

# Soulful Songs and Stories



**With a song and your stories, we co-create a soft place for hard conversations and a brave space for personal and spiritual growth.**

**Hi Soulful Song Lovers and Story Tellers,**

**Soulful Songs and Stories about being worthy**

**“Can’t Buy Me Love,” The Beatles** [https://youtu.be/AIDMqq\\_fH8U](https://youtu.be/AIDMqq_fH8U) 3:20

- *There will always be people who don't know your worth; make sure you're never one of those people.* —David Castain
- *Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt.* —William Shakespeare

**“Worthy, Right Here, Right Now. ‘Proving it’ is Counterproductive.”** (below)

This story is about an avid runner who ran “as a way to prove, to myself, that I could love myself, and deserve the love of others.”

- *You alone are enough. You have nothing to prove to anyone.* —Maya Angelou
- *Care about people's approval and you will be their prisoner.* —Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, #9, tr. by Stephen Mitchell [www.j.mp/TICmitchell](http://www.j.mp/TICmitchell) (PDF)
- *In a society that profits from your self-doubt, loving yourself is a rebellious act.* —Unknown

**“Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace,” John Rutter**

- **Choir of the Loma Linda University Church** <https://youtu.be/SQYeMRITADY> 2:38
- **Bowling Green University Men's Chorus** <https://youtu.be/scoBORDHnGo?t=95> 3:25

**“Servant of Peace,” Snatam Kaur** <https://youtu.be/aiiuagubwN8> 7:22

**“A less than Perfect Piano + Keith Jarrett = a Perfect Concert”** (below)

A “totally unsuitable,” “dreadful instrument” coupled with Jarrett's keyboard prowess and masterful improvisational skills produced a critically acclaimed concert, and a recording that became the best-selling solo album in jazz history and the best-selling piano album ever.

- *The moment you feel you have to prove your worth to someone is the moment to absolutely and utterly walk away.* —Alysia Harris
- #28 *The best way to get approval is not to need it. This is equally true in art and business. And love. And sex. And just about everything else worth having.* —Hugh MacLeod, *Ignore Everybody: and 39 Other Keys to Creativity*
- *Nothing would ever take away what the experience of directing my first feature film had taught me: that I know myself better than I think I do and that I know my worth better than others think they do.* —Amber Tamblyn, *Era of Ignition: Coming of Age in a Time of Rage and Revolution*

## The Köln Concert is not available on YouTube or Spotify.

- Keith Jarrett on doing the Cologne Concert <https://youtu.be/y9rTZLjBOfl> 1:31
- Transcription of the end of Part 1, played by Fausto Bongelli <https://youtu.be/onhMrYUjIKs?t=1193> 5:32
- Transcription of Part 3 (a separate encore labeled IIc), played by Tomasz Trzcinski [https://youtu.be/T\\_IW1wLZhE?t=3885](https://youtu.be/T_IW1wLZhE?t=3885) 6:56



- *If you end up with a boring miserable life because you listened to your mom, your dad, your teacher, your priest, or some guy on television telling you how to do your shit, then you deserve it.*  
—Frank Zappa

## Music for contemplation and meditation

**“Ong Namō” (live), Snatam Kaur** <https://youtu.be/R6fkvaBtjuY> 13:02 >2.2m views

Ong Namō, Guru Dev Namō is the Adi Mantra, tuning one in to the higher self.

Ong is “Infinite Creative energy in manifestation and activity”

Om or Aum is “God absolute and unmanifested”

Namō is “reverent greetings, implying humility”

Guru means “teacher or wisdom”

Dev means “Divine or of God” and Namō reaffirms humility and reverence.

*In all it means, “I call upon Divine Wisdom.”*

**“Om Namō Bhagavate,” Deva Premal** <https://youtu.be/aifSjuyeE5M> 7:12

**“So Much Magnificence,” Miten & Deva Premal** <https://youtu.be/jgOPCllbNYQ> 7:53

**“Ombra mai fu,” Largo from Xerxes, Georg Friedrich Händel, HWV 40**

- **Cellos: Peter Sebestyen, Zoe Stedje, Adam Scheck; Piano: David Szabo**

[https://youtu.be/Cf7wf\\_AwXXA](https://youtu.be/Cf7wf_AwXXA) 5:21

- **Andreas Scholl, countertenor,** <https://youtu.be/N7XH-58eB8c> 3:11

**Namasté,**

**Alice and Steve**

# Worthy, Right Here, Right Now. 'Proving it' is Counterproductive.

Devin Kelly, *Longreads*, Sep 8, 2020, originally titled "Out There: On Not Finishing"

Excerpted (1,586 words); full essay (4,304 words) at <https://longreads.com/2020/09/08/out-there-on-not-finishing>

*For the past three years*, my college running friends and I have, despite whatever physical distance separates us, met up each February at a farm in Brooklet, Georgia to run a 24-hour ultramarathon known as Farmdaze.

The race follows one lap that is repeated again and again. The lap is approximately two miles. The lap takes you along cow paths and through wooded trails and on plowed fields stretching long and wide beneath the sky. The lap takes you back to where you began, and then you begin again. Not everyone runs for the whole 24 hours. Some people do the six-hour race. Some do the 12. Some are there mostly to have fun, see friends, commune with one another around a fire. Some are there to find their limit. Some are there to run the coveted distance that defines an ultramarathon: 100 miles.

The day grew messy as the running went on. It had rained for days before, and most of the course was a slog: muddy, slippery, and cold. And, at about 12 hours in, every one of my friends, except for me, had stopped running, and I found myself where this essay begins: alone, in the dark, wrestling with meaning, unable to stop. I am scared of this impulse in myself.

*What happens if what you once used to make sense of things no longer helps you make sense of things? What happens if the patterns and habits and metaphors we lean on do not serve us in the moments we need them?* What happens if the stories we tell ourselves about our lives leave us lonely, wrestling with meaning? What then?

I grappled with these questions for hours on that farm in Georgia. Under the stars and all alone, I did not know what I was doing. Each lap, I shuffled past the bonfire, past my friends singing karaoke, past the laughter of strangers, and each lap I shuffled away from them, until they became the soft patchwork of

voices traversing a distance, the kind of sound that hollows you to your core and fills you with a deep sense of missingness, a longing to be there and not wherever you are. At that point, the race had ceased to be a race for so many people, but it hadn't for me.

Two weeks after Farmdaze, I sat in my therapist's office wondering why I hadn't been able to stop when all my friends had. We talked about how I have a desire to tell a specific story: a story of perseverance, a story I have been telling myself for so long as a way to make sense of my own life, as a way to prove, to myself, that I could love myself, and deserve the love of others. For a long time I have believed that love and joy come after. They come after accomplishment. They come after pursuit. They don't live in the present. They have to be earned. But there is a kind of grace that comes at a place like Farmdaze, a place that calls itself a race but is really everything that a race isn't, an event that lets men give up if they want, that doesn't shame them for it, that lets them become present in the story that is, simply, all of us trying to love all of us, the story that Galway Kinnell calls, simply, "tenderness toward existence."

For so many hours, shuffling around that farm, I didn't want to be *doing*, I wanted to be *done*, so that when I was done, I could say I did a thing. This is the opposite of the spirit of ultramarathoning, of distance running in general, which is in many ways about being "Out There," caught up in a moment that divorces you from the world, from society, from anything other than self. Accomplishment happens in an instant. Accomplishment is awarded the moment the finishing is done. But being out there takes a long time, and if it is only done for the sake of accomplishment, then it feels like an even longer, more painful time. Our society offers up so much as reward, and yet rewards so little for the so-much of life.

*It takes a certain kind of grace* to give yourself permission to say *I've done enough*, and sit down for a second, a minute, a day, a long time. Love does not

always have to come after. It can be right here.

I understand that no matter how much I love running, it still exists within a system that has said, essentially, if you want something better, here is what you have to accomplish. There is something about finishing that our culture is obsessed with. The act of finishing allows someone in society to enter into another realm of society. Finish high school, college, graduate school. Finish a marathon to put that 26.2 bumper sticker on your car. Finish the race to get the beer at the end. Finish your meal to eat dessert. Finish what you are doing so that you might find joy. So you might cease to care. So you might find something new to finish before you finish your life. This kind of reduction—of linking personal growth to accomplishment—does not honor the inconsistencies of life, the in betweens, the moments when finishing something doesn't feel good enough, or when achieving something just makes you long for the next achievement. This is why tense matters. If we are defined by what we have done or what we will do, then we, each day, seem to forget the present tense: what we do. This tense is shifty. It elides. It loses itself in the past and drives off a cliff into the future. It is full of insecurity, of difference. But it is where we live.

**Sometimes the transcendental truth** involves giving up the race and just sitting with your friends. It involves forgetting the phrase I just said: *giving up*, and other phrases, like *quitting*, or *losing*. It involves remembering that the word *last* doesn't just refer to *last place*, but also refers to *lasting for a long time*. Life gives me glimpses of those moments. I have run to find those moments. But I am also learning to live to find them. And learning to love to find them. And learning to miss them when they are gone.

I wish I had thought of those moments while I was in Georgia, but I was caught up in the idea of accomplishing. I was obsessed with having done something. I wish I had said: *not finishing does not mean giving up*. I wish I had said: *it is alright to love your friends instead of trying so hard to love yourself*. I wish loving myself did not always feel, each day, like an extraordinary task that took extraordinary lengths and impossible distances to achieve.

**I am still living in the consequence** of a lifetime spent telling myself all the ways in which I did not have value, and all the ways I was supposed to. A lifetime spent telling myself I was not fast enough, fit enough, smart enough, driven enough, insert anything

enough. Enough, enough, enough with that.

Most everyone except for Victor and Andrew and the few others still running the race was asleep in their tents or RVs or cars. The truth is: I wanted to feel more. But I was mostly tired. I had a glass of champagne. I went to sleep. There was so much distance between what I felt and what I was supposed to feel. It made me sad. I was alone. Meaning unshared is barely meaning at all. My reasons for finishing, whatever finishing meant, were defined wholly extrinsically. I had believed in what society told me would happen: that I would push through a challenge and emerge, new and strong, on the other side, where love was. ***But I was left instead with the deep, profound emptiness that comes with knowing entirely for certain that what you were told by society was wrong.***

When I woke up, I went looking for my friends. I slept so long that I missed the awards ceremony. But that wasn't the point. I saw them sitting by a pond. They had gotten my award for me, for third place: a silly hat with fire streaked across the brim. (Just kidding. It wasn't silly. It was fucking awesome.) But the award wasn't the point. I missed my friends. They had spent a morning walking along the farm, befriending horses. They showed me pictures, videos of what I missed the night before. I missed so much. They hugged me and said they were proud. And they were. But I know now that they would have been proud no matter what.

Today, I can still hear the echo of my friend Andrew singing Kenny Rogers from a mile away, somewhere on a farm in Georgia. *You gotta know when to hold them, know when to fold them*. How apt. I think you hold for as long as you can the moments that don't feel like you have to choose between holding and folding. I wish I had been there, right next to him, instead of where I was. But it's alright now. Because even though I'm no longer out there, in the middle of some unimaginable distance, I'm still here, which is a kind of *out there*, which is where all of you are.



***Here is what is truly at the heart of wholeheartedness: Worthy now. Not if. Not when. We are worthy of love and belonging now. Right this minute. As is. —Brene Brown***

# A less than Perfect Piano †

## Keith Jarrett = a Perfect Concert

Marti Leimbach, Jan 16, 2017, originally titled “A Broken Piano.” Excerpted (872 words); full essay (1,858 words) at <https://martileimbach.com/2017/01/16/a-broken-piano>

My favourite piece of music is Keith Jarrett’s Köln Concert, an hour-long piece improvised, as all of Jarrett’s concerts are, on a solo piano in front of a live audience. You know the story, right?

For the concert, he’d requested a particular piano, a Bösendorfer. The Bösendorfer originated in Vienna early in the nineteenth century. It is said to be the first concert piano able to stand up to the playing technique of the young virtuoso, Franz Liszt, whose tough, unforgiving treatment of the pianos he played destroyed them in short order. Perhaps the Bösendorfer’s durability was the reason Jarrett requested one for the concert. The 29-year old jazz musician was known for his eccentric stagecraft, his improvisations played with enormous athleticism and physicality. It’s fair to say he is tough on an instrument, that he plays unconventionally, even wildly, racing over the keys, standing up, sitting, leaning, panting, moaning. His performances move him—and anyone listening—through the disorder and miracle of creative endeavor. Watching him is watching genius itself, that raw work that is cleaned up only by its imitators.

In short, he needs a good piano.

January 24, 1975. Jarrett arrives to the venue the afternoon of the concert, He is presented with his Bösendorfer. He stands with Manfred Eicher, the man who will one day found ECM Records and who arranged Jarrett’s sell-out concert tour. The piano he has been given for the concert is a Bösendorfer, all right, but it is puny, ancient, totally unsuitable.

*Jarrett taps a few keys and finds it is not only the wrong size, incapable of producing enough volume for a concert performance,*



*but also completely out of tune. The black keys don’t all work. The high notes are tinny; the bass notes barely sound and the pedals stick.*

Eicher tells the organizer, a teenaged girl named Vera Brandes, that the piano is unsuitable. Either they get a new piano for Jarrett, or there will be no concert.

In a panic, the girl does everything she can to get another piano, but she can’t find one in time. She manages to convince a local piano tuner to attend to the Bösendorfer, but there isn’t much they can do about the overall condition of the instrument.

In the end, Jarrett agrees to play. Not because the piano was fixed up to the extent that he felt comfortable performing, but because he took pity on poor, young Vera Brandes, just seventeen years old and not able to shoulder so great a failure as losing the only performer on a sold-out night.

So he performs on the dreadful instrument. He does what he has to do, not because he thinks it will be good, but because he feels he has no choice.

Tim Harford, the author of *Messy: The Power of*

*Disorder to Transform Lives*, describes what happened next better than I can, so I will quote from his wonderful book. ***“The substandard instrument forced Jarrett away from the tinny high notes and into the middle register. His left hand produced rumbling, repetitive bass riffs as a way of conveying up the piano’s lack of resonance. Both of these elements gave the performance an almost trance-like quality.”***

Jarrett overcame the lack of volume by standing up and playing the piano very hard. He stood, sat, moaned, writhed, and pounded the piano keys. You can hear him on the recording, the agony of the music, his effort at creating any sound at all. He sweated out what must have been an excruciating hour, and he triumphed. The Köln Concert has sold 3.5 million copies and is perhaps the most beautiful, transformative piece of music I’ve ever heard. It makes me cry to hear it, especially if I recall the courage it took for him to perform in front of a live audience on an unplayable piano with that desperate girl in the wings, wringing her hands, hoping beyond hope that he didn’t rise from the stool and walk out. Hoping nobody noticed her great failure to produce the right piano for this most important occasion.

Describing his performances, Jarrett says, “Solo concerts are about the most revealing psychological self-analysis imaginable.”

Every so often, I listen to the Köln concert.

Jarrett is quoted as saying, “I was due to go onstage soon, we’d had so many hassles, and the piano was such a terrible instrument. And I hadn’t slept anyway. So I was in almost hell—” He was then served late at a restaurant and when the food came it was terrible. He went on stage exhausted and ill-fed and had to invent a way to make things work.

Which he did.

Jarrett expected a working piano. He didn’t get it. However, the concert ended up being perfect because of the piano and all its faults and idiosyn-

crasies.

About the Köln concert, Keith Jarrett said, ***“What happened with this piano was that I was forced to play in what was — at the time—a new way. Somehow I felt I had to bring out whatever qualities this instrument had. And that was it. My sense was, ‘I have to do this. I’m doing it. I don’t care what the fuck the piano sounds like. I’m doing it.’ And I did.”***



*This magic night happened on January 24, 1975 in Cologne, Germany. I can’t start to imagine what it might have been like to see it, and most of all feel it there and then. Even after so many years this recording brings up a hurricane of emotions, and inspire me in many ways. The relationship between Keith Jarrett and the piano is of a human kind. Like the love of his life that he had lost but is trying to win back expressing everything that he feels. And it is an improvisation which means that music reflects the “here and now” state of the soul and can never be repeated. Indeed in 1990 Keith Jarrett gave permission to transcribe the concert and one Polish piano player made a version of it in 2006, but there is something, that you simply can not transcribe or remake—it is the energy. Charged with electricity coming out of Keith’s fingers piano works as a mere amplifier of the scream, that is coming deep from the musician’s soul. Mr. Jarrett might be the best artist that is known to me. He reminds me that we should all have passion for life. Without it we’re just breathing bodies. We must suffer and sing the joy of existence. Indifference is the worst state of being.*

This is what “The Köln Concert” is about. This is what true art is about. Listen, learn, live!

—<https://zidanel.livejournal.com/76915.html>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_K%C3%B6ln\\_Concert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_K%C3%B6ln_Concert)