationality is, what their religion is, what their politics is, it does not matter. Everybody...

[Jane] Had a little fallout there from The Junkman. But I think we'll get him back because these tend to happen when we're using all of these different ways of getting audio these days. While we get The Junkman back, I was really interested in what he was saying. We have some music for him. So let's play a little bit of this song and then we can talk more with him coming up. This is Zen Samba.

[samba music]

[Jane] That is Donald Knaack, The Junkman, and Zen Samba, and Junkman, we have you back, right?

[Donald] Yes. You have me back.

[Jane] Oh, I love that song. That is so cool. What can you tell us about it?

[Donald] Well, it's off my first CD, which is called *Junk Music*. And it was actually nominated for a Grammy. And it was the first attempt that I made at the whole idea of junk music. And what I was trying to do was, basically, since I'm a classically trained percussionist, I was trying to use junk objects to create music that was related to traditional percussion music, but yet had a different quality to it. And so you'll hear things that you go, oh, I think that's the snare drum. Well, actually, it's not a snare drum. It's a bucket. And things that, you know, you hear and you go, oh, those are maracas - no, those were not maracas. Those are BBs inside a pillbox. So, you know, the idea was to create things that are reminiscent of traditional instruments, but yet they have their own what I call sound color.

[Jane] Sometimes my kids and I like to just take tins that have mints in them and use them like rattles. So that sounds kind of like what you're talking about.

[Donald] Absolutely. Absolutely.

[Jane] And they do sound different than other instruments. Every instrument, whether it's one that, you know, got at a store or made yourself, they do have these different qualities. And, you know, it sounds like that's part of what you value. It's not that you couldn't get a different instrument. It's that they all have these different sonic qualities that can really enhance or change the music.

[Donald] Very much so.

And, you know, one of the things that I do a lot when I work with children is we do a lot of making your own instruments and specifically making instruments that they can then take home and use. And there's just a lot of things, you know, like we mentioned, that, you know, you can make a maraca or shaker like I have right here.

[percussion sound] That's rice inside a plastic tube. And this one *[different percussion sound]* Is rice - the same kind of rice - inside a cardboard tube.

So you've got the plastic *[first percussion sound]* and the cardboard *[second percussion sound]*.

[Jane] So one is sort of deeper. And one is, it seems a little bit higher pitched and even maybe more shallow sounding, kind of.

[Donald] Yeah. The the the plastic is a little higher pitched and less resonant. And the cardboard is a little lower in pitch because the cardboard dowel is actually larger. And it's also much more resonant.

[Jane] So I want to play you something that I think you're going to like. This is some music from Judah. *[music]* So Judah is playing cups of water with a spoon and his uncle is

playing a loaf pan that he put rubber bands around. And what's also really cool about this is that Judah and his uncle are not even in the same place. They did this together over a video conference. So it not only is cool music, but it brought their family together, too. And Junkman, I just think that's pretty cool.

[Donald] Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. And, you know, there's just so many different things.

There's so many different sounds. You know, when I played traditional percussion instruments, I think there's some somewhere in the neighborhood of around three hundred and fifty standard percussion instruments. Whereas with junk and recycled materials, there are hundreds of thousands of sounds that are totally different from each other. So using the junk gives you the opportunity to it's like - if I were an artist, I would I would describe it when I use my junk materials, it's as if someone gave me a coloring set with all these new crayons, with different colors that nobody else has ever seen because you've got all of these new sound colors out there and they're just waiting for people to find them and use them for sound.

[Jane] That's an amazing way to think about it. Mr. Chris, do you used found objects and these instruments that maybe have never been heard by anybody else, ever?

[Chris] Absolutely. In our music classes, the music classroom itself is any variety of different instruments, whether kiddos are using the pillars that hold up the the beams in the ceiling or the walls or the floor or sometimes even their moms and dads.

[Jane] Let's go to Lexi, who's calling in from Essex Junction, Vermont. Hi, Lexi.

[Lexi] Hi, instead of singing a song I'm just going to play my instrument.

[Jane] OK, so you're going to sing or play an instrument?

[Lexi] I'm just gonna play an instrument, no singing.

[Jane] OK. OK. Let's hear it. [*percussion sounds*] Oh, I love that! Lexi, what is your instrument?

[Lexi] My instrument is made of a can some marker and tape and a piece of chalk is inside it.

[Jane] Oh, Lexi, that's very cool. Thank you for playing your instrument. So Donald Knaack, the Junkman, Lexi got a can, a magic marker, some chalk, a couple other things thrown together. Voilà, Instrument.

[Donald] Exactly. It's really easy to do.

[Jane] Let's go to another question here that we got from a kid named Gus.

[Gus] I'm four years old and live in Craftsbury, Vermont, and why do people always need an audience when they sing?

[Jane] Mr. Chris, what do you think about this? Why do people seem to need an audience when they sing?

[Chris] Well, that's a wonderful question.

I love when I have an audience because I feel like the audience completes the musical conversation. When you listen to someone, whether they're making music or talking like we're talking and singing today, it's a true gift that you're giving to them. And the people making music can feel that gift. And it fills me up inside and makes it so that I can share that beauty with everyone who is there.

[Jane] So Junkman for, you know, here's Lexi who got an instrument together in no time at all. Do you have any advice for others of us who are listening, who have never made our own instruments out of junk or, you know, things that we could do today to get started making music?

[Donald] Sure. First of all, I think, you know the first thing to understand about using reused materials is that virtually any kind of a sound is capable of becoming a music instrument. And what I mean by that is like, for example, I have here an old plastic tub and it kind of makes a thud sound. *[sound of thumping on tub]* It doesn't have a lot of depth. It doesn't have a lot of resonance. It's just a thought. *[sound of tub being struck]*

Then I have something - a tin can, a rather large tin can that has kind of the opposite sound. It has resonance. It has a tone. The tone has a lasting quality to it. And it sounds like this. *[sound of can being struck]* We also have a piece of wood that kind of is in the middle of those two sounds that we just heard. *[sound of wood being struck]*

This particular wood is not suspended, so it's a little more dead sounding. But I like using that dead sound in this particular situation that I have here. And then I have a sound like this, *[sound of metal being struck]* which is a piece of metal. *[sound of metal being struck]*

So we've got all these different, very diverse sounds, everything from a thud to something that has tone and resonance. And it's how we put it together, we can put it together to make something, and it might sound something like this.

[Jane] I wish you could see me, bouncing my body along to your rhythm. I love that. Donald Knaack, thank you so much for sharing a little bit about what you do and how you do it and inspiring us to make music out of, you know, anything within our reach. I really appreciate it.

[Donald] Thank you very much. I appreciate you having me.

[Jane] Donald Knaack is better known as the Junkman, and he joined us from Bristol, England, where he acts as arts and education ambassador for UNESCO, English Riviera Global Geopark. This is "But Why: A Broadcast for Curious Kids." I'm Jane Lindholm. Today, we're having a musical celebration. If you've made up a song that you'd like to sing or something you want to play on any kind of instrument that you can reach, give us a call. We're talking today with Chris Dorman of Vermont PBS's *Mr. Chris and Friends*. He's helping guide us through this hour. And let's get a little bit more of your music. Josie is calling in from Manchester Center, Vermont. Hi, Josie!

[Josie] Hi.

[Jane] Hi! So are you going to play some music for us?

[Josie] Uh-huh.

[Josie's Adult] Go ahead, play your song first.

[Josie] *[singing with ukulele]*

[Jane] I love that. Josie, what instrument are you playing while you sing?

JOSIE: Ukulele.

[Jane] Ukulele, so many ukuleles. *[sound of baby crying]* Josie, do you have a little baby brother or sister there, too?

JOSIE: Uh-huh.

[Jane] Do you, do you ever play for your baby sibling?

[sound of baby crying]

[Jane] Well, baby cries are kind of a kind of music as well. Josie, this was so awesome. Thank you for playing. Let's hear some more music here before we go to Mr. Chris. Kelby is calling in from Newport, Vermont. Hi, Kelby.

[Kelby] Hi.

[Jane] You have music you want to play for us too?

[Kelby] Yes, I sure do.

[Jane] All right. And so what are you going to play?

[Kelby] A song that I wrote, a little part of that song. It's called "Fly Like the Birds".

I just want to pack my bags and go and never look back and get away. I wanna fly like the songbirds and go like the wind, so darlin', you better catch me if you can, cause I'm already flyin'

I've learned that life isn't pain.

I've learned that you've gotta be the one to care.

I'm gonna spread my wings and I'm gonna fly free

I wanna fly like the birds, I'm gonna go like the wind, so darlin', you better catch me if you can, cause I'm already flyin'...

[Jane] Oh, Kelby, that's beautiful.

[Kelby] Thank you.

[Jane] Thank you so much for playing it, I so appreciate that. I appreciate hearing your beautiful voice and your playing. Thank you. And, you know, while we're talking about

playing, let's go to another musician who's been playing since she was quite young. May Erlewine is a Michigan-based musician who started playing guitar and writing music when she was 11 years old. Her most recent album is called *Second Sight*, and she's performing live on Facebook every Monday night. Hi, May. Nice to talk with you.

[May] Hi. Thanks for having me.

[Jane] So I don't know if you've been able to hear all the way through the show, but it's so cool because we have some kids who are three or four and are writing their own music and playing things. And then Kelby told our call screener she was 17. And so there's this wide range of people who are at different stages of their musical careers, which is so neat to hear on this radio program.

[May] It's been a joy. I have been listening and I'm so moved.

[Jane] So what started you on a path to being a musician?

[May] I think it's the same spark of curiosity that I'm hearing in these voices that have shared today of just really exploring song with my own voice. I started doing that when I was very, very little. Like as soon as I could talk. And it just felt like what Mr. Chris was talking about, it was already in me. From the moment I was born there was music in there and then music all around me. And I just was listening and then singing.

[Jane] So let's listen to a little bit of your music here, and we you sent us a song of yours called "Never One Thing". So let's listen to it.

[May *[singing with percussion and piano]*] I'm the underbelly, I am the claw, Never one thing no, not one thing at all
I'm a street fighter, I'm a prayer for peace, I'm a holy roller, I'm a honey bee
I am the truth, I am a lie. I am the ground, I am the sky
I am the silence, I am the call, Never one thing no, not one thing at all
I'm the underbelly, I am the claw, Never one thing no, not one thing at all
I'm a street fighter, I'm a prayer for peace, I'm a holy roller, I'm a honey bee
I am hope, I am defeat, I am broken, I am complete
I am the grace, I am the fall, Never one thing no, not one thing at all
I'm the underbelly, I am the claw, Never one thing no, not one thing at all
I'm a street fighter, I'm a prayer for peace, I'm a holy roller, I'm a honey bee

[Jane] May, that's so beautiful.

[May] Oh, thank you.

[Jane] So, you know, for young people who are listening and thinking, I want to do this and I want to do it with my whole heart and my whole time, you know, I don't want to have another job. I want to do this for a living. This is the kind of thing that makes me happy in body and soul. How do you become a musician who gets to make music as your job?

[May] Well, that's a really great question, and I don't think there's just one answer. But I do want to encourage all the young people that feel passionate about music to continue to follow that passion, that feeling that you have when you pick up an instrument or sing a song that's just so exciting. If you follow that passion and then you're very dedicated to practicing the art of making music and also listening to yourself and to the musicians around you, then you're definitely going to have a life of music. And there's so many ways

you can make a living making music, and it will look very different depending on who you are and what you want to do. But you can do it. And a lot of it just starts with creating the music itself.

[Jane] Let's go to another call here. Bard is calling in from Sheldon, Vermont. Hi, Bard. Nice to talk with you.

[Bard] [00:41:47] Hi.

[Jane] Hi. You going to play some music for us?

[Bard] Yeah.

[Jane] What are you gonna play?

[Bard] I'm going to play my rap song, "Midnight". Basically my only song with lyrics. And I call my album *Static* and all my music is electronic. I'm going to do a hands on cover with it too.

[Jane] OK, so Bard, give us can you give us a short version of it? Like 30 seconds of it.

[Bard] [00:42:16] I can give you 30 seconds. I did not. *[sound of electronic music and rapping]*

[Jane] Whoa, Bard, did you just say that that's from an album? From your album. You already have an album.

[Bard] Yeah. I have a YouTube channel with the whole entire album listed on it.

[Jane] That is so cool, Bard. Thank you so much for sharing your music. I love to hear it. That's awesome. We have another caller who's been waiting on the line. So Katie in Stowe, Vermont, I want to get to you. Katie, thank you for being patient. What's your question?

[Katie] My question is, I just, I'm really into history. But what? Like, how did this whole thing start? Like, what about when, who decided to say, oh, I should pick up this thing and I should make something that sounds beautiful to everybody else.

[Jane] Oh, that's an interesting question, Katie. And, you know, we were talking about that earlier a little bit with Mr. Chris. And May, I don't think you probably know who the first person to make music was either. But why do you think, you know, as far back as we can see through history, humans have been using their bodies and using objects to make sound that makes them feel things.

[May] Well, I think it's a natural part of us. You know, I think it's really, really something that you could hear in the birds singing and you could hear the way the air moves through the leaves. There's music happening all around. And to use our voices to make sounds and to feel the vibrations that creates inside our bodies seems like a really playful, natural way to create. And our voices are how we communicate to each other. So playing with those voices, creating notes and sounds just seems like a very natural thing to want to do. And I think a lot of things came out of that. And rhythm has deep roots in our history as well. Like

when we started to hit sticks on something or stones and and create rhythm. And it's the same thing. There's rhythm in all of nature. And so I think it's us being part of the song.

[Jane] I love that. May Erlewine, thank you so much for joining us, sharing your music with us and your inspiration. I appreciate it.

[May] Thank you.

[Jane] May is based in Michigan and her most recent album is called *Second Sight* and if you want to see her perform live, she's doing it on her Facebook page every Monday night. So look up May Erlewine. Before we wrap up the show today, Mr. Chris actually wrote a new song today, I think. And while we've been talking during this hour, Mr. Chris, you've been jotting down notes of things that you actually want to incorporate into your performance of this song, is that right?

[Chris] I have, and it's been a really wonderful, active way to listen to all of this incredible music and ideas and questions that the kiddos have shared.

[Jane] Well, what a great way to end the hour. Will you play it for us?

[Chris] OK [*singing with ukulele*] You can sew love into a song like a stitch in a quilt that can warm the world with your love.

You can sow love into a song like a seed and the soil you can feed the world with your love and all the things you feel are real. When I hear them in your song, I feel real, too, and all the things you feel are love.

And when I hear them in your song, I feel loved by you just like today. I'll tell you about it. How they shared a big, big feeling. I know that Hadley knows how it feels to be at home, not with your friends at school. Judah played the spoons across many, many miles and Aidan helped to calm my mind and Alia and Nora and Mama made me feel like I'm inside of a movie and the Junkman and Lexi shared that we can make sound out of anything. And Gus and Katie and Nora helped us explore, Lennie who rode the unicorn and Kaelyn used the ukulele to play her beautiful, beautiful chords. And Josie shared a beautiful verse. And Kelby is flyin' like the birds and Bard shared Midnight lyrics like lightning and May helped us on our course.

You can sew love into a song like a stitch in a quilt. We can warm the world with our love.

[Jane] Mr. Chris, that was beautiful. I'm really impressed and pleased, and my heart feels full to to hear you sing about everybody who joined the show today and all the ways that we come together around music.

[Chris] Thank you, Jane. It's been a pleasure.

[Jane] Chris Dorman is a musician and a music educator. You might know him from Vermont PBS's two seasons of *Mr. Chris and Friends*, and he's also created the *Mr. Chris and Friends Family Hour*. You can also find him running Music for Sprouts here in Vermont. Mr. Chris. Thank you so much for joining us.

[Chris] Thank you, Jane. Thanks, kiddos.

[Jane] What a wonderful way to wrap up our eight weeks of live shows. And this is the last one for our live radio shows for now. If you're new to "But Why" and you've enjoyed these live shows, you should check out our podcast. We put out new episodes every other Friday. There are almost 130 ready for you to listen. We've covered everything from whether jellyfish are really made out of jelly to if it's ever okay to lie, to who invented the idea of a president. You can find out more about our show and how to get a podcast in the first place at vpr.org. And if you're a kid with a great question, have an adult record it. You can do it on a smartphone using a free voice recorder app and send the file to questions@butwhykids.org. We can't wait to hear what you come up with. Today's show is directed by Jake Rusnock, produced by Melody Bodette. We had production assistance from Kelly DesLauriers. And our theme music that you're hearing now is by Luke Reynolds. I'm Jane Lindholm. Stay curious.