

Soulful Songs and Stories



"Right now I'm his apostle, but my dream
is to someday be my own Messiah"

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

#12: The Gift You Are / the Gifts You Have / the Gifts to Dismiss

Hi Soulful Song Lovers and Story Tellers,

Sadly, Christianity seems to have become more about "saving your soul" or what some now call "spiritual capitalism." In our consumer culture, even religion and spirituality have very often become a matter of addition: earning points with God, attaining enlightenment, producing moral behavior. Yet authentic spirituality is not about getting, attaining, achieving, performing, or succeeding—all of which tend to pander to the ego.
—Richard Rohr, OFM, *The Art of Letting Go*

Being a musician is what I do, but it's not what I am. —Herbie Hancock

For every one of the choices that leads to wholeheartedness, there is real shame work to be done about how we get there. I mean, how can we embrace rest and play if we've tied our self-worth to what we produce? —Brené Brown

If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete.
—Jack Kornfield, *Buddha's Little Instruction Book*

Self-love is a state of appreciation for oneself that grows from actions that support our physical, psychological and spiritual growth. Self-love means having a high regard for your own well-being and happiness. Self-love means taking care of your own needs and not sacrificing your well-being to please others. Self-love means not settling for less than you deserve. —The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation

"Dummy Juggler," music and lyrics by Al Carmines 4:13

Lyrics are on the next page; MP3 is attached.

Dummy Juggler

music and lyrics by Al Carmines

There's this little church in Paree, gents,
A little church in Paree.
Everybody came once a year, gents,
Everybody came on Christmas Eve.
And they all brought their gifts to this church, gents,
To lay at the feet of the Virgin of Gold.
They came through the rain and snow and sleet
Just to lay their gifts at her feet.
Rich men brought jewels, ladies brought silk,
Children brought toys, farmers brought milk.
Everybody rich and poor, young and old,
Brought some gift to the lady
and laid it at her feet of gold.
So the story I was told.
There was one old guy who hung around the church,
He used to hang around the church all the time.
They called him Dummy Juggler
and he mumbled to himself.
The people said he drank a lot of wine
and they'd throw him a nickel or a dime.
Dummy Juggler! Dummy Juggler was his name.
Juggling was his pride. And juggling was his shame.
Every Christmas Eve, the people would say,
"Dummy Juggler, what will you give her today?
What will you give to the Virgin of Gold?"
And they they'd poke one another and smile,
For he'd had nothing to give for quite a while.
He'd just turn his back and slouch away,
Mumbling to himself and smelling of cheap wine.
And they'd throw him a nickel or a dime.
Dummy Juggler! Dummy Juggler what will you do?
Dummy Juggler, it's you, it's you, it's you they're talking to.



One Christmas Eve, when they mocked him
And they laughed in their usual style,
He didn't turn his back, he turned the other way,
He walked right up the aisle.
And the people tried to stop him,
But he walked to the feet of the Lady of Gold.
So the story I was told.
With a bold desperation in his face,
Dummy Juggler said, "Pardon me, your grace,
My only gift is what I can do,
so lady, lady, lady, I juggle for you."
Then he picked up a candle, tossed it in the air,
Two, three, four, there were candles everywhere.
Blazing in the air, around the lady there.
Then something never seen before happened in that place.
Tears appeared, tears appeared on the lady's face,
And a smile as sweet as a church bell's chime,
The lady was laughing and crying at the same time.
Like a rainbow through a silver mist,
Or a colored balloon in the fog,
Like a hymn of pain and grace, met together in her face,
In that holy place, in that holy place.
Oh, they called him Dummy Juggler,
He mumbled to himself
And the people said he drank a lot of wine,
And they'd throw him a nickel or a dime.
Dummy Juggler! Dummy Juggler, pray for me!
Wherever you are juggling, wherever you may be.
Dummy Juggler pray for all the winos and the bums,
Everyone who tries and fails to play the game.
Dummy Juggler, pray for everyone who lives and dies in pain.
Dummy Juggler as you juggle
Forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever
For the Virgin, our Lady of Notre Dame!

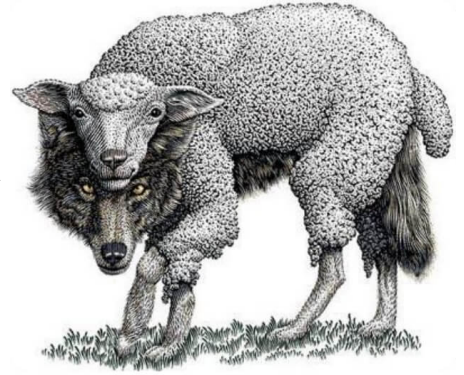
Rev. Al Carmines, a producer-composer-singer-actor was one of the pioneers of the avant-garde Off-Off-Broadway theater movement in the 1960s, and was assistant minister at Judson Memorial Church on Washington Square Park from 1961–1981. Carmines wrote dozens of musicals, operas and oratorios, 10 of which had Off-Broadway runs. Throughout his career, Carmines won five Obie Awards, including one for lifetime achievement. Al died at 69 in 2005.



Reject advice, rules, dogma, and labels that demean, ignore, or limit you, even if they're packaged as gifts.

Re-examine all you have been told in school or church or in any book, and **dismiss whatever insults your own soul**; and your very flesh shall be a great poem, and have the richest fluency, not only in its words, but in the silent lines of its lips and face, and between the lashes of your eyes, and in every motion and joint of your body.

—Walt Whitman, from the preface to *Leaves of Grass*



Somehow, I happened to be alone in the classroom with Mr. Ostrowski, my English teacher. He told me, “Malcolm, you ought to be thinking about a career. Have you been giving it thought?” “Well, yes, sir, I’ve been thinking I’d like to be a lawyer.” Mr. Ostrowski looked surprised, I remember, and leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands behind his head. He kind of half-smiled and said, “Malcolm, one of life’s first needs is for us to be realistic. Don’t misunderstand me, now. We all here like you, you know that. A lawyer—that’s no realistic goal for a n-----. You need to think about something you can be. You’re good with your hands—making things. Everybody admires your carpentry shop work. **Why don’t you plan on carpentry?**” Mr. Ostrowski had encouraged others in my class—all of them white. Yet nearly none of them had earned marks equal to mine. —*Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Ch 2

For those of us who have bravely said #metoo, gratitude can be difficult, especially if we sought refuge in religious communities that reinforced **shame under the guise of salvation**. —Diana Butler Bass, *On Being*, June 26, 2018

What if the holy were in our midst? Or one of us? Or in you? Some music to think on these things.

“Feliz Navidad,” Flash Mob, Weserpark Mall, Bremen, Germany <https://youtu.be/RD2VuX7ZJzc> 3:59

“Everyday People,” Sly Stone/feat. Jack Johnson, Jason Mraz, Keb’ Mo’, Playing For Change <https://youtu.be/-g4UWvcZn5U> 3:18

“A Better Place,” Playing For Change <https://youtu.be/ZVHOqrw3Jks?t=24>
Freedom and Justice / Is the melody that let us shine on ▲4:08
If you feel it through the music / We can make this world a better place.

“Hallelujah Chorus” (Jazz cover) at First Unitarian Brooklyn
https://youtu.be/m_OzuibfOGg 2:31

“Amen/This Little Light of Mine,” Etta James <https://youtu.be/vvqQipironQ> ▼2:52

The Rabbi's Gift Traditional story, adapted from *The Different Drum*, M. Scott Peck (Peck reading the story: <https://youtu.be/3z1pIrV2F6c> 6:12)

Once a great order, a decaying monastery had only five monks left. The order was dying. In the surrounding deep woods, there was a little hut that a Rabbi from a nearby town used from time to time. As the Abbot agonized over the imminent death of his order, it occurred to him to ask the Rabbi if he could offer any advice that might save the monastery.

The Rabbi welcomed the Abbot at his hut. When the Abbot explained the reason for his visit, the Rabbi could only commiserate with him. "I know how it is," he exclaimed. "The spirit has gone out of the people. It is the same in my town. Almost no one comes to the synagogue anymore." So the Abbot and the Rabbi sat together discussing the Bible and their faiths.

The time came when the Abbot had to leave. "It has been a wonderful visit," said the Abbot, "but I have failed in my purpose. Is there nothing you can tell me to help save my dying order?"

"The only thing I can tell you," said the Rabbi, "is that the Messiah is among you."

When the Abbot returned to the monastery, his fellow monks gathered around him and asked, "What did the Rabbi say?" "He couldn't help," the Abbot answered. "The only thing he did say, as I was leaving was that the Messiah

is among us."

In the months that followed, the monks pondered this and wondered whether there was any possible significance to the Rabbi's words: The Messiah is among us? Could he possibly have meant that the Messiah is one of us monks here at the monastery? If that's the case, which one of us is the Messiah?

As they contemplated in this manner, the monks began to treat each other with extraordinary respect on the off chance that one among them might be the Messiah and in turn, each monk began to treat himself with extraordinary respect.

It so happened that people still occasionally came to visit the beautiful forest and monastery. Without even being conscious of it, visitors were sensing the extraordinary respect that now filled the monastery.

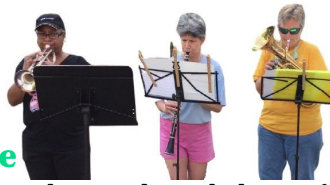
People began to come to the monastery frequently to picnic, to play, and to pray. They began to bring their friends. Some of the younger men who came to visit the monastery started to talk more and more with the older monks. After a while, one asked if he could join them. Then, another and another. Within a few years, the monastery once again became a thriving order, a vibrant center of light and spirituality.

There's no way you can understand the pain of seeing something you began as a free expression of love being turned into a major commercial enterprise.



"I would like a god who only loves good people like me, and will give me whatever I ask for."

Jazz Includes



Jazz is really about the human experience. It's about the ability of human beings to take the worst of circumstances and struggles and turn it into something creative and constructive. That's something that's built into the fiber of every human being. And I think that's why people can respond to it. They feel the freedom in it. And the attributes of jazz are also admirable. It's about dialogue. It's about sharing. And teamwork. It's in the moment, and it's nonjudgmental, at its best. We all want to live in a jazz world where we all work together, improvise together, are not afraid of taking chances and expressing ourselves.

—**Herbie Hancock**

I think jazz is a beautiful, democratic music. It encourages musicians with very strong, and many times, very different points of view to work together as a team while, at the same time, giving them the space to express their individuality. It's a very important art form and can be used as a model for different cultures to work together. —**Marcus Miller**

Jazz is life. Jazz is freedom. Jazz is love. It is individual. It is collective. It is universal. Jazz is a music with an international vocabulary, that is expressed around the world. It unites all people, regardless of race, creed, or color. Jazz was born out of Black's oppression, as a joyful, rebellious release...a human cry for dignity, that has been heard and embraced around the world.

—**Dee Dee Bridgewater**

Jazz gives you a place in the world to communicate your experience of being a human being, which is a crucial necessity of the human spirit. You feel like you're heard and understood by others. That affirmation that we're all in this together, that we're not alone in what we are feeling, believing and hoping for, is so appealing and inspiring. It makes you want to get to the level where you can continue to capture that universality and spread it in your music.

—**Esperanza Spalding**

Jazz is freedom, flight, accepting the truth about yourself, salvation. Jazz is to be brave, to play, to love. Jazz is the highest of spirit, intuition and freedom. Jazz is the soundtrack to love, to the quiet moments of being by myself, to joy, to the streets I walk. Jazz is the poetry of my life. —**Miroslava Katsarova**

Dogma Excludes



At His coming all men shall rise with their bodies and give an account of their own deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, and those who have done evil will go into everlasting fire. This is the true Christian faith. Unless a man believe this firmly and faithfully, he cannot be saved.

—**The Athanasian Creed, last 4 sentences**

¶304.3 Self avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.

¶341.6 Homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.

¶613.19 No annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality. —**The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church**

The teaching of the Catholic Church on ordination, as expressed in the *1983 Code of Canon Law*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, is that only a Catholic male validly receives ordination, and “that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful.” —**Wikipedia**



“Open The Door” (Song for Judith), Judy Collins

Open the door and come on in,
I'm so glad to see you my friend.

<https://youtu.be/bE6-hjM3wQQ> 4:18