

Between Beat and Bombs

— Milestones by Dieter Schäfer —



Text templates:

Dieter Schäfer, texts refined with Chat GPT

Images for tracks 4 and 9 from the book

„Dieter Schäfer – Der Verkehrspolizist

Cheerful to cloudy episodes from the

Kurpfalz region“ drawn by illustrator

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Image for foreword, scribble by illustrator

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Foreword to the playlist

This playlist is not a traditional music album. It is a collection of memories – condensed into songs.

From the autobiographical book *'Der Verkehrspolizist – Heiter bis wolkige Episoden aus der Kurpfalz'* (*The Traffic Policeman – Cheerful to Cloudy Episodes from the Kurpfalz*), I have selected formative stages of my life and translated them into song lyrics: childhood in a baby boomer apartment block, the fading sixties, youth between beat music and political upheaval, mopeddreams, military service, traffic accidents, everyday police work, leadership, responsibility, friendship and self-awareness. And of course, music, music, music...

Each song represents a phase, a mood, an experience.

The different musical styles are no coincidence – they reflect the diversity of these stages of life. The fact that the songs are released in German and English opens up the very personal material beyond the regional context.

This playlist is not a nostalgic look back.

It is an attempt to make lived time audible – honest, sometimes cheerful, sometimes cloudy, always authentic.





Track 1

Coal in the Basement

An honest look at the childhood of a post-war child – coal buckets, hard work, and simple solidarity that provides warmth even without wealth.

I grew up in a gray stone house
Two little rooms, we made 'em ours
A yard, a window, sometimes some light
Not much of the world was in my sight

A motorbike pulled our move one day
I walked beside it, quiet, stayed
I didn't know what stays, what goes
Just knew something new would grow

Coal in the basement
The stove's never cold
We had so little
But we held our own

My dad came home, tired and quiet
One look from him said: That's it, kid
He went, he came, day and night
Made something from nothing, made it right
I learned early work don't need a stage
You don't gotta shout if you're full of your own wage

Coal in the basement
Hands black with soot
I didn't know the word for poor
Just the daily rut

I still see my mom on the basement stairs
Carrying a bucket, heavy, no cares
Step by step, winter to winter
Like carrying it was part of her forever

That day I lost a childhood dream
The big steering wheel, the strong man
scheme
But I found something soft and clear
It holds me still, it's always near

People talk so much 'bout worth
About what matters on this earth
I learned it where no one speaks
In quiet halls, in shadowed weeks

Coal in the basement
My heart was never alone
From so little
I made a life my own

The house is gone
The stoves are cold
But sometimes life still smells
Like coal and hold



Track 2

From Violin to Moped

From a sense of duty to freedom: the journey of a young person who trades his violin for the roar of an engine – and learns that growing up begins with falling down.

Yo, it started with a violin in my hands,
Teacher said, “Kid, music makes you stand.”
After school, I practiced solo in my room,
Outside kids kickin’ balls, sun goin’ boom.
Counting beats, but hearin’ every kick,
Indoors got rules, outdoors got that click.

Violin to moped, outta my zone,
Strings for gas, homework on my phone.
Forty clicks, wind in my face,
Finally out – finally my space.

Cash from confirmation, burnin’ in my pocket,
Big bro had the same kinda rocket.
Sold that violin, yeah, kinda tough,
But engine roar? Man, that hit was enough.
Shiny maroon, ride just broken in,
Crew rollin’ deep – can’t keep us in.

Violin to moped, outta my zone,
Strings for gas, homework on my phone.
Forty clicks, heart pumpin’ loud,
Youth on fire, we own the crowd.

One wrong glance, no signal made,
Tires screechin’, time start to fade.
Flyin’ through air, asphalt below,
Heart in my throat – still got that glow.

Moped flew ten meters straight,
Tires popped, guess that was fate.
Me? Chill. Just a rush, a thrill,
Some dude yellin’, tryin’ to instill.
Tracks tell more than words could shout,
In the end, man, it all blew out.

Violin to moped, joy on skin,
Learn fast what you dare to begin.
Fall once, get back, never stuck,
That’s how life fills your cup of luck.

Homewrecked, damage off the charts,
Quit? Nah, that’s not my art.
Sunday grind, paper in my hand,
Workin’ hard to get back my land.
Piece by piece, mark by mark,
Soon my ride alive – spark in the dark.

Fifteen, I hit a brand new track,
Sold the ride that once had my back.
Sometimes I hear it, soft in my head,
Violin and motor, still keepin’ the thread.

Track 2a

From violin to moped (punk version)

The same story, told louder and wilder –
youthful awakening set to the raw, rebellious
sound of new self-confidence.

Violin in my hand,
Teacher said: “Play, man!”
After school, stuck inside,
Kids outside, freedom ride.

Vi-o-lin!
Mo-ped!
Vi-o-lin!
Go! Go! Go!

Sold the bow, felt a sting,
Red moped – hear it sing.
Forty fast, wind in face,
We ruled the streets, ran our race.

Vi-o-lin!
Mo-ped!
Vi-o-lin!
Go! Go! Go!

Crash! I’m down, tire went pop,
Got back up, never stop.
Skid marks show where we’ve been,
Ride again – let’s begin!

Vi-o-lin!
Mo-ped!
Fall down,
Get up,
Go!



Track 3

Fading Sixties

A nostalgic look back at school days, friendship, and ideals – carried by the spirit of the late 1960s and the belief in being part of something big.

It wasn't easy, but it felt alright,
family, buddies, day and night.
You learned real fast what value means,
when you're picked for teams – not last in line.
Schoolyard dust all over your shoes,
early on you learn: nothing's for free, you lose.

Hey – we were young!
Hey – we were free!
Between the noise and the fight,
that's where we learned to be.
Hey – those were our days,
yeah, they never let us go.
Fading Sixties,
still beating in our soul.

April sixty-four, first day in class,
same old desk, hoped it wouldn't pass too fast.

Side by side till graduation day,
youngest kids, but we found our way.
Sixty-seven, middle school came,
teachers with stories, scars and names.

Old Fritz talked more war than French,
lost in memories, sitting on the bench.
Westfront tales, drifting away,
“Cabane au Canada” he'd always say.
We closed our eyes, dreamed far from here,
of another life, somewhere clear.
Hey – we were young!
Hey – we were free!
Between the noise and the fight,
that's where we learned to be.
Hey – those were our days,
yeah, they never let us go.
Fading Sixties,
still beating in our soul.

Heidelberg streets, packed and loud,
students shouting, standing proud.
Water cannons, flashing lights,
we were right there, front of the fight.
Too young, too close, no fear inside,
we didn't think – we just joined the ride.

What about you, my old school friend?
Studied law, stayed till the end.
Small town office, nothing fancy,
roots in the ground, no need for frenzy.
Then one name from long ago,
same damn class – how life can go.

Hey – we were young!
Hey – we were free!

Between the noise and the fight,
that's where we learned to be.

Hey – those were our days,
yeah, they never let us go.
Fading Sixties,
still beating in our soul.

Seven guys meet once a month,
talk about then, about now, about us.
Too much booze, too much sound,
rock'n'roll nearly took us down.
Three are gone way too soon,
we raise a glass and hum their tune.

Hits come closer, that's for sure,
makes you humble, nothing more.
When the lights go down at last,

All:
Hey – we were young!
Hey – we were free!



Track 4

Between Beat and Bombs

Music as a refuge in a turbulent world – between flower power, political upheaval, and the longing for harmony, while reality explodes outside.

We let our hair grow long,
Rock from the States in our ears.
Grand Funk, Deep Purple, Ten Years After,
And bands nobody had heard in years.

We watched the Beat Club, then Music Laden,
-Flower power, crazy clothes, anything goes.
Peace signs 'round our necks, olive jackets,
Politics? Nah, we just lived the shows.

Sometimes I felt the world's anger,
But I'd rather hear guitars than all the protest.
Between beat and bombs,
Between freedom and fear.

We dreamed of music
The world hadn't given here.
Everything flowing, everything wild,
And the streets exploded outside.

Vietnam on the radio, Edwin Starr sang "War",
To me it was soul, not a protest score.
Classmates swore by Ton Steine Scherben,
I just wanted to dance, not argue anymore.

We were unpolitical, full of life,
But the world pulled us in, with all its strife.
Explosions in the city, just streets away,
I was on my way to football, totally unaware
that day.

Sirens screaming, the world was so close,
But all we thought of were our guitars.

Between beat and bombs,
Between freedom and fear.

We dreamed of music
The world hadn't given here.
Everything flowing, everything wild,
And the streets exploded outside.

Rohrbach Market, a flat right on my school path, -
The closeness made it real, too close to grasp.
I was a kid caught between laughter and fear,
Between dancing and the feeling that the world
might tear.

Between beat and bombs,
Between freedom and fear.
We dreamed of music
The world hadn't given here.
Everything flowing, everything wild,
And the streets exploded outside.

Guitar sounds in the night,
Long hair blowing in the wind.
And we kept on walking,
Bombs behind us, music ahead.



Track 5

Class of '76 – watcha gonna do?

Youthful uncertainty after graduating from school: a song about the leap into adulthood, unemployment, and the courage to go your own way.

Diploma in my hand, summer '76,
They say "Congrats, kid," but man, life's a fix

Jobs are tight, too many kids in line,
One million outta work, yeah, that shit's
fine... not.

"Yo, what you doin' now?" everybody asks,
I shrug, I laugh, say, "Man, gotta see how this
lasts."

Class of '76 – whatcha gonna do?
Whatcha gonna do? I got no clue.
Class of '76 – whatcha gonna do, friend?
Big dreams, empty streets, gotta roll
with the bend.

Some kids hit college, safe route, no sweat,
Me? Grabbed a truck at the store, no regrets.
Old Hanomag, seven-ton load,
Haulin' fridges, washing machines, down the road.

Engine hummin', hands tight on the wheel,
No lesson plans, just cold asphalt feel.

Class of '76 – whatcha gonna do?
Whatcha gonna do? I got no clue.
Class of '76 – whatcha gonna do, friend?
Life's a hard road, gotta drive 'til the end.

Truck stop diner, coffee and smoke,
Old-timer stories, laughs and jokes.
Romance on the radio, reality on the dash,
Cut or keep? Man, life moves fast.
Class of '76 – whatcha gonna do?

Whatcha gonna do? I got no clue.
Class of '76 – whatcha gonna do, friend?
Hard roads, crazy nights, still pushin' 'til the end.

Class of '76 – whatcha gonna do?
Life's a ride, man, ride it through.



Track 6

Music in my Soul

70ies Soul-Version

A lifelong love of music – from the first beat of childhood to the eternal groove in the heart. A nostalgic journey through soul, disco, and the feelings of sound that show: music is more than sound – it is life, comfort, and freedom.

When I was young, I heard that sound,
Turned my world, made my heart spin 'round.
Year '69, my first big day,
Got a record player, and I started to play.
Bee Gees singin', "*Tomorrow, Tomorrow,*" – yeah,
Barry was my hero, smooth and rare.
I learned to dream through every song,
That rhythm's where my heart belonged.

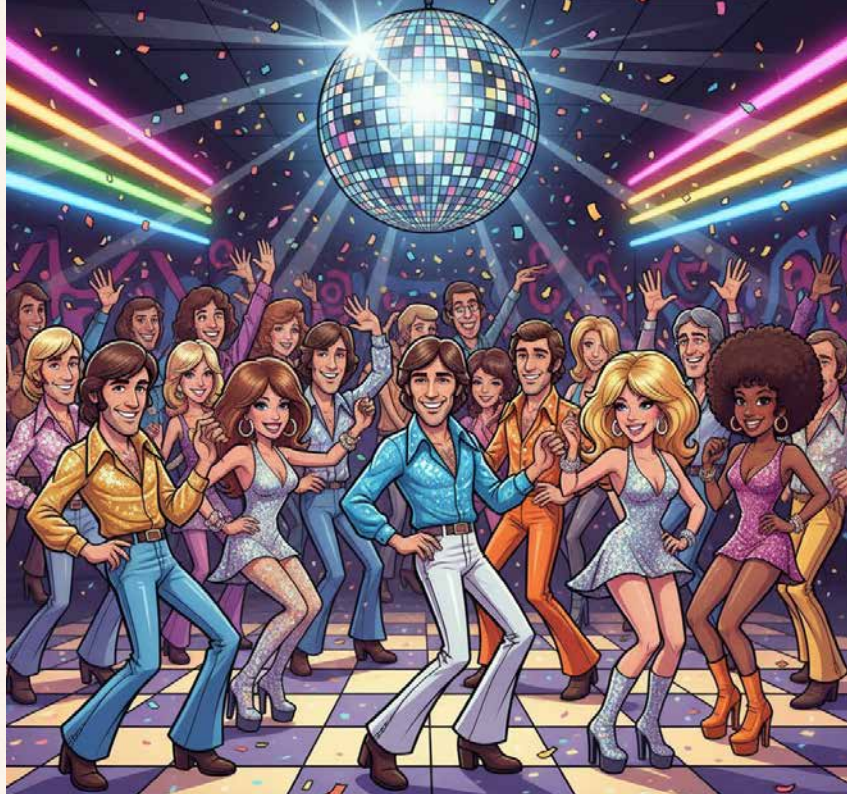
I got music in my soul,
It keeps me young, it keeps me whole.
It's the fire in my heart at night,
It's my reason, my delight.
From the beat of love to the disco light,
That groove just makes me feel so right.
Yeah, I got music in my soul,
And I'll never let it go.

Sunday mornings, radio on,
Casey talkin', man, I was gone.
AFN with the hits so clean,
Taught me English in every scene.
Moody Blues and Procol Harum too,
Played those songs when my heart felt blue.
Music kept me safe and strong,
Been my truth my whole life long.

I got music in my soul,
Yeah, it keeps me whole.
It's the fire I can't hide,
It's my joy and my pride.

From Bee Gees down to Marvin Gaye,
Soul's been my light, my way.
I got music in my soul,
And I'll never let it go.
Oh, baby, turn that vinyl slow,
Let the needle take control.
Every note's a piece of me,
That's my life, my melody.

Oh, music's been my life, my ride,
My groove, my love, my pride.
Yeah, I got music in my soul...



Track 7

Saturday Heart Fever – Music's my Life 70ies Disco-Version

A funky tribute to the disco era and an undying passion for dancing and dreaming. With a retro, glittering groove, the song tells how music connects generations – from the first beat to the last note of life.

I was just a kid with a beat inside,
Didn't have much, but I had my vibe.
Got a turntable, ear to the groove,
Every Bee Gees track made my body move.
Barry Gibb was the man, no doubt,
High tones flyin' when the lights went out.
From school to the floor, yeah, every night,
That mirrorball was my guiding light!
Hey, music's my life,
Gave me rhythm, gave me drive.
From soul to funk to disco nights,
I danced until the morning light!
Come on baby, spin it tight,
We're stayin' alive tonight!
Yeah, music's my life,
And it keeps me high!
Sunday radio, AFN on blast,
Casey talkin', man, those stories last.

Told the secrets behind each song,
Had me singin' and singin' all night long.
Then came Night Fever, lights went wild,
World went crazy, disco style!
Bee Gees ruled the charts so fine,
And the dancefloor, baby, was mine!
Hey, music's my life,
It's my heartbeat, my drive.
I got soul and I got style,
Been groovin' down the disco aisle.
Shake that body, let it roll,
Music's deep inside my soul.
Yeah, music's my life,
And it keeps me high!
Turn the lights down — spin that sound,
Everybody's dancin' all around!
Feel that bass — oh, it's alive,
This is the rhythm that keeps me high!
Music's my life, can you feel that beat?

Got it burnin' in my feet.
From vinyl dreams to neon skies,
That fever never dies!
Yeah, music's my life,
And it keeps me high — all night!



Track 8

Mud and Drill

A relentless portrait of military service – discipline, drill, and the struggle for humanity in a system of command and obedience.

Rain keeps washing out the ground,
Heavy boots, that sucking sound.
“Get down!” screams the whistle loud,
Mud in my mouth, no questions now.
I look for ground that isn’t wet,
But his eyes say: you’re not done yet.
“Crawl up here, right where I stand!”
Face in dirt, just part of the plan.

Mud on my skin, pride in the ground,
Drill makes you hard — respect’s not found.

Barracks stench, drill in my head,
Orders scream, humanity’s dead.
Polish boots till they shine like gold,
But inside, man, you’re growing cold.
I learn the rules, I won’t eat the shame,
Orders are orders —
but I won’t play that game.

Evening roll call, boots look clean,
Battle suit wrecked, know what I mean.
Weekend comes, the washer spins,
While the rest just drown in tins.
Signal corps, same damn days,
Shift work burns your mind away.
Cold lunch late in a cramped old truck,
If that’s fun — then I’m out of luck.

Order on paper, chaos inside,
Rank decides who gets to decide.
Barracks stench, drill in my head,
Orders scream, humanity’s dead.
Polish boots till they shine like gold,
But inside, man, you’re growing cold.
I learn the rules, I won’t eat the shame,
Orders are orders —
but I won’t play that game.

Beer goes down, thoughts get heavy,
Leadership’s more than stripes and chevrons.
I see real fast who just loves control,
And who still treats you like a soul.
One stripe showing, “set the tone”,
March in line, don’t walk alone.
Not in step, not picture-clean,
Guess who gets the blame again?

“You should lead — you should know!”
But where to march when no one knows?
Four-year deal, one door still there,
No promotion — freedom’s fair.
No course, no rank, no fake respect,
I’d rather leave than just collect.
Two years done, end of June,
'78 — yeah, I walked out soon.

Barracks stench, drill in my head,
Orders scream, humanity’s dead.
Polish boots till they shine like gold,
But inside, man, you’re growing cold.
I learned the drill, not the shame,
Orders are orders —
I choose my own damn way.

Discipline can shape a man,
But humiliation never can.
I keep what made me strong and proud,
Leave behind what just stank loud.



Track 9

Rebuilt

Experiences on four wheels – from the first accident to life lessons between risk, freedom, and the realization that you only grow through experience.

Summer '77, got my license in hand,
Mom's little Fiat, but I took the red stand.
Dad's Commodore, roarin' down the street,
first crashes hit – man, life ain't sweet.
Motorbike rear-ended me, metal bent,
but I kept on rollin', learned what that meant.

Rebuilt, but still alive,
four wheels turnin', heart's on fire.
Red lightning flashin' down the lane,
come with me, baby, we'll survive the pain!

Sunday night, just me and my girl,
some car drifts sideways – chaos in my world.
Rear quarter dented, we kept on goin',
every little crash, another story showin'.
Then winter ice, big truck in sight,
seconds to react – we survived the fight.

Rebuilt, but still alive,
four wheels turnin', heart's on fire.
Red lightning flashin' down the lane,
come with me, baby, we'll survive the pain!

Exhaust fumes creeping in, my vision's gone,
rock flying at me, feelin' all wrong.
We breathe deep, windows down,
push through the night,
every curve, every crash makes us fight.
Spring '78, sun's sinkin' low,
highway clear, speedin' ready to go.
Overtake, then bam – animal appears,
hit the side, truck spin – adrenaline tears.
No joke, no laugh, danger all around,
Commodore's alive, still rollin' down.

Rebuilt, but still alive,
four wheels turnin', heart's on fire.
Red lightning flashin' down the lane,
come with me, baby, we'll survive the pain!

Dad gave me the car, through all the dents,
high-powered beast, learned what life meant.
Every crash a lesson, luck on four wheels,
rebuilt and ready for whatever the road deals.



Track 10

The Day the Stones flew

A report from the field: chaos, fear, and solidarity when a peaceful day turns violent – and restraint becomes true strength.

Forty thousand people in the sun,
The festival was just begun.
Tension in the air, but no hate yet,
Still, the day turned fast, you can't forget.

A mob of young men, adrenaline high,
Two thousand five hundred, you can't deny.
Surrounded by stewards, scared and worn,
Begging me to pull back before more gets torn.

It was the hardest choice I've made,
To step aside, not let anyone fade.
Not the law retreating, not giving in,
Just holding back, to prevent the sin.

The day the stones flew,
I cowered by the bus.
The heat and the anger,
The world was dangerous.
But through the chaos, I saw
The strength that holds us true.

I've seen tough calls, I've seen the fight,
But never crouched in the sun, fearing might.
-I saw my comrades fall to exhaustion's sway,
Some sick in the field, some had to lay.

Colleagues fainted under blazing sun,
Others kept going when the doctor was done.
Still, they returned to stand their ground,
In this chaos, loyalty is found.

It was the hardest choice I've made,
To step aside, not let anyone fade.
Not the law retreating, not giving in,
Just holding back, to prevent the sin.

The day the stones flew,
I cowered by the bus.
The heat and the anger,
The world was dangerous.
But through the chaos, I saw
The strength that holds us true.
Every scar, every bruise, every pain,
I wish my friends a quick recovery again.
The day tested us, pushed us so far,
But we made it through, and that's who we are.

The day the stones flew,
I cowered by the bus.
The heat and the anger,
The world was dangerous.
But through the chaos, I saw
The strength that holds us true.

I say just thank you,
To every hand and every friend.
We faced the storm together,
And somehow reached the end.



Track 11

Sirens Brother

A farewell song full of pride in team spirit and responsibility – a hymn to camaraderie, courage, and the legacy of a life in service.

I'm out, the time is done,
six years on top – yeah, I had fun.
Almost twenty-six on my career ride,
led the force with pride on my side.
First boss, last boss, all in one,
Mannheim traffic crew – we got it done.

Siren's burnin', we're ready to go,
saving lives, keeping the flow.
Kids pressed their noses to the glass,
that's the stuff that makes us last.
Siren brother, heart on fire,
leaving tracks – yeah, I'll inspire!

When the fire crew moved to the new place,
I led the way, felt the embrace.
Fifty thousand people on the street,
thousands of kids, hearts skip a beat.
One last round around the old tower,
sister and brother lights, pure power.

Siren's burnin', we're ready to go,
saving lives, keeping the flow.
Kids pressed their noses to the glass,
that's the stuff that makes us last.
Siren brother, heart on fire,
leaving tracks – yeah, I'll inspire!

If you got the protector's gene,
fight for the people, live the dream.
Traffic cops, up close, every day,
hands-on heroes, in every way.
Loud, creative, proud and free,
leaving marks for all to see.

Yeah, I was loud, yeah, I was bold,
but what I did? Stories told.
Police respect, it's earned, not given,
traffic cops – we ride, we're driven.

Siren's burnin', we're ready to go,
saving lives, keeping the flow.
Kids pressed their noses to the glass,
that's the stuff that makes us last.
Siren brother, heart on fire,
leaving tracks – this is my swan song!

I'm out, but what stays behind,
is the pride, the state of mind.
Siren brother – forever ride,
the streets keep watch, and I'm by your side.

Final words of thanks

This project would not have been possible without the help of many people and influences.

I would like to thank all my companions, friends, colleagues and superiors who have shaped, challenged and accompanied me – at school, at work and beyond.

I would especially like to thank my classmates, the members of our emergency services fraternity and the friendships that have lasted for decades. They are part of these songs – even where they are not mentioned by name.

This playlist is my personal thank you for the time we spent together, the values we shared and the trust that was placed in me.

