

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white, flowing, short-sleeved dress, is captured in a dynamic pose in a lush green field. She is holding a violin in her left hand and a bow in her right, as if in the middle of a performance. The background is a soft-focus green field with trees in the distance. The overall mood is artistic and serene.

kirstie Eken

NEW BEGINNINGS



NEW BEGINNINGS

"Believe you can and you're halfway there."
~ Theodore Roosevelt

Life is full of fresh starts and my previous "violin life" is marked by many meaningful new beginnings. Stumbling upon Lindsey Stirling and her music in 2012, teaching myself her music by ear and thus finally having fun playing the violin again marked a new beginning. Finding a new violin teacher after years of struggling with many others marked a new beginning. Meeting my music producer in June 2018 marked a new beginning. Suddenly being able to expand themes into full songs (themes that I recorded with my phone years ago) was and still is a miracle to me, and a new beginning. This album is my new beginning. Treat it nicely. It means the world to me.

Good and bad times in life seem to always take turns. We know happiness and sorrow, laughter and tears, love and hate. Many different experiences and contrastive emotions shaped the music of "New Beginnings".

1. Too Much

The theme of "Too Much" came to my senses one night when, for once, it was not me but my Mom who felt like things were simply getting on top of her. I know only too well how it feels to be com-

pletely overwhelmed and frustrated by – well, life. Sometimes, it's just all too much.

2. Darkness

"Maybe you have to know the darkness before you can appreciate the light." – Madeleine L'Engle

Ever since I learned about it, I have been amazed by the fact that light is actually not physically describable. I marvel that without darkness, light simply cannot exist and that, in the very same manner, we need hard times to really appreciate the good ones.


3. One Last Kiss

"One Last Kiss" comes from the deepest core of my heart. I had high expectations towards myself when composing it because it relates to the probably most emotional experience I have ever had. When I say that this piece turned out even better (much better) than I had expected, that is enormously significant. The power inherent in this orchestral piece reflects how all one's emotions and passions can well up once more (and maybe even more intensely than ever before) in one last kiss.

4. New Beginnings

I love this piece. After years and years of dreaming and longing and hoping and praying (and after actually almost having given up), this piece is evidence that dreams DO come true. For being the absolute first attempt to produce something together, this is a blast! The 2nd of June 2018 (our first ever studio session) and this song mark one of the most life-changing new beginnings of my life.



A person with long hair, wearing a white t-shirt and a dark vest, is sitting in a field of tall grass. They are holding a double bass. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green field.

5. Keep on Livin'

Breakups are terrible. They destroy desires. They shatter hopes. They tear apart. It is so hard to let go. "And I dream about you still" were the words that struck me one morning several weeks after a bitter breakup and after a dream that had taken me back to the beauty of our relationship that was now inexistent. So what do we do? We keep going. We keep trying. We keep on living. On our own.

6. Chase

I could go on being highly philosophical about this and talk about how this title refers to chasing one's dreams (which I definitely encourage everyone to do), but honestly, this song is simply called "Chase" because it sounds chase-y. The main theme of this song came to my mind (or rather my fingers) several years ago (the first recording I found is from November 20, 2014).

7. Flames

When I stare into the fire, I always think that flames appear to be dancing. The positive tunes of this piece also seem to be dancing like flames and they remind me of cosy summer nights with campfires and snuggly winter nights with fireplace-fires.

8. Stepping Stone

Believe it or not, I thought of this title because of little FL Chan who joined Pascal and me when we produced this piece. She danced whenever the music played and my favourite default setting for her movements was called "Stepping" where she simply steps from side to side.



9. Edge of the Light

Merrill Jenson, who I am beyond grateful to be able to call my friend, said that sometimes we have to have faith. And faith is like walking to the edge of the light. I tried to capture the picture of a Fantasy figure in a long coat walking towards the end of a foggy half-light with confidence and faith in his/her every footstep in this film-music-like piece.

10. Hope

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." - Desmond Tutu

"When the world says, 'Give up,' Hope whispers, 'Try it one more time.'" - Unknown

The dark tones of this piece are contrary to the light melodies of the violin, but they still harmonise. Oh, how powerfully they harmonise! I think that it is in our darkest hours that we need to have hope because hope is what keeps us going. And hope is always better than doubt and fear.





BONUS

11. Keep on Livin' (vocal version)

Once our love was firm and strong
I believed that we were meant to be together all
along

But things have changed and we walk separately
I push aside the cheerful memories
And I go past the road to our eternity

And I dream about us still
Doing things we never will
But we messed it up and there's no going back
We screwed it all and have to face this wreck
We're devastated but we can't turn things back
right

So what do we do?

We keep on livin'

We keep on livin'

We keep on livin'

We keep on ...

Once our love was wild and free
I believed, and you did too, that we were really
meant to be
Nothing reignites the flame that's now lost in the
dark

How did we ever find the strength to break each
other's hearts

The world has changed and we walk separately
I push aside the cheerful memories
And I go past the road to our infinity

And I dream about us still
Doing things we never will

But we messed it up and there's no going back
We screwed it all and have to face this wreck
We're devastated but we can't turn things back
right

So what do we do?

We keep on livin'

We keep on livin'

We keep on livin'

We keep on

Livin'

12. Coming Home (Falco)

No, I did not put this piece on my first album because I am a huge Falco-fan or because he was Austrian. I put it in here because Pascal and I made it for a wedding I performed at and the bride wished for an instrumental version of this song to be played at the ceremony. I'm pretty happy with how it turned out – in comparison to Falco's rough voice, the tender sound of my violin has a completely new effect and to me, it really adds a very personal Kirstie-ish touch.

THANK YOU

Thank you, Mom, for never refraining from giving constructive criticism. Thank you that you kept advising me to not quit playing the violin when I really felt like giving up after Elena's death and when I wasn't able to see my future in music several years ago. Thank you for never giving up on my violin and me.
I love you so much.

Thank you, Eric. You are the best big brother I could ever wish for. I wouldn't be who I am without you. Our often philosophical and spiritual conversations and our hilarious silliness (and our love for puns) are irreplaceable in my life. Love ya, Ercadoodle.

I want to thank Elena, my very first violin teacher. She was the one who laid the foundation of my skills on my beloved instrument. She was the one who taught me how to play with the heart. Thank you for patting my head and telling my Mom "She is a violin." Thank you for your never-ending patience. You were more to me than just a teacher and my world fell apart when you died. You are the reason why my violin bears your name and why my stage name is now Kirstie Elen. I love and miss you.

Marcus, you crazy dog! You're the best. Thank you for always being open to new things. Thank you for being excited about my compositions. Thank you for continuously teaching me new tricks and skills on the fiddle. Thank you for telling ATS Records to listen to my music. Thank you for being active in different bands yourself and for being a virtuoso musician. You're the best violin teacher I could wish for.

Pascal. You are awesome! This album would not exist without you. Who would have thought that we were able to produce eight (and a half) songs in your small studio in the craziest summer heat in just 17 days!? Thank you for making my dream come true. Thank you for always finding the most amazing tunes to enhance my compositions. Thank you for always laughing at my bad jokes. You are not just my music producer; you really have become such a dear friend to me.

I also want to thank my Heavenly Father. My inspiration doesn't come out of nowhere. I thank my God every day for knowing my hopes and dreams and for not ignoring them but for making them become reality. I know He is real. And I sense Him best through music. Thank you, Papa.

"Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with your talent is your gift back to God." ~ Leo Buscaglia





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NEW BEGINNINGS

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|----------------------|------|
| 1. Too Much | 4:43 |
| 2. Darkness | 3:17 |
| 3. One Last Kiss | 3:17 |
| 4. New Beginnings | 3:58 |
| 5. Keep on Livin' | 3:32 |
| 6. Chase | 3:40 |
| 7. Flames | 3:07 |
| 8. Stepping Stone | 3:26 |
| 9. Edge of the Light | 3:49 |
| 10. Hope | 4:31 |

Bonus

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| 11. Keep on Livin'
(vocal version) | 3:33 |
| 12. Coming Home
(Falco) | 2:50 |

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