

A portrait of Alexander Thoma, a man with a beard and slicked-back hair, wearing a black tuxedo jacket, a white dress shirt, and a black bow tie. He is holding a vintage-style silver microphone in his right hand. A red pocket square is visible in his jacket. The background is dark and out of focus.

ALEXANDER THOMA
THE ESSENTIAL



A STORY TO TELL...

It all began on the last weekend of September in 1991. I was a mere ten years of age and my whole family was celebrating the 70th birthday of my dear grandmother in Aachen. That evening, I spent some time with my uncle Hubert, a cousin of my mother. I remember how impressed I was by his unique and charming character and before I had realized it, I was sitting in his racy Porsche, driving at top speed to Cologne. Surrounded by a marvelous fragrance blend of Gitanes cigarettes and Aramis perfume, we were listening at full volume to the music of Frank Sinatra. That was my very first encounter with this music. It was love at first sight! I recollect very well, how I asked my uncle anxiously about this tune and who the man singing was, and he simply replied, "this is Frank Sinatra of course!". Just a few months later, it was Christmas eve, he sent me my first Sinatra album as a present and the weeks and months after, I basically inhaled the music. I started purchasing Sinatra records wherever I could find them, music books to study the lyrics, and dictionaries to translate and understand the verses. In no time, Sinatra became "Franky boy" to me. I was so fascinated by the sound, the rhythm, the quality of his music, and the stories told in the songs that with the years, I attended vocal lessons and his melodies were a steady companion throughout my various passages of my childhood and student years.

It took me another 23 years to finally find the courage to go into the studio and work on a Swing and Jazz album on my own. So in the fall of 2013, I contacted Peter Reiter-Schaub, an outstanding musician and a friend, whom I had worked with several times in the years before, when singing live at big family gatherings. Luckily, he agreed to work with me, and encouraged by family and friends, we spent a year realizing this project step by step. For me, being the only amateur in this venture, it was an incredible experience to work with so many professionals and to learn from them. Even though very influenced by him, the last thing I consider myself is a Sinatra impersonator. This album is simply me singing my personal selection of the fifteen most essential songs of my favorite music genre and which have mostly followed me since I was a young boy. I hope you will enjoy it.

AIN'T THAT A KICK IN THE HEAD
(Jimmy van Heusen, Sammy Cahn), 1960

How lucky can one guy be
I kissed her and she kissed me
Like the fella once said
Ain't that a kick in the head?
The room was completely black
I hugged her and she hugged back
Like the sailor said, quote
"Ain't that a hole in the boat?"

My head keeps spinning
I go to sleep and keep grinning
If this is just the beginning
My life's gonna be beautiful
I've sunshine enough to spread
It's like the fella said
"Tell me quick
Ain't love like a kick in the head?"

Like the fella once said
Ain't that a kick in the head?

Like the sailor said, quote
"Ain't that a hole in the boat?"

My head keeps spinning
I go to sleep and keep grinning
If this is just the beginning
My life's gonna be beautiful

She's telling me we'll be wed
She's picked out a king size bed
I couldn't feel any better or I'd be sick
Tell me quick, oh ain't love a kick?
Tell me quick, ain't love a kick in the head?

Some day, when I'm awfully low
When the world is cold
I will feel a glow just thinking of you
And the way you look tonight

Yes, you're lovely, with your smile so warm
And your cheeks so soft
There is nothing for me but to love you
And the way you look tonight

With each word your tenderness grows
Tearin' my fear apart
And that laugh... wrinkles your nose
Touches my foolish heart

Lovely... never, never change
Keep that breathless charm
Won't you please arrange it? 'cause I love you
Just the way you look tonight

And that laugh that wrinkles your nose
It touches my foolish heart

Lovely... don't you ever change
Keep that breathless charm
Won't you please arrange it? 'cause I love you
Just the way you look tonight

Mm, Mm Mm, Mm,
Just the way you look tonight

THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT
(Jerome Kern, Dorothy Fields), 1936

WHAT'S NEW

(Bob Haggart, Johnny Burke), 1939

What's new? How is the world treating you?
You haven't changed a bit, lovely as ever, I must admit
What's new? How did that romance come through?
We haven't met since then, gee, but it's nice to see you again
What's new? Probably I'm boring you
But seeing you is grand, and you were sweet to offer your hand
I understand. Pardon my asking what's new
Of course you couldn't know, I haven't changed, I still love you so

FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE

(Ron Miller, Orlando Murden), 1966

For once in my life I've got someone who needs me, someone I've needed so long
For once unafraid I can go where life leads me, and somehow I know I'll be strong
For once I can touch what my heart used to dream of
Long before I knew, someone warm like you could make my dreams come true
For once in my life I won't let sorrow hurt me, not like it's hurt me before
For once I've got someone I know won't desert me, and I'm not alone anymore
For once I can say: "This is mine you can't take it"
As long as I've got love I know I can make it
For once in my life I've got someone who needs me



P.S. I LOVE YOU

(Johnny Mercer, Jenkins Gordon), 1934

What is there to write? What is there to say?
Same things happen everyday
Not a thing to write, not a thing to say
So I take my pen in hand and start the same old way
Dear, I thought I'd drop a line, the weather's cool, the folks are fine
I'm in bed each night at nine
P. S. I love you

Yesterday we had some rain, but all in all, I can't complain
Was it dusty on the train
P. S. I love you

Write to the Browns just as soon as you're able
They came around to call
And I burned a hole in the dining room table
And let me see, I guess that's all
Nothing else for me to say, and so I'll close but by the way
Everybody's thinking of you,
P. S. I love you

I do my best to obey all your wishes, I put a sign up "Think"
But I gotta buy us a new set of dishes
or wash the ones that are piled in the sink
Nothing else to tell you dear, except each day seems like a year
Every night I'm dreaming of you
P. S. I love you

YOU ARE THE SUNSHINE OF MY LIFE

(Stevie Wonder), 1973

You are the sunshine of my life, that's why I'll always be around
You are the apple of my eye, forever you'll stay in my heart

I know that this is the beginning, though I loved you for one million years
But if I thought our love was ending, I'd find myself drowning in my own tears

You are the sunshine of my life, that's why I'll always be around
You are the apple of my eye, Forever you'll stay n my heart

You must have known that I was lonely, because you came to my rescue
And though I know that this is heaven, how could so much love be inside of you

You are the sunshine of my life, that's why I'll always be around
You are the apple of my eye, forever you'll stay in my heart

('Cause you are) You are the sunshine - of my life
(Of my life, of my life) (Light my fire baby, light my fire,...)



A SONG FOR YOU
(Leon Russell), 1970

I've been so many places in my life and time
I've sung a lot of songs and I've made some bad climbs

I've acted out my life in stages with ten thousand people watching
Oh, but we're alone now and I'm singing this song for you

I know your image of me is what I hope to be, I've treated you unkindly
Oh, but Darling can't you see that, there's no one more important to me
Baby, baby, can't you see through me, 'cause we're alone now
And I'm singing this song to you

You taught me precious secrets of a true love withholding nothing
You came out in front, when I was hiding
Yeah, yeah, but now it's so much better and
If my words don't quite come together, please listen to the melody
'Cause my love is in there somewhere hiding

I love you in a place where there is no space or time, I love you for my life
(cause) You are a friend of mine

And when my life is over, remember when we were together
And we are alone now, and I am singing this song to you
We were alone, and I was singing, yeah singing
We were alone, and I was singing this song for you
Singing my song, I'm singing my song for you

It seems we stood and talked like this (once) before
We looked at each other in the same way then
But I can't remember where or when

The clothes you're wearing are the clothes you wore
The smile you are smiling you were smiling then
But I can't remember where or when

Some things that happened for the first time
Seem to be happening again

And so it seems that we have met before
And laughed before, and loved before
But who knows where or when?

Some things that happened for the first time
Seem to be happening (once) again
(I can't remember, my darling, I can't remember when)

And so it seems that we have met before
And laughed before, and loved before
But who knows where or when?

WHERE OR WHEN

(Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart), 1937

IF

(Tolchard Evans, Robert Hargreaves, Stanley Damerell), 1950

If a picture paints a thousand words
Then why can't I paint you?
The words would never show
The you I've come to know

If a ship is launched a thousand times
Then where am I to go?
There's no one here but you
You're all that's left me too

And when my love for life is running dry
You come and pour yourself on me

If a man could be two places at one time
I'd be with you
Tomorrow and today
Beside you all the way

If the world should stop revolving
Slowly spinning down to die
I'd spend the end with you
And when the world was through

Then one by one the stars would all go out
And you and I would simply fly away

Me and Mrs. Jones
We got a thing going on
We both know that it's wrong
But it's much too strong
To let it go now

We meet everyday at the same cafe
Six-thirty and no one knows she'll be there
Holding hands, making all kinds of plans
While the jukebox plays our favorite songs

Me and Mrs., Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Jones
We got a thing going on
We both know that it's wrong
But it's much too strong
To let it go now

We gotta be extra careful
That we don't build our hopes up too high
Because she's got her own obligations
And so do I

Me and Mrs., Mrs. Jones
Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Jones

Well, it's time for us to be leaving
And it hurts so much, it hurts so much inside
And now she'll go her way and I'll go mine
But tomorrow we'll meet
At the same place, the same time

ME AND MRS. JONES

(Kenny Gamble, Leon Huff, Cary Gilbert), 1972

Me and Mrs., Mrs., Mrs., Mrs. Jones
(Same place)
We both know that it's wrong
(Same time)

Everyday at the same cafe
(Same place)
We got a thing going on
You know it's wrong
(Same time)

FEELING GOOD

(Anthony Newley, Leslie Bricusse), 1964

Birds flying high
You know how I feel
Sun in the sky
You know how I feel
Reeds driftin' on by
You know how I feel
It's a new dawn
It's a new day
It's a new life
For me
And I'm feeling good

Fish in the sea
You know how I feel
River running free
You know how I feel
Blossom in the tree
You know how I feel
It's a new dawn
It's a new day
It's a new life
For me
And I'm feeling good

Dragonfly out in the sun you know what I mean
Don't you know
Butterflies all havin' fun you know what I mean
Sleep in peace when the day is done
And this old world is a new world
And a bold world
For me

Stars when you shine
You know how I feel
Scent of the pine
You know how I feel
Yeah freedom is mine
And I know how I feel
It's a new dawn
It's a new day
It's a new life
For me
And I'm feeling good

DRINKING AGAIN

(Johnny Mercer, Doris Tauber), 1967

Drinkin' again and thinkin' of when, when you loved me
I'm havin' a few and wishin' that you were here

Makin' the rounds, accepting a round from strangers
Bein' a fool just hopin' that you'll appear

Sure, I can borrow a smoke, maybe tell some joker a bad joke
But nobody laughs, they don't laugh at a broken heart

Oh, yeah, I'm drinkin' again, it's always the same
That same old story

After the kicks there's little old mixed-up me
Tryin' to lose a dream that used to be

Look at me, I'm drinkin' again, drinkin' all over town
Yeah, I'm drinkin' again



Alles krieg' ich alleine hin
Ihr staunt wozu ich fähig bin
Und weil mich keiner besser kennt
Bin ich selbst mein Assistent.

Halt meine eignen Pokerrund'n
Psychoanalysestund'n
Trag' mir selbst Gedichte vor
Sing mit mir im Doppelchor
Besiege mich bei Schachpartien
Hab' mir das meiste selbst verziehen
Kann für mich eine Lanze brechen
Mich im Zweifel auch bestechen

Reich mir selbst den Staffel-Stab
Und nehm' mir auch die Beichte ab
Doch gibts nen Punkt an dem ich scheiter'
Da kämen auch andere nicht weiter

Küssen, kann man nicht alleine
Und ich sag Dir auch den Grund:
Küssen das geht auf keinen Fall alleine
Denn dazu brauch ich einen anderen Mund

Allein ist das unmöglich
Ich weiß genau das geht nicht
Versuche enden kläglich
Das ist nur vertane Zeit
Ich müsste mal agieren
Und endlich kapieren
Da hilft kein meditieren
Küssen kann man nur zu zweit
Ich wär' dazu bereit

KÜSSEN KANN MAN NICHT ALLEINE

(Annette Humpe, Max Raabe), 2011

Ich habe mich sehr gut im Griff
Bin mein Kapitän und mein Schiff
Gerat' ich auch mal in die Miesen
Führ' ich mich aus allen Krisen
Spionier' mich selber aus
Stell mich ein und schmeiß mich raus
Ich fahr mir hinten rein
Hau mir danach aufs Nasenbein

Ich les mir aus der Hand
Und klatsch mich an die Wand
Ich lach mich aus und lüg' mich an
Das ist es was ich sehr gut kann

Nur: Küssen, kann ich nicht alleine
Und ich sag Dir auch den Grund:
Küssen geht auf keinen Fall alleine
Denn dazu brauch ich einen anderen Mund

Du bist gerade hier
Wie wärs wenn ich mir Dir
Die Sache mal probier'
Küssen kann man nur zu zweit
Ich glaub das du Bescheid weißt
Die Lösung klappt zu zweit meist
Wenn man sich auf die Couch schmeißt
Ist der Weg zum Kuss nicht weit
Ich wär' dazu bereit



It's quarter to three
There's no one in the place 'cept you and me
So set 'em' up joe
I got a little story I think you oughtta know

We're drinking my friend
To the end of a brief episode
So make it one for my baby
And one more for the road

I know the routine
Put another nickel in the machine
I'm feeling so bad
Won't you make the music easy and sad

I could tell you a lot
But you gotta be true to your code
So make it one for my baby
And one more for the road

You'd never know it
But buddy I'm a kind of poet
And I've got a lot of things I wanna say
And if I'm gloomy, please listen to me
Till it's all, all talked away

Well, that's how it goes
And Joe I know you're gettin' anxious to close
So thanks for the cheer
I hope you didn't mind
My bending your ear

But this torch that I found
It's gotta be drowned
Or it soon might explode
So make it one for my baby
And one more for the road

ONE FOR MY BABY
(AND ONE MORE
FOR THE ROAD)
(Johnny Mercer, Harold Arlen), 1943

Out of the tree of life I just picked me a plum
You came along and everything's startin' to hum
Still, it's a real good bet, the best is yet to come

The best is yet to come and babe, won't that be fine?
You think you've seen the sun, but you ain't seen it shine

A--Wait till the warm-up's underway
Wait till our lips have met
And wait till you see that sunshine day
You ain't seen nothin' yet

The best is yet to come and babe, won't it be fine?
Best is yet to come, come the day you're mine

Come the day you're mine
I'm gonna teach you to fly
We've only tasted the wine
We're gonna drain the cup dry

Wait till your charms are right for these arms to surround
You think you've flown before, but baby, you ain't left the ground

A--Wait till you're locked in my embrace
Wait till I draw you near
A--Wait till you see that sunshine place
Ain't nothin' like it here

The best is yet to come and babe, won't it be fine?
The best is yet to come, come the day you're mine

Come the day you're mine
And you're gonna be mine

THE BEST IS YET TO COME
(Caroline Leigh, Cy Coleman), 1964



Produced by Alexander M. Thoma and Peter Reiter-Schaub
Recorded and Mixed by Peter Reiter-Schaub
Programming and Sound Design by Peter Reiter-Schaub
Mastered by Udo Wüstendörfer

Musicians:

Thomas Vogel: Lead Trumpet
Stefan Zimmermann: Trumpet
Günther Bollmann: Trombone
Jan Schreiner: Bass Trombone
Peter Reiter-Schaub: Piano, Flugelhorn, Saxophone, Trumpet
Martin Scales: Guitar
Dietmar Fuhr: Bass
Daniel Schröteler: Drums
Bodek Janke: Drums, Percussion

All Solos by Peter Reiter-Schaub except guitar Solo by Martin Scales

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CREDITS + THANKS

