



KEITH JARRETT

PARIS / LONDON

Testament

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Keith Jarrett, Piano

PARIS

November 26, 2008

CD 1

Part I	13:47
Part II	10:35
Part III	7:05
Part IV	5:33
Part V	8:45
Part VI	6:30
Part VII	6:58
Part VIII	10:10

Music by Keith Jarrett
Published by Cavelight Music (BMI)



LONDON

December 1, 2008

CD 2

Part I	11:08
Part II	8:10
Part III	6:50
Part IV	5:58
Part V	10:34
Part VI	6:52

Music by Keith Jarrett
Published by Cavelight Music (BMI)

CD 3

Part VII	8 : 59
Part VIII	8 : 00
Part IX	3 : 55
Part X	5 : 35
Part XI	8 : 25
Part XII	8 : 29

Music by Keith Jarrett

Published by Cavelight Music (BMI)

“Still crazy after all these years”

Since Heidelberg, Germany in the early 70's I have done improvised piano solo concerts. It all started, however, back when I was a six-or-seven-year-old so-called “child prodigy,” studying and playing classical recitals for the Allentown Pa. Women's Club, etc. The programs would usually include masters such as Mozart or Schubert, Chopin or Debussy, but would also include something I “wrote.” But this “writing” wasn't executed at all the same each time. Almost nothing was written down on paper. There were motifs and melodies that remained the same, but then around these were “takeoffs” in the same mood. The pieces were almost always “program” music. There was “Jungle Suite,” for example. When I would be practicing at home, I would often change the notes of some composer, and my mother would catch this at times. I told her not to worry: I would play it as written at the concert.

Heidelberg was a university town and had a jazz festival. I started my part of the evening by playing a tune, but somehow did not stop. Instead, I connected the tune to the next one by continuing on some sort of journey or transition to it. So, by the end of the set, I hadn't stopped playing. I was then married to my first wife, Margot.

Over the years since then, solo piano concerts became more “abstract” and somehow they would grow from small seeds planted spontaneously at the beginning. But they still lasted the entire 45 minutes or so, then a break, then another 45 minutes. They were kind of epic

journeys into the unknown. The architecture, however, over many years, became too predictable to me, and I stopped doing so many of these and concentrated on my quartets and writing.

After my divorce from Margot, I lived for 30 years with my second wife, Rose Anne. I attempted several times to re-invent the solo concerts, but among other things was laid low for about two years with Chronic fatigue syndrome. The amount of energy these concerts took was always amazing to me. It was like the Olympics each time. So there was a certain off-and-on quality to my scheduling them. While many incredibly good concerts came about, some were not recorded.

In the early part of this decade, I tried to bring the format back: starting from nothing and building a universe. But somehow, while practicing in my studio, I realized that much of what I was playing was stuff I had liked before, but actively did not like now. Whenever I would play something that was from the past and sounded mechanical, I would stop. This led me to try to include this starting and stopping in solo concerts in Japan. The music from this particular first attempt was to become "Radiance."

I continued to find a wealth of music inside this open format, stopping whenever the music told me to, and eventually released "The Carnegie Hall Concert" in 2006. Although I seemed to others to be some kind of freak of nature, the amount of preparation work, mental,

physical, and emotional is probably beyond anybody's imagination (including my own). It is NOT natural to sit at a piano, bring no material, clear your mind completely of musical ideas, and play something that is of lasting value and brand new (not to mention that these are live concerts, and the audience's role was of utmost chemical importance: they could change the potential and shape of the music easier than the difference of pianos or hall sound). I then did a series of solo concerts in Japan in the spring of 2008 that seemed to hit a technical high-note in the history of my solo events. I wasn't sure what could possibly happen next after these concerts.

Then my wife left me (this was the third time in four years). I quickly scrambled to stay alive (music had been my life for 60 years) by setting up a Carnegie Hall Concert (a leaflet inserted into the program for my 25th anniversary trio concert there in October 2008 advertised a solo concert in late January 2009), but before I did that concert, Steve Cloud managed to quickly come up with two solo concerts in Europe: Paris and London. I had not played solo in London for, I believe, 18 years. These were the first solo events since my wife had left. I was in an incredibly vulnerable emotional state, but I admit to wondering whether this might not be a "good" thing for the music. It truly didn't matter; I had to do them. Everything was put together in a dizzyingly short time. I had to find help for packing and touring (I had lots of physical ailments that prevented me from being pro-active on the physical fronts, plus

stress, plus an emptiness that was overwhelming, etc.). I decided that if I backed down now, I would back down forever. I used to tell my piano students, "If you're going to play, play like it's the last time." It was not theoretical advice anymore; this was real. This was either going to achieve my survival or hasten my demise. I had no idea how much energy I would have, though I prepared well (but all along I never remembered just how much it took to do these concerts).

Startlingly, Paris was an achievement I never expected. Manfred Eicher and the rest of my touring ensemble (minus one) were backstage eating dinner. It started then to be clear to me that I had a new chance at something, that nothing would stop me if only I stayed awake to the possibilities, both musical and personal. Many of the people I knew seemed to feel they were just meeting me. I was in tears going on and offstage for bows.

On the way into London, I had as close a brush with a nervous breakdown as I've had. Christmas shoppers were all out holding hands; the place was way too colorful for my mood. I was exhausted from Paris (only two days had gone by) and stuck in an unmoving traffic jam in the middle of London in a car without my wife, looking out the window at couples, Christmas lights, and seemingly-normal unbounded joy. I couldn't handle it. When we finally got to the room I closed all the curtains (they also looked out at lit-up Christmas trees) and tried breathing normally.

Two days later we drove to the hall (the limo driver was on my side, he perked up my spirits), I checked the piano, went backstage to see what we had for dinner, was introduced to the catering lady, who was as sharp as anyone around and had just lost her lover after some time together. I said I couldn't help thinking about my wife, and she quietly (but firmly) pointed to a blank, white wall. We shot short, pointed one-liners back and forth during dinner, and I realized all these people, unwittingly, were helping me get myself together. The concert went on and, though the beginning was a dark, searching, multi-tonal melodic triumph, by the end it somehow became a throbbing, never-to-be-repeated, pulsing rock band of a concert (unless it was a church service, in which case, Hallelujah!). I needed heat therapy on my arms afterwards (first time ever). Even the people backstage as I came off in tears again were giving off the exactly right thing. Communication is all. Being is all. People are deep, serious creatures with little to hang on to.

So, loss may be a big thing, but what remains becomes even more important than ever. Just never let go of the thread. And be honest with yourself. A writer I greatly admire and with whom I was just recently in touch, echoed some of my words to her when she wrote back to me: "How fragile and serendipitous things are indeed, unbearably so."

Keith Jarrett

Recorded in concert
November 26, 2008 at Salle Pleyel, Paris
December 1, 2008 at Royal Festival Hall, London

Producer: Keith Jarrett
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Cover Photo: Juan Hitters
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Design: Sascha Kleis
Executive Producer: Manfred Eicher

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Special thanks to Stephen Cloud, Manfred Eicher,
Tim Matovu & Patrizia Agangi, Amy Miller,
Marie-Claude Nouy, William O'Donnell, Martin Pearson,
Joanna Duncan, Daniela Yohannes and Mary Gaitskill

Paris concert produced by Cité de la Musique / Salle Pleyel –
Vincent Anglade / Emmanuelle Durand
London concert produced by Serious –
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