



# The Sound of Music

## Enrichment Guide

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 With sections created by Arts Club Theatre Company

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Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre is proud to call Manitoba home. Royal MTC is located in Winnipeg on Treaty 1, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree and Dakota people, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We are thankful for the benefits sharing this land has afforded us, acknowledge the responsibilities of the Treaties, and embrace the opportunity to partner with Indigenous communities in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

## The Role of the Audience

Theatre needs its audience! We are happy to have you here. Every staff person, actor, and crew member backstage plays an important part in your experience, and you also have a role in the experience of cast, crew and the people around you.

**Arrive Early:** Please make sure you give yourself enough time to find your seat before the performance starts. Latecomers may not be admitted to a performance. We ask schools and other groups to arrive at least 20-30 minutes before the show.

**Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices:** Please **turn off** your cell phone/mp3 player /gaming system/camera/smart watch. Texting, surfing, and gaming during performances is very distracting for the performers and other audience members. Using cameras and recording devices during a performance is **never** allowed.

**Talking During the Performance:** Even when you whisper, you can be heard by performers and people around you. Unless it is a relaxed performance, disruptive patrons will be removed from the theatre. Please wait until after the performance to share your words with others.

**Food/Drinks:** Food and outside drinks are not allowed in the theatre. When there is an intermission, snacks and drinks may be available for purchase. There is complimentary water in the lobby.

**Dress:** There is no dress code at the Royal MTC, but we respectfully ask you not to wear hats in the theatre. We strive to be a scent-free environment and thank all patrons for their cooperation.

**Leaving During the Performance:** If you leave the theatre during a performance, you will be readmitted at the discretion of Front of House staff. If readmitted, you may be placed in an empty seat at the back of the auditorium instead of your original seat.

**Being Asked to Leave:** The theatre staff has, and will exercise, the right to ask any member of the audience to leave if that person is being inappropriate or disruptive including (but not limited to): talking, using devices that produce light or sound, and deliberately interfering with an actor or the performance (tripping, throwing items on or near the stage, etc.).

**Talkbacks:** A short question and answer period with the actors takes place after student matinees, first Tuesday evening shows, and some public matinees. While watching the show, make a mental note of questions to ask the actors about the production or life in the theatre. Our artists deserve to be treated with respect! It's okay to have a negative opinion, but this is your chance to ask questions and understand the performance or process, not to criticize. If you have a concern, see the house manager after the show and they will make sure your feedback gets to the appropriate Royal MTC staff.

**Enjoy the show:** Laugh, cry, gasp – responding to the performance is part of the nature of theatre! As you get involved in the story, try to balance your reactions with respecting the people around you. The curtain call is part of the performance too – it gives you a chance to thank all the artists for their hard work with applause, and for them to thank you for your attention. We all appreciate when you stay at your seat and join in the applause!

## The Creators of the Sound of Music

### Lindsay and Crouse – Libretto



With a 28-year partnership in writing, producing, and theatre management, Howard Lindsay (1889-1968) and Russel Crouse (1893-1966) were true collaborators. They wrote librettos or “books” – the non-sung portions of a musical – as well as scripts for straight plays, together winning the Pulitzer Prize for *State of the Union* and Tony award for *The Sound of Music*.

Lindsay had a background as a Broadway actor, director, and playwright while Crouse had worked as a reporter and columnist as well as debuting as an actor on Broadway. They were paired together when Lindsay was writing the book for a musical by Cole Porter about a shipwreck. When a real-life tragedy on the cruise ship *Morro Castle* made producing such a show in bad taste, a producer suggested that Russel Crouse would be able to help revise the script, which became the well-known *Anything Goes*.

Crouse’s first collaboration with Oscar Hammerstein was in 1931, and as partners, he and Lindsay wrote librettos for many composers, culminating in *The Sound of Music* in 1959. Shortly after the premiere of the film version, Crouse died of pneumonia, ending one of the longest running collaborations between theatrical writers in history. With their “theatrical knowledge and...sharp wit” Lindsay and Crouse’s work continues to be enjoyed.

### Rodgers and Hammerstein – Music and Lyrics

Provided by Arts Cub Theatre Company



Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960), a composer and a librettist/lyricist, started joining forces after having long independent careers in which they collaborated with other artists. Together, they gained outstanding success in the American musical theatre world.

Oscar Hammerstein is known for reviving the operetta. After working with composers such as Rudolf Friml and Sigmund Rombers, he wrote *Show Boat* with Jerome Kern in 1927, which became an operetta. A new form of musical theatre was born.

Before working with Hammerstein, Richard Rodgers collaborated with lyricist Lorenz Hart on a series of musical comedies. From the 1920s to the 1940s, Rodgers & Hart wrote over 40 shows and film scores, which included *The Boys from Syracuse* and *Pal Joey*. In 1942, Hart's alcoholism reached a turning point and he was not able to work. He passed away in 1943. Rodgers knew Hammerstein for years, and as Hart's condition was getting worse, he approached Hammerstein to step into a new project - *Oklahoma!*

*Oklahoma!* was the first R&H musical. It became an important milestone in the development of American musicals as it brought to life a new genre —the Musical Play, which was a fusion of Rodgers' musical comedy and Hammerstein's operetta. This was the beginning of the most successful partnership in Broadway musical history. Among the musicals Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote together are: *Carousel*, *Allegro*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, *Me and Juliet*, *Pipe Dream*, *Flower Drum Song* and *The Sound of Music*.

**Related Resource Links:** Read more about the [life and works of Lindsay and Crouse](#) at Masterworks Broadway, and find [in-depth biographies of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II and exploration of their legendary partnership](#) through articles and video on their website.



From left, Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II, Mary Martin (the original Maria on Broadway), Howard Lindsay, and Russel Crouse in 1959. [https://twitter.com/RnH\\_Org/status/1376626484345978880](https://twitter.com/RnH_Org/status/1376626484345978880)

## Characters

**Maria Rainer:** A novitiate at the Nonnberg Abbey, sent to serve as governess to the von Trapp family. Maria is a free-spirited young woman who loves singing and music, and although sincere in her religious commitment, does not always follow the strict rules of conduct expected of nuns.

**Captain Georg von Trapp:** A decorated Austrian naval officer and father of seven children. Captain Von Trapp is serious and stern in his demeanor but is gradually softened by Maria's charm.

**Liesl von Trapp:** The oldest of the von Trapp children, age 16.

**Friedrich von Trapp:** One of the von Trapp children, age 14, oldest boy trying to be the 'man' of the family.

**Louisa von Trapp:** One of the von Trapp children, age 13, mischievous.

**Kurt von Trapp:** One of the von Trapp children, age 10, longs for love and attention from his father, very conscious of other people's feelings.

**Brigitta von Trapp:** One of the von Trapp children, age 9, always reading, very bright and observant, not afraid to speak her mind.

**Marta von Trapp:** One of the von Trapp children, age 7, sweet and gentle.

**Gretl von Trapp:** The youngest of the von Trapp children, age 5.

**Mother Abbess:** The head of Nonnberg Abbey; a moderate and well-meaning authority figure who is fond of Maria.

**Max Detweiler:** A prominent local music promoter and government officer; a close friend of Captain von Trapp.

**Baroness Elsa Schröder:** A wealthy Viennese businesswoman who intends to marry Captain von Trapp.

**Rolf Gruber:** A telegram delivery boy who is infatuated with Liesl, but becomes increasingly swayed by the Nazis.

**Sister Bertha:** A nun at the Nonnberg Abbey.

**Sister Margareta:** A nun at the Nonnberg Abbey.

**Sister Sophia:** A nun at the Nonnberg Abbey.

**Frau Schmidt:** Captain von Trapp's housekeeper.

**Franz:** Captain von Trapp's butler.

**Herr Zeller:** The Gauleiter, regional leader of the Nazi party in Austria.

## Content Overview

**This section may contain spoilers.**

No strong language or sexuality. Depending on director choices, there may be depiction of drinking alcohol or smoking cigarettes onstage. There is discussion of nationalism and possible war, and Nazi imagery.

## Plot Summary

In 1930s Austria, as free-spirited Maria decides whether to take her vows to become a nun, she is sent to be governess to seven children of a widowed naval officer. She brings music back to their lives. The family and Captain Von Trapp find themselves opening up to love – and so does Maria. Maria and the Captain marry, but when they return from their honeymoon they find Austria occupied by the Nazis, who demand the Captain serve in their navy. He refuses, and the family narrowly escape over the mountains to Switzerland.

## Synopsis

**This section contains spoilers.**

*Adapted from Arts Cub Theatre Company*

On the eve of World War II at an abbey in the Austrian Alps, the nuns sing in worship (“Preludium”). In the nearby mountains, a free-spirited young novice (novice in a religious order) named Maria is thinking about what the hills mean to her (“The Sound of Music.”) Back at the abbey, the Mother Abbess and nuns discuss Maria’s non-traditional attitudes (“Maria”). When Maria arrives late, the Mother Abbess joins her in song (“My Favourite Things”) and suggests that Maria reflect on whether she really wants to become a nun. She assigns Maria to temporarily serve as governess to the seven children of a decorated naval officer, Captain Georg von Trapp. Maria is reluctant to leave the abbey, but the abbess, who is fond of Maria and shares her love of music, reassures her that this experience will help her to better decide what she truly wants.

Upon arriving at the impressive von Trapp villa, Maria meets Captain von Trapp, a stern and stoic man who blows a whistle to direct his children and domestic servants. Maria is then introduced to the children, ranging from five-year-old Gretl to 16-year-old Liesl. Shortly after these introductions, Maria begins teaching the children how to sing—an activity they very much enjoy (“Do-Re-Mi”).

A telegram is delivered by young messenger Rolf, who meets with Liesl secretly. They sing and dance together (“Sixteen Going on Seventeen”) ending with a kiss. Liesl is caught in a thunderstorm sneaking back into the house, seen by Maria who agrees to keep the secret. The children are scared of the storm but Maria sings to them (“The Lonely Goatherd”). As time passes, the children grow increasingly enamoured of the vivacious Maria--as does Captain von Trapp, despite his steely façade and initial opposition to them singing and learning music.

Meanwhile, Captain von Trapp courts Elsa Schraeder, a wealthy businesswoman with an aristocratic background. As Captain von Trapp entertains Elsa and Max Detweiler, a prominent local music promoter, at the villa, the current political situation comes up in

the course of their conversation. Elsa and Max seem resigned to complying with the directives of the threatening German National Socialist government, so as not to jeopardize their personal fortunes; but Captain von Trapp, an Austrian patriot, expresses his strong opposition to the Nazis. Elsa tells Max that something is keeping the Captain from proposing to her, and he suggests that it is because they are both rich and don't have time for romance ("How Can Love Survive"). When Maria and the children enter wearing clothes made from Maria's curtains, the Captain angrily orders Maria to go back to the abbey – but when he hears the children singing, he asks Maria to stay and thanks her for bringing music back to them ("The Sound of Music Reprise").

Later, Captain Von Trapp throws a grand party for his guests. The children dance and soak in the romantic atmosphere. They sing charmingly for the attendees ("So Long, Farewell"), and Max suggests that they perform at the upcoming musical festival that he is organizing. Maria tries to instruct Kurt, one of the older children, on how to waltz, when Captain von Trapp steps in to demonstrate the dance. There are palpable romantic feelings between them, as evidenced by Maria's blushing.

Later, when Maria tells the children that they ought to be kind to Elsa because she may soon be their "new mother," young Brigitta interjects, insisting that Captain von Trapp and Maria are in love with one another. Embarrassed, Maria denies this and returns to the abbey, ostensibly to pledge her commitment to the religious life ("Morning Hymn"). The abbess sees through this, however, urging Maria not to run away from her feelings and find the life that is meant for her ("Climb Ev'ry Mountain"). Maria admits that she feels strongly for Captain von Trapp, returning to him and his children.

## **Act Two**

As the children practice for the musical festival, they complain that they miss Maria and that singing together just isn't the same without her there. ("Reprise: The Lonely Goatherd"). They do not understand her sudden absence, and they are decidedly unenthusiastic when Captain von Trapp informs them of his engagement to Elsa. As they sing, Maria returns, joining their song ("Reprise: My Favourite Things"); she then apologizes to Captain von Trapp and his children for leaving.

Captain von Trapp and Elsa have a tense disagreement regarding the Nazis and his absolute unwillingness to comply with their orders ("No Way to Stop It"). At an irresolvable impasse, she leaves for Vienna, breaking off the engagement. When Captain von Trapp informs Maria of this news, they both confess their feelings, kiss, and plan to marry ("Something Good"). The nuns sing at their wedding processional ("Reprise: Maria").

Later, after Captain von Trapp returns from his honeymoon with Maria, he finds flags of Nazi Germany flying and decides that his children should not sing at the festival celebrating occupied Austria. Maria and Liesl discuss love and marriage (“Reprise: Sixteen Going on Seventeen”).

Rolf arrives with a telegram with a commission from the German Navy for the Captain; Liesl is dismayed that Rolf is now committed to the Nazi party. More officers visit to order him to report at once to a German naval base. Maria tells them that Captain von Trapp will be performing with her and his children in Max’s musical festival, coming up in two days. The Nazi officers reluctantly allow Captain von Trapp to perform, but firmly insist that he report for military service after the festival.

This buys the family a bit of time to devise a way out of Nazi-occupied Austria. They perform at the festival (“Do-Re-Mi”, “Edelweiss”, and “So Long, Farewell” Reprises), winning first prize in the judged competition. As Max announces the runner-ups, stalling for time, the family sneak out to hide at the abbey. Sister Margaretta tells them that the country’s borders are closed. The abbey’s grounds are searched by a menacing crew of Nazi stormtroopers, including Rolf who finds the family and calls for his lieutenant, but when he sees Liesl he changes his mind and says the family is not there. The von Trapps narrowly leave on foot to walk over the mountain range into Switzerland (“Reprise: Climb Ev’ry Mountain”).

## **Context and Related Resources**

### **Historical Setting**

*Provided by Arts Cub Theatre Company*

On March 11–13, 1938, Nazi Germany annexed the neighboring country of Austria. This event is known as the "Anschluss", which is a German word that means "connection" or "joining". By forcing the Austrian government to concede power through the threat of a military invasion, Hitler effectively violated both the Treaty of Saint Germain and the Treaty of Versailles that were signed after WWI. These treaties forbade Germany and Austria from uniting because they had been closely allied in WWI. However, Hitler's aggressive foreign policy reflected his desire to unite all ethnic Germans under one "Reich", or rule, and to go to war once again in Europe to claim further territory for Germany. The Anschluss is referenced in the second act of the play when Captain von Trapp and his family decide that they must flee Austria.

The Captain is portrayed in the play as a proud Austrian nationalist, as evidenced by his sentimental connection to the song "Edelweiss", Austria's national flower, and his refusal to fly a Swastika flag. The creation of Austria as a nation-state had only just occurred in 1918, in the wake of WWI after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian

Empire. That is the empire that Captain von Trapp served under, so it can be understood that he does not want his new country to lose its independence.



The orange area represents the empire prior to World War 1, with current borders and capital cities in grey.

Although not mentioned in the play, after the Anschluss, Austrian Nazis had license to attack their political opponents and specifically Jewish people without fear of repercussions. They seized power in government buildings and dominated the streets with torchlight parades, chants, and salutes to Hitler. Beginning on the night of March 11 and in the weeks that followed, there was violence across the country. Austrian Nazis and others beat up, attacked, and humiliated the Jewish population. Soon, Austria's Jews were subjected to the same laws and restrictions that discriminated against Jews in Nazi Germany and then to the violent atrocities of the Holocaust that followed. While the von Trapps also faced religious pressure from being Roman Catholic in the face of a hostile and largely secular Nazi regime, they were not in immediate danger until Captain von Trapp made the decision to decline his military post in the Third Reich. It is very important to be aware that their story is quite different from the persecution that Jewish people and other groups faced during this time.

## About *The Sound of Music*

Provided by Arts Cub Theatre Company

*The Sound of Music*, the successful musical and film, followed a number of works that were inspired by the true story of Maria von Trapp. As the von Trapp family were performing their concerts across the United States, Maria was persuaded (after some hesitation) to write her memoirs. *The Story of the Trapp Family Singers* was published in 1949 in America and followed by a German version. Due to the books' success, the von Trapps started getting greater attention from the general public as well as from the film industry. A German film company then produced two films; *The Trapp Family* (1956) and *The Trapp Family in America* (1958), which were made with great involvement from Maria von Trapp who participated in the writing process. The two films gained financial success in Germany and Austria, and are considered as part of the "Heimatfilm" (Fatherland film) genre that was popular among post-war German speaking audiences.

In 1958, as musicals such as *My Fair Lady* and *Guys and Dolls* were thriving in the USA, Rodgers and Hammerstein were asked by actress Mary Martin to write one song for a new project she was working on — a stage adaptation based on *The Trapp Family* film. Rodgers and Hammerstein offered to write a full score to the stage adaptation, which turned into a musical: *The Sound of Music*. The show opened on Broadway on 1959 and ran 1,443 times. It won 7 Tony Awards (including Best Musical), a Grammy Award and earned a Gold Record for the cast album. In 1965, the film *The Sound of Music* was released, starring Julie Andrews. The film won 5 Academy Awards including Best Picture, and became one of the most popular musicals and household names across the world. A live televised production aired in December 2013 on NBC, and another on Britain's ITV in December 2015.

**Related Resource Links:** Read a detailed and fascinating account of the [journey to the stage](#) and then [from stage to screen](#) as well as [differences between the versions](#) on the Rodgers and Hammerstein website. For a [quick three-minute overview](#), watch a video created in advance of the NBC live broadcast.

The Library of Congress has a video series about the R&H collection, including this [video exploring the origins of the lyrics to "My Favourite Things"](#) (7:38)

[The Sound of Music – From Fact to Phenomenon](#) is a documentary from 1994 available on YouTube that touches on the von Trapp family's life and journey and the making of the musical, but heavily focuses on the creation of the movie and its legacy. (1:28). Perhaps something to watch after viewing MTC's production rather than in preparation for it!



Nonnberg Abbey with mountains in the background. Photo: Andrew Bossi; Wikipedia.



The real Villa Trapp. Photo: Luckyprof; Wikipedia

## The Real von Trapp Family: Fact and Fiction

*Provided by Arts Cub Theatre Company*

- Maria was a teacher in the monastery's school in Nonnberg when the abbess sent her to help in the von Trapp house.
- Maria came to the von Trapp family in 1926 as a tutor for one of the children (also called Maria) who was recovering from scarlet fever, not as governess to all the children.
- Maria and Georg married in 1927, 11 years before the family left Austria, not right before the Nazi takeover of Austria.
- Maria did not marry Georg von Trapp because she was in love with him. As she said in her autobiography, she fell in love with the children at first sight, not their father. She is quoted as saying "I really and truly was not in love. I liked him but didn't love him. However, I loved the children, so in a way I really married the children... By and by I learned to love him more than I have ever loved before or after."
- The number of children and their names, ages, and genders were changed for the show. The family was also musical before Maria arrived, but she did teach them to sing madrigals.
- Georg, far from being the detached, cold-blooded patriarch of the family who disapproved of music, was a warm and loving if somewhat overwhelmed father. Author Tom Santopietro writes, "It was actually Maria herself, with her emotionally stunted upbringing, who needed thawing", as Maria had grown up in an abusive home. While this change in Georg's character might have made for a better story in emphasizing Maria's healing effect on the von Trapps, it distressed his family greatly.
- Instead of the fictional Max Detweiler, pushy music promoter, the von Trapps' priest, the Reverend Franz Wasner, acted as their musical director for over 20 years.

- The family did not secretly escape over the Alps to freedom in Switzerland. As daughter Maria said in 2003, "We did tell people that we were going to America to sing. And we did not climb over mountains with all our heavy suitcases and instruments. We left by train, pretending nothing."
- The von Trapps traveled to Italy, not Switzerland, in broad daylight under the guise of a family vacation, the day before the borders to Austria were closed. They then travelled to America to tour as a family band and eventually settled there.



The von Trapps were in Salzburg for the festival. While it's true that you can get to Switzerland from Austria, crossing a mountain from Salzburg would have led them to Germany instead, so the script is inaccurate. Maria von Trapp laughingly calls out this invented geography, but generations of audiences have suspended their disbelief for the sake of the story!

**Related Resource Links:** Get to know the real von Trapps by hearing them sing [a German hunting song](#), [an album of Christmas carols](#), and [recent release by their descendants](#) on Youtube. Watch the family appear [on game show "What's My Line"](#) in 1960 (complete with their iconic sailor suit outfits) (26:03). [Watch the original film \*Die Trapp Familie\*](#) in German with English subtitles, broken up into a playlist of 6 videos (approx. 100 minutes total) or rent it and its sequel via a streaming service. [View a timeline of events](#) in the family's life as compared to the timing in the musical (including adjustments made for the film) from Central City Opera's blog. The Rodgers and Hammerstein website has a more [in-depth exploration of the family's story and connection with music](#) and an [article with photos](#) is featured by Salzburg Tours. Older youth and adults may be interested in the documentary [Climbed Every Mountain](#), which explores the phenomenon of the movie musical and reactions of Austrians, the lives and legacy of the von Trapp descendants, and how Maria differed in real life from her character (approximately 1 hour).

## **Musical Theatre Songs**

Songs in musicals exist for many different purposes. Overall, adding music to a standard play “heightens emotion, reinforces dramatic action, and evokes atmosphere and mood in ways that words alone cannot.” Rodgers and Hammerstein are credited with introducing the modern musical structure in *Oklahoma!* by incorporating:

- a book (script) that has priority, with other dramatic elements furthering the dramatic needs of the book.
- Opening numbers that establish the musical’s tone, setting, and prepare the audience for the themes.
- Smooth transitions from script to music.
- Songs that express thoughts and feelings of characters in a style that makes sense for the setting (eg *Oklahoma!*’s characters sing in a western style instead of operatically.)
- A style of music that goes together with the lyrics, like a clip-clopping beat reminding us of horse’s hooves on a song about travelling by carriage;

There are many possible functions of songs, but here some common categories:

### **Character Songs**

“**I am**” **songs** may be used for a character to introduce themselves to the audience, or allow characters to freely express how they are feeling at the moment, sometimes as they discover something about themselves.

“**I want**” **songs** suggest a course of action for the future, expressing a character’s dreams and goals (or, sometimes, what the character does not want).

**Reprises:** Often a song occurs again in the show, which reveals how a character has developed during the story. The reprise could indicate that a character’s attitude or self-awareness or situation has changed.

**Inner monologues** express inner thoughts directly to the audience, which other characters onstage do not hear.

**Emotional climax songs** occur when characters feelings overflow, with music amplifying their emotions to a level above simple dialogue. These songs allow the audience to share the character’s passion. Usually these songs are full of excitement, love, success, or joy.

### **Songs that Tell the Story**

**Exposition songs:** When you have a song, you are taking time away from dialogue, so musicals move quickly to establish the dramatic situation, introduce main characters, and give the audience a reason to care about them. These songs tell the audience what has happened before the play and what brought the characters to this point. They also might reveal the play’s themes.

**Conflict songs:** At the heart of every drama lies conflict. Some of the most interesting and exciting songs in Musical Theatre involve conflict, when characters struggle with each other, a situation, or themselves.

**Narration songs:** Narration songs describe events that we otherwise may not see – what has happened off-stage for instance.

**Summary songs:** Similar to narration songs, summary songs compress lengthy amounts of time into one song.

### **Songs with Special Functions**

**Comment songs:** A character not in the dramatic scene may step to one side and sing about events on stage

**Musical metaphors:** These songs take advantage of the unique qualities of musical theatre to portray a situation in presentational, non-literal fashion.

**Cameo songs:** Cameo songs feature a minor character in a memorable number, someone who otherwise might be forgotten. A good cameo song defines a minor character quickly and effectively as well as giving a performer in a small role time in the spotlight.

**Parodies:** These rely on an audience's familiarity with music that is not in the show they are watching, but is used to evoke an appropriate mood.

## Glossary and Mentions

**Abbey** – The building(s) occupied by a community of monks or nuns.

**Bemused** – Confused, puzzled, or bewildered (some of the nuns say Maria makes them feel this way).

**Bo's'un** – A ship's officer in charge of equipment and the crew.

**Camille** – A character in a play *La Dame aux Camelias* (made into a film in 1936). Armand and she are in love, and she is prepared to sacrifice a life of riches to be with him, but Armand's father is concerned by the scandal of Marguerite's past and insists they part. When Armand returns to her she has fallen ill and dies in his arms. In "How Can Love Survive" Elsa says she "cannot die like Camille for you."

**Dixit Dominus** – Latin, from Psalm 110: "The Lord Said," the first song sung by the nuns in the abbey.

**Edelweiss** – A mountain plant from the same family as daisies and sunflowers. It has white, woolly, star-shaped petals and grows in the Alps (near Switzerland, Germany, and Austria) as well as in the Himalayas. Because it survives harsh mountain winters it is associated with strength, toughness, and courage.

**Flibbertigibbet** – A silly person who talks too much.

**Fräulein** – A title or way to address an unmarried woman in German, like saying "Miss" in English. Frau corresponds to "Mrs." or "Madam."

**Gloat** – An old-fashioned term for an admiring look or glance. In "The Lonely Goatherd" the mother has "a gleaming gloat" – she has a pleasant expression on her face towards the couple.

**Governess** – A woman employed to teach or train children in their household.

**Heil** – A German greeting of respect meaning "hail." In Hitler's rise to power the Nazi party adopted the phrase "Sieg Heil" (hail victory) which became a widely used and notorious slogan. "Heil Hitler" was begun to be used in 1930s Germany to pay homage to Adolf Hitler, often accompanied by a raised arm salute. It became required as a way to confirm the supremacy of Hitler – those who did not use the greeting were punished or suspected of working against the regime.

**Herr** – Title or way to address a man in German, like "Mr." in English.

**Insolvency** – Being unable to pay your debts. Max says that this is a problem that the Captain and Elsa do not have.

**Laendler** – A partner folk dance from Austria and southern Germany. It involves spinning, clapping, hopping, and stamping. It is a precursor to the waltz.

**Mutiny** – A rebellion against authorities, especially by soldiers or sailors; refusal to obey. Maria tells the Captain that if he doesn't change his ways towards his children he'll have a mutiny on his hands.

**Novitiate** – The state of being a novice, someone under probation in a religious order, before taking their vows. A novice might live like the other nuns and study related subjects.

**Nun** – A woman who devotes her life to service of her religion. Nuns take vows, usually promising a life of poverty and chastity, to commit themselves to this lifestyle. They may live in an abbey together.

**Postulant** – A candidate for religious order who has received "the call" from God to lead a spiritual life. Postulants have not taken vows but may live in community and participate in activities.

**Reverend Mother** – The woman who is the head of a convent or abbey.

**Saegerbund** – A choral group.

**Schnitzel** – A thin slice of meat, covered in breadcrumbs and fried. Enjoyed with noodles as a "favourite thing" in this musical!

**Storm Troopers** – A member of the Nazi party paramilitary group, notorious for aggressiveness, violence, and brutality.

**Strudel** – A dessert of thin pastry rolled around a fruit filling and baked.

**Telegram** – A message sent by telegraph (transmitted along a wire by electrical connection or radio signal) that is then printed and delivered.

**Third Reich** – Official Nazi name for the regime in Germany from 1933-May 1945. The Nazis claimed this as the successor to the First Empire/First Reich, the Holy Roman Empire, and the second: the German Empire of 1871-1918.

**Vespers** – A service of evening prayer.

**Will o' the Wisp** – A person or thing that is difficult or impossible to find, reach, or catch. Comes from the phenomenon of a light seen hovering at night over marshy ground.

**Wimple** – A cloth headdress covering the head, neck, and sides of the face.

## Discussion and Writing Prompts

Adapted from Arts Cub Theatre Company

### Pre-Show

- Have you seen any live performances on stage before? What are your expectations about what you will see on stage in this production?
- What do you already know about the play, including the plot, production elements (such as lighting, sound, costumes, and sets) and the characters? How do you anticipate that these elements will come together in the play?
- What technical elements do you anticipate seeing in the production? How do you think these elements will affect the audience's experience of the play?
- Look at the poster for this production (you can find the image on the title page of this document). Based on what you see, what do you anticipate about the production? Think about the images and graphics that are on the poster. What can we infer about the characters featured on the poster?
- Have you seen the movie version of *The Sound of Music*? What do you think would be similar on stage? What would be different?

### Post-Show:

- What moral dilemmas were the characters dealing with? What affected their decision-making process while facing these dilemmas?
- What other conflicts do the characters encounter?
- What values did the characters display?
- Think about an interesting character/relationship you've seen in the show. What was unique about them/it?
- What did you notice about the ways in which each character communicated with one other?
- What did you notice about the ways in which the characters displayed their emotions?
- How did this production convey different locations?
- What technical and design elements were used to help create the world? Which of these choices did you find effective?
- What ideas or themes did the play make you think about?
- Why do you think Rodgers and Hammerstein decided on this title instead of something like "The Adventures of Maria"? What does this tell you about the importance that the authors placed on music; why emphasize it? How does that come through in the production? (Fun fact: the show was originally called Love Song, but their lawyer discovered other plays with that title and begged for a change to avoid potential lawsuits.)

## Suggested Classroom Activities

These activities are specifically designed for this show. On our website are [additional general activities suitable for any MTC production](#).

### For Younger Students

#### **Learning Do-Re-Mi** *Provided by Arts Cub Theatre Company*

*The Sound of Music* speaks of music as an instrument of education, empowerment and community building. In this exercise, students will learn the theoretical practice behind the popular song “Do-Re-Mi”, and experiment with conducting vocals.

**Step one:** Ask the students to stand in a circle. Demonstrate stretching and relaxing the arms, chest, legs, feet and facial muscles. Massage face. Warm up lips by puckering up and smiling. Start a count-down; ask the students to breathe in on 4 and let out on 6 (then 8, then 10). Warm up the diaphragm by ‘singing’ “Jingle Bells” without using voice, but rather by exhaling with the sound “S.” Practice scale warm-ups if you can.

**Step two:** Listen to the song [“Do-Re-Mi”](#). Explain the basics of Solfège, a musical language that is used to sing melodies. The seven Solfège syllables in major scale are Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti. Teach the students how to sing the “Do-Re-Mi”. You can also teach them the [Solfège hand signs](#). Practice the notes until they are confident.

**Step three:** Then, assign each student one syllable/note. Have the students stand in a line or in groups in the order of the scale. Invite one student to become the “conductor”. When the conductor points out to a student/group, they must sing their note (they could also sign it). Invite the conductor to “play” a song they know, or create new music as they are conducting the group. Have take turns and conduct.

**Favourite Things:** Listen to and read the lyrics of *My Favourite Things* and discuss what you notice about Maria’s favourites (eg, many are from the natural world, there are things you can hear, things you can taste, things you can see...). What do we learn about Maria as a character by hearing what she loves?

What are some of each student’s favourite things? Individually, in groups, or as a class, write some new phrases or verses that reflect you. To take it a step further, see if you can use rhythm and rhyme to create a new version of the song.

**My Heart Wants to Sing:** Music is very important in the lives of the von Trapp family, Maria, and the nuns. Is music important in your and your family’s life? When do you hear music? What kinds of music do you and your family listen to? Is any song that is special to you? After discussing as a class, draw a picture or write a paragraph or story about music in your life.

**Arts and Crafts:** [Various craft activities](#) are available from the Rodgers and Hammerstein website, though some are specific to scenes in the film that do not occur in the stage production (eg, The Lonely Goatherd puppet show).

## For Older Students

### **Fish Out of Water** *Provided by Arts Cub Theatre Company*

*The Sound of Music* is primarily a story of identity. Maria goes through a process of transformation by embracing her own personality, values, and way of being despite being considered “different” than the other nuns at the Abbey. She also finds her way thanks to the Abbess’ support. This exercise asks students to think about the experience of otherness and how the support/neglect of one person can have a ripple effect that changes the lives of many.

Look through Maria’s hero journey with students. Maria begins the story as a “fish out of water.” She then finds herself in a new environment and uses her unique skills and worldview to better the situation. When she is scared or doesn’t trust the new journey, she finds support in her mentor. The last time we see Maria, she confidently guides her new family to safety. Ask students to brainstorm other “fish out of water” stories from fiction or history. They can then discuss or research the turning point where that person nearly gave up but were encouraged to continue by a mentor or a support system. Encourage students to discuss how variation of identity and unique perspectives can be beneficial to a community. Option: To make this a personal reflection exercise, students can journal their process and examine people from their own lives.

**Discussing Dance and Song:** Discuss how songs and dance are used in this production. What kinds of situations prompted singing? What about dancing? Choose a song from the musical ([original cast soundtrack available here](#)) and listen to the interplay between the lyrics and accompaniment. Does the music help convey the mood of meaning of the lyrics? How? Did the style of movement and dancing you saw onstage during this song reinforce the music or play against it? What purpose does your chosen song serve in this musical? Is it a character song, storytelling song, or does it have a special function? Can you categorize it further? Do any of the songs strike you as the most catchy or more appealing? Are these the songs that you think have the most important function in the structure of the musical?

Assign students to groups and have each compare a repeated song to its reprise. Consider whether “Maria” “Do-Re-Mi” “My Favourite Things” “The Sound of Music” “Sixteen Going on Seventeen” “So Long, Farewell” and “Climb Ev’ry Mountain” are different the second time they are sung. Do you recall changes in lyrics, accompaniment, or characters performing the piece? Were they choreographed differently? Do they reflect a change in attitude or situation? What is the mood of the original song versus reprise?

**From Life to Stage to Screen:** Have students think about a historical figure, character from a book, or someone in their own life and create a timeline of events of their life or a situation in it. Think about the different possible purposes of songs set out in the Background Context section. At what points along this timeline would you insert songs, what category of songs, and who would they be sung by?

Students should choose one of these points/events from the overall story structure and write a paragraph or two describing the situation in detail. Then, adapt it to a musical theatre scene! Remember that theatre tries to “show, not tell” – how can you use dialogue, stage elements, music, dance, or other techniques to convey story? Would you use stage directions to suggest certain design or technical elements? (Full song lyrics or accompaniment not necessary!) Option: after students write their descriptions, have them switch stories and adapt someone else’s into a script instead.

As an extra step, imagine that this scene was going to be filmed – instead of your audience seeing the whole stage at once, you control their field of vision, and can go to different locations. Draw a storyboard for part of your scene incorporating camera shots and notes about location, lighting, and sound. There are many templates and examples of storyboards online!

**Movie comparison:** Watch the film version of *The Sound of Music* and compare it to the theatrical one. Discuss what changes were made in terms of structure, themes, and characterization. You could illustrate these points in a Venn Diagram.

Why do you think these changes were made? What choices were effective, both onstage and onscreen? Do you think that performing the “movie version” live onstage would have the same effect? What changes might you make to the stage or screen version?

**Better Together:** Rodgers and Hammerstein were legendary in their partnership. Have students individually or in groups research other creative partnerships – [this is a good place to start for theatre artists](#) – to explore how collaborators might complement each other, then create a poster or PowerPoint presentation.

## Curriculum Connections

Attending Royal MTC's production of *The Sound of Music* and discussing it, or participating in some of the suggested or similar activities, will fit into the Manitoba curricula in Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts, and English Language Arts. The specific learning outcomes listed are generally for Senior Years but as this show is appropriate for younger students, the K-8 curricula apply as well in these areas.

### English Language Arts

General Learning Outcome 1: Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.

- Express ideas 1.1.1
- Consider others' ideas 1.1.2
- Experiment with language and forms 1.1.3
- Develop understanding 1.2.1
- Explain opinions 1.2.2
- Combine ideas 1.2.3

General Learning Outcome 2: Comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print, and other media texts.

- Prior knowledge 2.1.1
- Experience various texts 2.2.1
- Connect self, texts, and culture 2.2.2
- Appreciate the artistry of texts 2.2.3
- Forms and genres 2.3.1
- Experiment with language 2.3.4
- Create Original Texts 2.3.5

General Learning Outcome 3: Manage ideas and information.

- Make sense of information 3.2.5

General Learning Outcome 4: Enhance the clarity and artistry of communication.

- Generate ideas 4.1.1
- Choose forms 4.1.2
- Organize ideas 4.1.3
- Appraise own and others' work 4.2.1

General Learning Outcome 5: Celebrate and build community.

- Cooperate with others 5.1.1
- Work in groups 5.1.2
- Share and compare responses 5.2.1
- Relate texts to culture 5.2.2
- Appreciate diversity 5.2.3

### Dance

Responding: The learner uses critical reflection to inform dance learning and to develop agency and identity.

- DA-R1: The learner generates initial reactions to dance experiences.
- DA-R2: The learner critically observes and describes dance experiences.
- DA-R3: The learner analyzes and interprets dance experiences.
- DA-R4: The learner applies new understandings about dance to construct identity and to act in transformative ways

## **Music**

Connecting: The learner develops understandings about the significance of music by making connections to various times, places, social groups, and cultures.

- M-C1: The learner develops understandings about people and practices in music.
- M-C2: The learner develops understandings about the influence and impact of music.
- M-C3: The learner develops understandings about the roles, purposes, and meanings of music.

Responding: The learner uses critical reflection to inform music learning and to develop agency and identity.

- M-R1: The learner generates initial reactions to music experiences.
- M-R2: The learner critically listens to, observes and describes music experiences.
- M-R3: The learner analyzes and interprets music experiences.
- M-R4: The learner applies new understandings about music to construct identity and to act in transformative ways

## **Visual Arts**

Creating: The learner generates, develops, and communicates ideas for creating visual art.

- VA-M2: The learner develops competencies for using visual art media, tools, techniques, and processes in a variety of contexts.

## **Drama/Theatre**

Connecting: The learner develops understandings about the significance of the dramatic arts by making connections to various times, places, social groups, and cultures.

- DR-C1: The learner develops understandings about people and practices in the dramatic arts.
- DR-C2: The learner develops understanding about the influence and impact of the dramatic arts.

Responding: The learner uses critical reflection to inform drama/theatre learning and to develop agency and identity.

- DR-R1: The learner generates initial reactions to drama/ theatre experiences.
- DR-R2: The learner critically observes and describes drama/ theatre experiences.
- DR-R3: The learner analyzes and interprets drama/ theatre experiences.
- DR-R4: The learner applies new understandings about drama/ theatre to construct identity and to act in transformative ways.

## **Social Studies and History**

Grade 6 Cluster 2: - 6.2.4: World War II

Grade 11 – while not strictly related, this production could be connected to enduring understanding “Canada and the World: 3,” historical thinking concepts establish historical significance and understand ethical dimensions of history, and skills to support historical thinking consider the purpose and validity of historical sources, compare diverse perspectives of the past, and construct and communicate historical narratives[...]

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