

LifeTales
Musical Biography
Series

**ALEXANDER
GRAHAM
BELL**



An Original Adaptation with
Script, Music and Lyrics by
MICHAEL TENNANT

Additional Music and Lyrics by
WAYNE SCOTT

Orchestration by
NOLAN LIVESAY

"Alexander Graham Bell"

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Appearance)

Thomas Watson	Friend of Alexander Graham Bell
Alexander Graham Bell (Aleck)	Inventor
Young Melville	Brother of Alexander
Young Aleck	
Mother	Mother of Alexander
Father	Father of Alexander
Mabel	Alexander's Deaf Love Interest/ Wife
Mr. Hubbard	Father of Mabel
Various Ensemble Characters	

"Alexander Graham Bell"

SYNOPSIS OF SONGS

1. "The World Around Us"Ensemble, Thomas
 2. "Alexander Graham Bell"Ensemble, Thomas, Aleck
 3. "I'm an Inventor" Young Aleck
 4. "Mabel"Aleck, Thomas
 5. "Alexander Graham Bell"Ensemble
 6. "Aleck and Mabel's Love Song"Mabel, Aleck
"Alexander Graham Bell" (Reprise)..... Thomas, Mr. Hubbard
 7. "The Eyes of a Dreamer"Aleck, Mabel
"Alexander Graham Bell" (Reprise)..... Ensemble
- Finale: "The World Around You" (Reprise).....
.....Ensemble

LifeHaven
T.H.E.A.M.E.R

"Alexander Graham Bell"

By Michael Tennant

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Overture

SONG: "THE WORLD AROUND US"

Ensemble

Take a look at the world around you
What do you see?
There's a universe full of endless
Possibilities
From the bottom of the ocean
To the skies of blue
There are discoveries waiting to be made by
Each one of you
It's a busy world that we live in
Most definitely
There's a billion amazing wonders
We don't take time to see
But it only takes someone to start dreaming
For the world to change
And our lives that we live now can
Be rearranged

(Segue to next song)

SONG: "ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL"

Thomas

There have been many men of science
Helpful giants throughout time
And one of these great scientists
Has been a friend of mine

Ensemble (With Thomas)

His name is Alexander— Alexander Graham Bell
And it will be our pleasure
To explain what he did well
He tinkered and tested, he hardly ever rested
For his mind was the kind to learn
And after awhile, through many tests and trials
He would bring s a thing that often rings
The telephone— the telephone
Alexander Graham Bell did well
And gave us telephones
The telephone— the telephone
Alexander Graham Bell did well
And gave us telephones

Thomas

Hello, my name is Thomas Watson
I'm a friend of Aleck Bell

W/Ensemble

I (He) worked as his assistant
And I (he) tried to serve him well
I helped him work with gadgets and electricity
And Thomas here and Aleck
Were as clever as could be

Aleck & Thomas We tinkered and we tested— we hardly ever rested
 'Cause we're bound to transmit a sound
 With cogs, coils and wire, 'lectricity and pliers
 We would bring to you a thing that just might ring

Thomas Now, Aleck was a bright young man
 Though rather bland at school

Aleck I'd rather do experiments with gadgets and with tools

Thomas But he was good at math
 And he could play piano well

All Put it all together, you get Alexander Bell
 Alexander Graham Bell— !

Thomas Our story begins years before I met Aleck... a day in the 1850's when young Aleck and his brother, Melville were walking home from school...

SCENE 1: A COUNTRY ROAD

(Aleck and Melville come running in)

Melville Aleck, Hurry!

Young Aleck Where are we going, Melville?

Melville Swimming in the river. A lot of kids are going.

Aleck No...

Melville Why not?

Aleck I have to practice the piano.

Melville You've already practiced today.

Aleck Then I have to do my mathematics.

Melville You know mathematics better than the teachers.

Aleck I have to learn Greek.

Melville You'd rather die first.

Aleck Latin?

Melville Nope.

Aleck Feed the dog?

Melville Aleck, what is wrong with you? You haven't been any fun the last few days.

Aleck It's Mother.

Melville What about Mother?

Aleck Something's wrong with her.

Melville What do you mean?

Aleck I'm not sure, but something's not right. You know how she knows the second I come from school, because she can hear the door shut behind me? The other day I was in the house fifteen minutes before she saw me, and then she asked how long I'd been home for.

Melville That's nothing.

Aleck Yesterday we were talking, and everything seemed fine, until she turned her head away from me. I kept talking, but she didn't hear a word I said.

Melville She was just ignoring you. You were probably annoying her again.

Aleck Today I practiced piano for a half hour. Then I asked her if she thought it sounded good, and she acted like she didn't even hear it. She didn't even know what song I was playing.

Mother Melville, Aleck?

Melville Over here, Mother.

Mother Your father has returned from his trip, and wants to tell you all about the talking machine he saw at the convention.

Aleck Where is he now? *(No response. Mother is facing Melville)* Mother? *(Aleck touches her)*

Mother Yes, Aleck?

Aleck Where is Father now?

Mother He's getting washed up for dinner, and you boys should do the same. *(Mother looks back at Melville)*

Melville Mother, did Father bring us anything from his trip?

(While she is facing Melville, Aleck snaps a finger in her ear. She doesn't respond, so he does it again. No response. When he looks in her ear, she sees and notices)

Mother I'm sure he did, but you won't see your gifts until you've eaten your dinner. I mean that! All of it! Aleck! What are you doing?
Melville See you later, Aleck! *(Melville runs home)*
Aleck I was just... I just wanted to see if...
Mother If I could hear you?
Aleck Yes.
Mother *(Painful pause)* I can see there's no hiding anything from you, Aleck. You're a clever boy.
Aleck Mother, what's wrong?
Mother Aleck, you know the people who come to your father for help?
Aleck People who can't hear. Father has always tried to help the deaf and teach them how to communicate.
Mother Well Aleck, I am losing my hearing, just like those people.
Aleck Does Father know? Maybe he can help you keep your hearing.
Mother Your father does know, Aleck. We've seen it coming for a while, and we didn't want to tell you boys until we had to. But no, there's nothing your father can do to stop it from happening. We just have to accept it. Now come along, Aleck. Let's go to dinner. Come along.
(Aleck and Mother head into the house. Dinner and conversation is in progress as they sit at the table.)

SCENE 2: THE BELL HOUSEHOLD

Melville Did you see any famous inventors, Father?
Father Indeed, Melville. They all came out to participate in the discussions and to observe each other's work, but I think the real reason behind the large attendance was the talking machine.
Aleck Father, did you get to see it up close?
Father *(Brief pause)* Yes!
(Aleck and Melville stare at each other, in a way a young child would today if their father met Michael Jordan)
Melville What was it like, Father?
Father First, you must eat your green beans. *(Aleck and Melville aren't quite as thrilled now)* Eat every last one of them, and I'll tell you all about it. *(Aleck and Melville begin eating their green beans, gagging on every bite)* Now open your mouths. *(Father checks to be sure they've swallowed them)*
Good boys.
Melville I feel sick.
Aleck Now Father, tell us about the talking machine!
Father The what? Oh... yes... the a... talking machine. Well, in truth boys, it wasn't all that impressive.
Melville We had to eat green beans for that?
Father It couldn't really talk. It was simply a device that made noises, and those noises sounded like words.
Melville It really couldn't talk? *(Feeling very betrayed)*
Father I'm afraid many of the guests at the convention were disappointed as well.
Aleck Even so, I still would have liked to have seen it.
Father Well, why don't you boys build your own?
Melville How could we do that, Father?
Father The same way the inventors at the convention created theirs.
Mother Don't give them any ideas, dear.
Father No, really. It wouldn't be so hard... use your imaginations. Take some time, think about it, and you'll be surprised at what you can do.
Aleck I'll make one, Father.
Melville Me too!

SONG: "I'M AN INVENTOR"

Young Aleck

When I grow up, I'll be an inventor

I'll follow my mentors and soon you will see
I'll form an alliance, with modern science
And when there's compliance
Then famous I'll be

Mother *(Spoken)* Go to sleep, Aleck.
Aleck Good night, Mother.
 (Key change, lights up on older Aleck)

SCENE 3: THE WORKSHOP OF ALECK AND THOMAS

Aleck *(Song continues)*
All of my life, I've been an inventor
I've followed my mentors, where I've come to be
Research and appliance of modern science
When there is compliance
There you will find me
Following in the work of my father
Most wouldn't bother, but I can see
Connecting the nation with communications
A heightened sensation
For a genius like me

Aleck Good morning, Thomas
Thomas *(Entering)* Good morning, Aleck. I hope you got a good night's sleep. I don't want you falling asleep during today's experiments.
Aleck Sleep? Who can sleep with all this excitement? Every time I would doze off, I'd wake right back up again. Too many ideas running through my mind, I suppose.
Thomas Truth be told, I only got a few hours myself.
Aleck Thomas, were all the doors and windows locked when you got here this morning?
Thomas Yes. Why?
Aleck I saw Elisha Gray on my way here this morning. He's up to something.
Thomas Elisha Gray? I haven't seen his face in a while.
Aleck No one has. He's been locked up in his workroom for weeks, working on... who knows what.
Thomas He'd love to get his hands on our new communication device.
Aleck This will make things so much easier. We could put a line from your house to mine, and if you come up with an idea in the middle of the night, you could just tell me from your bedroom. You wouldn't have to go running through the streets at two in the morning ranting and raving about the idea that came to you in a dream like you did last week.
Thomas It was a good idea, too.
Aleck Do you remember what it was yet?
Thomas No! When that grumpy old neighbor of yours threw his shoe at me and hit me in the head, the idea disappeared completely.
Aleck My neighbors are funny that way. When people scream in the streets at odd hours of the night, it upsets them. *(Sighs)* Thomas, have you noticed the flowers are growing outside. When the sun hits them, around noon, they're so pretty. I watered them yesterday, and I'm sure they looked up at me and said "thank-you," Aleck.
Thomas You met another girl.
Aleck Why do you say that, Thomas?
Thomas The only time you water flowers is when you've met a girl. Otherwise you don't notice them, and at least once a week you step on them when you're not paying attention to where you're going. Then I have to plant new ones. So to answer your question, yes, I have noticed those flowers. In fact, I planted those flowers, and I shall be very upset if you step on them.
Aleck Step on them...? I love them!
Thomas Now I'm sure of it. You met a girl.
Aleck Not "a" girl..."THE" girl.

Thomas Yep, here we go.
Aleck She's beautiful, Thomas.
Thomas There goes our day of experiments... where did you meet this one?
Aleck She's a student of mine that I'm tutoring. And, I have an appointment with her father this afternoon. He may fund our research.
Thomas Tell me, did you give her the usual pick-up line, and then win her over by playing her a love song on the piano?
Aleck No, that would never work on her.
Thomas She's not that shallow?
Aleck No it's not that... she's deaf.
Thomas What?
Aleck *(Speaks loudly into his ear)* DEAF!
Thomas How do you communicate?
Aleck She reads lips... better than anyone I've seen. She can read lips in English, and German.
Thomas A bilingual lip reader. I'm impressed. Pass me the wrench.
Aleck And, I've decided it's not so bad having a girl stare at my lips whenever we're together.
Thomas That's great, Aleck. Now, let's concentrate on our research.
Aleck It's funny... whenever I'm here, I can't think of anything but her. But when I'm with her, I can't think of anything but our research.
(Music begins)
Thomas So, lover boy, does this girl have a name?

SONG: "MABEL"

Aleck Mabel. The girl that I love is named Mabel
Thomas Can you pass me the wires on the table?
Aleck She's a girl that can read my lips
Thomas Aleck, pass me the vice grips
Aleck And she's like no one else that I've ever met
 The prettiest face I could never forget
 A day without her is a day I'd regret
Thomas Aleck, can we get to work yet?
Aleck Can there be, any girl as sweet as she?
Thomas That's what you said about the last three
Aleck We'll take a train, to the sea
 And sail off on a boat, just her and me
 And on currents of love, we will float endlessly
Thomas Aleck, how idiotic can you be?
 Next week we have payments due
 With no money our research is through
 So just between me and you...
(Music stops)

Thomas *(Shouts)* I THINK YOU SHOULD FORGET ABOUT MABEL!!!
Aleck Sure... no problem, Thomas. She's out of my head completely.

SCENE 4: THE HUBBARD HOME

(Music reprises as scene changes to the Hubbard home)
Thomas *(To audience)* But of course, she wasn't. Aleck couldn't get Mabel out of his mind— especially since her father might help us with our research.
(Aleck enters Mabel's Home)
Mabel Aleck, come in. *(She takes Aleck's coat and hangs it up)*
Aleck *(To her back)* How have you been, Mabel? *(Aleck turns Mabel to him, repeating)* How have you been, Mabel?

Mabel Very well. My father will be here in a moment. In the meantime, you can wait in here. Shall I wait with you?

Aleck I would like that very much.

Mabel I think it's wonderful that you've come to my father for help. He's always willing to help others.

Aleck I always feel a little awkward asking others to invest their money for my research.

Mabel You should never feel like that if it's a worth while cause. Your inventions will help people, and once others see that, I think you'll have folks jumping at the chance to assist you financially. And I know that my father respects the contributions you and your father have made in teaching the deaf community. (*Aleck is visibly nervous*) You are nervous, aren't you? Would you like to play our piano? Perhaps that will put you at ease.

Aleck It's been a while. (*Aleck sits at the piano and begins to play*)

Mabel It's beautiful, Aleck.

Aleck Mabel... you're deaf.

Mabel (*Slightly hurt*) Yes, I am. But I can see your fingers moving, and I can imagine what it might sound like. I wish I could really hear you play, but for now, my imagination is all I have.

Aleck Mabel, will you try something for me?

Mabel Of course.

Aleck Lay your head on the piano... right by the strings.

Mabel Aleck, that's silly.

Aleck Please. (*Makes puppy dog eyes*)

Mabel Oh, all right. I don't know what this will accomplish. (*Mabel puts her head on the piano. Aleck plays and a smile comes across Mabel's face*) I can hear it! Aleck, how am I able to hear the music?

Aleck Because of the vibrations of the strings. After my mother went deaf, this is how she listened to me practice the piano. I know you can't hear much of it, and it probably sounds like a low rumble, but it's something.

Mabel Aleck... It's perfect.
(*Mabel still has her head on the piano. She and Aleck lock eyes and he continues to play. Mabel's father enters and sees her in this strange position*)

Mr. Hubbard Mabel, are you alright? Mabel?

Mabel Oh, Father.

Mr. Hubbard Were you feeling ill?

Mabel Not at all. Why do you ask?

Mr. Hubbard You were collapsed on the piano. Mr. Bell, couldn't you see my daughter had taken ill?

Mabel I feel fine, Father. I'll leave you two while you talk. (*She exits*)

Mr. Hubbard Mr. Bell, welcome.

Aleck Thank you, sir.

Mr. Hubbard I understand your teachings at the university are quite impressive. You seem to have earned the respect of your colleagues, at least, most of them. There are those, of course, who laugh at you behind your back, but don't pay any attention to their type. You keep up the good work.

Aleck Well, thank you, sir.

Mr. Hubbard Now, Mr. Bell...

Aleck Aleck.

Mr. Hubbard Aleck? (*Slightly disgusted with the informality*)

Aleck Mr. Bell

Mr. Hubbard Yes, Mr. Bell. What is it you wanted to see me about?

Aleck Sir, my assistant, Thomas...

Mr. Hubbard Thomas? (*More disgusted*)

Aleck Mr. Watson. My assistant, Thomas Watson and I are on the verge of several wonderful scientific breakthroughs...

Mr. Hubbard I see. And you would like me to give you my opinion on your new inventions. Of course. I'm more than willing to help you.

Aleck Sir, I would be privileged to hear your opinion. But now, what our project needs is funding.

Mr. Hubbard Ah ha! And you would like me to recommend some people for you to ask to become your patrons. Well, as I said before, I'm very happy to help you.

Aleck Oh, sir, it would be wonderful if you could point me in the direction of anyone who would be interested in sponsoring my work... but sir, I'm here to offer you the unique opportunity where you yourself could involve yourself in our research.

Mr. Hubbard You want my money?
Aleck Oh, sir, I... yes sir, I would like that very much.
Mr. Hubbard Aleck...
Aleck Mr. Bell.
Mr. Hubbard Aleck, this is the year 1876. When I look around at the world today, I realize that everything that is going to be invented has already been invented. I appreciate the ambition of young inventors such as yourself, but I can't help but think your research is futile. However, I do admire your persistence, and I've never been one to crush another man's dreams, even if it is foolishness. The answer is... YES... I will help fund your research.
Aleck Thank you, sir.
Mr. Hubbard I shall give you five dollars a month, and I hope you will use it wisely.
Aleck Sir, your generosity is overwhelming, indeed, but the price of research today is considerably higher than it was when you were my age back in the 1700's.
Mr. Hubbard Aleck, are you being ungrateful? I would hate to think that a man would walk into my home, receive my time, hospitality, permission to court my daughter, and my money on top of it all, and then find out this man is ungrateful.
(Music Begins)
Aleck No, sir. I simply wanted you to realize that investing in my scientific research is a business opportunity. When I become wealthy because of a new invention, I'll pay you back in full, as well as a percentage of what you've invested. And when I saw what a small, small, teeny, tiny amount you intended to give me, I felt I would not be a very good friend to take this small amount, and have you invest so little.
Mr. Hubbard I have a feeling I'm going to regret this, but I will give you six dollars a month. Now, you'd best be on your way before I change my mind.
Aleck Thank you... sir.

SONG "ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL"

Ensemble It takes God-given courage and persistence to invent
 And money from investors is a welcome supplement
 And thanks to Mister Hubbard
 Yes, Mabel's dear old dad
 Alexander dug right in and worked with what he had
 Along with his friend, Thomas
 They were two hard working lads
(song continues as underscore)

SCENE 5: THE WORKSHOP OF ALECK AND THOMAS

(Aleck has just finished making some adjustments on his new invention)
Aleck Alright, Thomas. I just finished making some adjustments, and I think it will work this time. If you would be so good as to go into the other room and pick up the receiver, I'll speak to you from my end and you should be able to hear me on your end.
Thomas Of course, Aleck.
(Both pick up their end of the "telephone")
Aleck Greetings, Thomas, can you hear me? *(Nothing. Aleck repeats, louder)*
 Greetings, Thomas, can you hear me? *(Nothing. Aleck repeats, screaming)*
 Greetings, Thomas, can you hear me? *(Nothing. Aleck jumps up and runs to Thomas)*
Thomas Thomas, I was speaking to you. Weren't you listening?
Aleck I was Aleck, but I couldn't hear you.
Thomas What do you mean you couldn't hear me? I was speaking loud and clear.
Aleck I believe you were. The problem is, your invention doesn't work.
Aleck What? Alright, alright. I'll go make another adjustment. It will work this time.
(Music Resumes)

SONG: "ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL" (Reprise)

Ensemble It takes God-given talent and persistence to invent
They never, ever gave it up no matter how things went
They did not get discouraged, they did not gripe or groan
They both remained determined to invent the telephone
(Music continues as underscore)

Aleck Greetings, Thomas, can you hear me? *(Nothing. Aleck repeats, louder)*
Greetings, Thomas, can you hear me? *(Nothing. Aleck repeats, screaming)*
Greetings, Thomas, can you hear me? *(Nothing. Aleck jumps up; runs to Thomas)*
Thomas, I was speaking to you. Weren't you listening?

Thomas I was, Aleck, but I couldn't hear you. Your invention still doesn't work.
Aleck Alright. No problem. *(Barely able to hold in his frustration)* I'll go adjust it again.

(Music resumes)

SONG: "ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL" (Reprise)

Ensemble The telephone— the telephone
They have to be persistent to discover what's unknown
The telephone— the telephone
It takes a lot of work to create something on your own
(Music continues briefly, fading)

Thomas *(To audience)* I've always admired the patience Aleck had during the long process of trial and error. Aleck remembered it was important not to become frustrated when things didn't go his way, because success could be just around the corner. And you know...
(Suddenly, we see Aleck pick up the "telephone" and throw it to the ground, kicking it)

Aleck How's that for an adjustment? You think you'll work any better now?

Mabel *(Entering)* Aleck... what are you doing?

Aleck *(Shocked)* Mabel?! I was... just fixing my new invention. I had it working perfectly, and I think Thomas may have broken it when I wasn't watching.

Mabel Oh. Are you ready to go?

Aleck Go where?

Mabel You said tonight, you would take me some place special. You didn't forget, did you?

Aleck Forget? Oh, Mabel... Mabel you don't know how it hurts to hear you say such things. All day long, I've thought of nothing but you. In fact, I was counting down the minutes until you would arrive here.

Mabel You were supposed to come to my house.

Aleck I was?

Mabel Over an hour ago. I got tired of waiting, so I walked over here.

Aleck *(Realizing he's caught)* Mabel... The truth is... The truth is *(Decides to make one last attempt)*
Thomas, my assistant has taken ill, deathly ill. I was on my way to your home, when I saw a sickness, a very sudden sickness overtake him, and I was forced to delay our meeting so I could care for him.

Mabel Will he be alright?

Aleck No... I don't think so.

Mabel I'm sorry to hear that.

(Mabel lowers her head in sorrow. As she does, Thomas enters as high spirited as ever. Aleck grabs Mabel and hugs her, so her back is to Thomas. He motions with his arms for Thomas to leave. Thomas gets the hint, and begins to tip toe out)

Aleck Thomas, she can't hear you. Just walk normally.

Thomas Oh.... *(Exits)*

Aleck Ready to go?

Mabel If you'd rather not go, so you can take care of Thomas, I'd understand.

Aleck No, he'll be fine. Let's go *(They exit)*

Mabel I thought he was deathly ill.
Aleck He is, but he'll live.
(Music plays softly as Aleck and Mabel appear in the moonlight)

Mabel Aleck, I'm really glad we were able to take this time to be alone. I know how busy you've been with your experiments. But now I've got you all to myself. *(Aleck's mind has wandered)* Aleck?
Aleck Hmmm?
Mabel I do have you all to myself, right?
Aleck Of course.
Mabel When will you ask Father for his permission to marry me?
Aleck Just as soon as I can discover the electrical current that can carry sound.
Mabel And when will that be?
Aleck It's hard to say. You see, ordinary electrical currents won't carry sound. I have to get the currents to undulate. It's very complex because it has to transfer every sound a human voice can make. A whisper, a scream, they all have to be carried from one point to another.
Mabel Did you say you were taking me out for a romantic getaway?
Aleck I'm sorry. I'm all yours.
Mabel Good. She takes his hand. Now, if you were to go ask Father for his permission to marry me right now, we could...
Aleck Elisha Gray has also been working on a device to transfer sound. If he discovers it before me, I don't know what I'll do. I've borrowed money from everyone I know to help fund my experiments. The universities have advanced me money on the classes I teach... I have to find that undulating current!
Mabel Then maybe you should go back and work. We can spend time together later when you're not thinking about your inventions. Oh, wait... I forgot. You're always working on your inventions.
Aleck Mabel, I'm sorry. I promise you, you have my complete attention. I will go to your father, and ask to marry you.

SONG: "ALECK AND MABEL'S LOVE SONG"

Mabel Oh Alexander, can't you see, we'll be together you and me
Our love was truly meant to be, and when I'm with you I feel so free
And there is nothing I won't do, to make your dreams come true
Our love will last eternally... are you listening to me?

Aleck Oh Mabel, do not be absurd. My poor heart rides on your every word
Dear Mabel, do not make a fuss. This summer night belongs to us
And I'm so happy you're at my side. The floods of love will not subside
I think only of you and me, and electricity

Mabel Why are your eyes full of dismay
Aleck Because it's late and soon you'll go away
Mabel But I am here right now
Aleck I wish that I knew how to make that current undulate
Mabel Gee... what a romantic date
Aleck I've searched, but I just must be blind
The proper current I cannot find
If I don't discover it today
It might be found by Elisha Gray

Mabel If I can help, I'd like to try
Just look into my eyes
If inspiration won't come...
I'll give you some
(Music segues to next song reprise)

(Mabel attacks poor, innocent Aleck with a kiss or very friendly handshake)