

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE PACK

For more information, including for Schools Bookings, please contact us at **learning@curvetheatre.co.uk**

Contents

WELCOME 3

THE WORLD OF THE SOUND OF MUSIC 4
Information about the show, main themes, full synopsis and the true story

THE MAKING OF THE SOUND OF MUSIC 14
A look behind the scenes and interviews with the creative team

ACTIVITIES 28
Seven activities offering ways for your students to engage with THE SOUND OF MUSIC

FURTHER BACKGROUND READING 38
Information about the show's historical context



Photograph: **Jonathan Pryke** (Bradgate Park video)

Welcome

We want to offer a warm welcome from all of us at Curve, and thank you for your interest in THE SOUND OF MUSIC.

We are passionate for schools and young people across Leicestershire to come and engage with our new Made at Curve production. We hope it can be a great learning opportunity for young people, as well as a fantastic trip to see live theatre.

This pack is designed as an educational resource, that can be used to support young people's learning around the production. It includes information about the making of the show, as well as its content and themes.

We feel that THE SOUND OF MUSIC is a unique opportunity for inter-disciplinary learning: from Drama (the making of the show), to Music (the show's score and focus on music education), to English (the show's themes and content), to History (the historical context of the story).

This pack provides resources to explore these areas across the curriculum, and has been designed to support and enrich a young person's visit to watch the show. This pack is adaptable for Primary and Secondary learners.

About the pack

The first section explores the content of the show, including a synopsis, main themes, a character breakdown and how it is based on a true story.

The second section gives you an insight into how we created our Made At Curve version of THE SOUND OF MUSIC. From research to the rehearsal room, it includes interviews and videos with the Creative Team and unpacks the production process.

The third section offers you some activities and ways to work with your students, using THE SOUND OF MUSIC as your stimulus.

The fourth section gives you further background information about the show, including the historical, social and political context of Austria in 1938. This section is aimed at Key Stage 3 learners and above.

If you'd like any more information, or would like to book a school visit to THE SOUND OF MUSIC, please don't hesitate to contact us at: learning@curvetheatre.co.uk







Photographs: **Marc Brenner** (rehearsals)



Photograph: **Jonathan Pryke** (Bradgate Park video)

About the show

Maria, a free-spirited novice nun, is sent to look after the rowdy von Trapp children at the house of the steely Captain Georg von Trapp. Maria captures the children's hearts using creativity and music to educate and inspire them. Soon the entire family is under the spell of Maria's unquenchable zest for life and even the Captain's heart begins to soften, as they fall in love. But when Captain von Trapp is commanded to report for duty in the Nazi German navy, the family face a difficult choice. They must leave the homeland they love so much and embark on the most important journey of their lives.

Main themes

At the heart of the show is a story about love and family. Maria and the Captain fall in love, but more importantly Maria bonds with his children and begins to care for them like a mother. The show explores what it means to build a family. The family are also in grief from the loss of their mother. Maria helps them find joy, love and happiness again.

The universal power of music sits at the centre of the show. The nuns in the Abbey use music to pray and bond their community together. Similarly, Maria uses music to connect with the von Trapp children and helps them find their passion and individuality. Music allows the Captain to reopen his heart to his children and find joy again. Before the family leave Austria, Georg sings *Edelweiss* as a final tribute to the Austria he loves so much.

Patriotism is another key theme in the show. Captain von Trapp loves his country Austria. Maria, the Captain and his children explore their love for Austria through music and feel a deep connection to their homeland. The takeover of Austria by the Nazis raises the question of what it means to be Austrian vs German. Austrian patriotism becomes overshadowed by the Nazi's German nationalism. What does it mean to love your country?

The Mother Abbess' instruction to Maria to *Climb Ev'ry Mountain* sums up the key idea at the heart of the show: finding courage to overcome the obstacles and challenges in life, to make your own happiness.









Photographs: **Marc Brenner** (rehearsals)

Full synopsis

ACT I

In Salzburg, Austria, nuns are singing in the Abbey. One of the trainee nuns, Maria, is on the nearby mountainside, singing to the hills *(The Sound Of Music)*. She returns late to the abbey where the Mother Abbess and the other nuns have been considering what to do about her free-spiritedness *(Maria)*. Maria apologises for singing in the garden without permission. The Mother Abbess joins her in song *(My Favorite Things)*. The Mother Abbess tells her that she should spend some time outside the Abbey to decide whether she is suited for life in the Abbey. She will be sent to be a governess to the seven children of a man whose wife has died, Austrian Navy Captain Georg von Trapp.

Maria arrives at the villa of Captain von Trapp. He explains her duties and summons the children. They march in, clad in uniforms. Maria begins to challenge the Captain who has a very military-like approach. Alone with the children, they start to relax with her and she teaches them the basics of music *(Do-Re-Mi)*.

Rolf, a young messenger, delivers a telegram and then meets with the eldest child, Liesl, outside the villa. He claims he knows what is right for her because he is a year older than her *(Sixteen Going on Seventeen)*. They kiss, and he runs off.

Maria sees Liesl slipping in through the window, wet from a sudden thunderstorm, but agrees to keep her secret. The other children are frightened by the storm. Maria sings *(The Lonely Goatherd)* to distract them.

Captain von Trapp arrives a month later from Vienna with Baroness Elsa Schraeder and Max Detweiler. Elsa tells Max that something is preventing the Captain from marrying her. He tells her that rich people often fail at having great romances *(How Can Love Survive)*. Rolf enters, looking for Liesl, and greets them with *"Heil"* (the greeting of the German Nazi party). The Captain orders him away, saying that he is Austrian, not German.

Maria and the children leapfrog in, wearing play-clothes that she made from the old drapes in her room. Infuriated, the Captain sends them off to change. Maria tells him that the children need him to show his love for them, and he angrily orders her back to the Abbey. As she apologizes, they hear the children singing *(The Sound Of Music)*, which she had taught them, to welcome Elsa Schraeder. He joins in and embraces them. Alone with Maria, he asks her to stay, thanking her for bringing music back into his house. Elsa is suspicious of Maria until she explains that she will be returning to the Abbey in September.

The Captain gives a party to introduce Elsa, and guests argue over the Anschluss (the Nazi German invasion of Austria). Kurt asks Maria to teach him to dance the Ländler. When he struggles, the Captain steps in to demonstrate. He and Maria dance until they come face-to-face; and she breaks away, embarrassed and confused. Discussing the expected marriage between Elsa and the Captain, Brigitta tells Maria that she thinks Maria and the Captain are really in love with each other.

Elsa asks the Captain to allow the children to say goodnight to the guests with a song *(So Long, Farewell)*. Max is amazed at their talent and wants them for the Kaltzburg Festival, which he is organizing. The guests leave for the dining room, and Maria slips out the front door with her luggage.

At the Abbey, Maria says that she is ready to take her monastic vows; but the Mother Abbess realizes that she is running away from her feelings. She tells her to face the Captain and to search for the life she was meant to live *(Climb Ev'ry Mountain)*.



ACT II

Max teaches the children how to sing on stage. When the Captain tries to lead them, they complain that he is not doing it as Maria did. He tells them that he has asked Elsa to marry him. They try to cheer themselves up by singing *(My Favorite Things)* but are unsuccessful until they hear Maria singing on her way to rejoin them. Learning of the wedding plans, she decides to stay only until the Captain can arrange for another governess. Max and Elsa argue with the Captain about the imminent Nazi takeover, trying to convince him that it is inevitable *(No Way to Stop It)*. When he refuses to compromise on his opposition to it, Elsa breaks off the engagement. Alone, the Captain and Maria finally admit their love, singing *Something Good*. As they marry, the nuns reprise *Maria*.

While Maria and the Captain are on their honeymoon, Max prepares the children to perform at the Kaltzburg Festival. Herr Zeller, the Gauleiter of the region, demands to know why they are not flying the flag of Nazi Germany now that the Anschluss has occurred. The Captain and Maria return early from their honeymoon before the Festival. Because of the Nazi occupation, the Captain decides the children should not sing at the event.

Maria and Liesl discuss love, and Maria predicts that in a few years Liesl will be married *(Sixteen Going on Seventeen – Reprise)*. Rolf enters with a telegram that offers the Captain a commission in the German Navy, and Liesl is upset to discover that Rolf is a committed Nazi.

The Captain and Maria decide they must secretly flee Austria. German Admiral von Schreiber arrives to order Captain von Trapp to report immediately to assume his new command in the Nazi German navy. Maria says that he cannot leave immediately, as they are all singing in the Festival Concert; and the Admiral agrees to wait.

At the concert, after the von Trapps sing an elaborate reprise of *Do-Re-Mi*, Max brings out the Captain's guitar. Captain von Trapp sings *Edelweiss*, as a goodbye to his homeland. While the judges decide on the prizes, the von Trapps sing *So Long, Farewell (reprise)*, leaving the stage in small groups. Max then stalls as much as possible, before announcing that the first prize goes to the von Trapps. When they do not appear, the Nazis start a search. The family hides at the Abbey. Rolf comes upon them and calls his lieutenant, but after seeing Liesl he changes his mind and lets them escape. The Nazis leave, and the von Trapps flee over the Alps as the nuns reprise *Climb Ev'ry Mountain*.

Based on a true story



MARIA KUTSCHERA

THE SOUND OF MUSIC was inspired by the real life story of Maria Kutschera.

Maria was born on a train heading to Vienna on January 26 in 1905. She became an orphan at a very young age, being raised by her older cousin. She spent much of her childhood outdoors, playing on the mountains.

As Maria wrote in her autobiography: *"I was the black sheep of the community; there was no doubt about that. I never meant anything bad, but my upbringing had been more that of a wild boy than that of a young lady."*



Maria became a postulant (trainee nun) at Nonnberg Abbey in 1924.

She dedicated her life to the Abbey, but since she had been taken away from the outdoor activities she loved so much, her doctor became concerned for her health. The decision was made to send her to the home of retired naval captain, Georg von Trapp, as governess for his ill daughter.



GEORG VON TRAPP

Georg von Trapp was born on 4 April 1880. His father was a naval officer, and Georg followed him into the Austrian Navy at age 14.

Georg became the most successful Austrian submarine commander of World War I. His service earned him several decorations, including the Military Order of Maria Theresa – the highest award possible. The end of the war forced Georg to retire.

MARIA AND GEORG

Georg's first wife had died in 1922. Maria quickly won the hearts of the Captain's seven children, and fell in love with Georg herself. They married at the Nonnberg Abbey in 1927.

When the Nazis invaded Austria in 1938 (called Anschluss), the von Trapp family had to flee the country.

They were opposed to the Nazi's politics and ideology. Georg had been offered a high-rank position in the new Nazi navy, which he refused to accept. The family also declined a request to perform at Hitler's birthday concert.

Georg told all his children that they had to leave Austria.

The Trapps travelled by train to Italy, and then via London to the United States. In the show, the writers telescoped these events to create a more dramatic climax to the play, where the family, soon after Maria's and the Captain's wedding, escape over the mountains to Switzerland on foot.

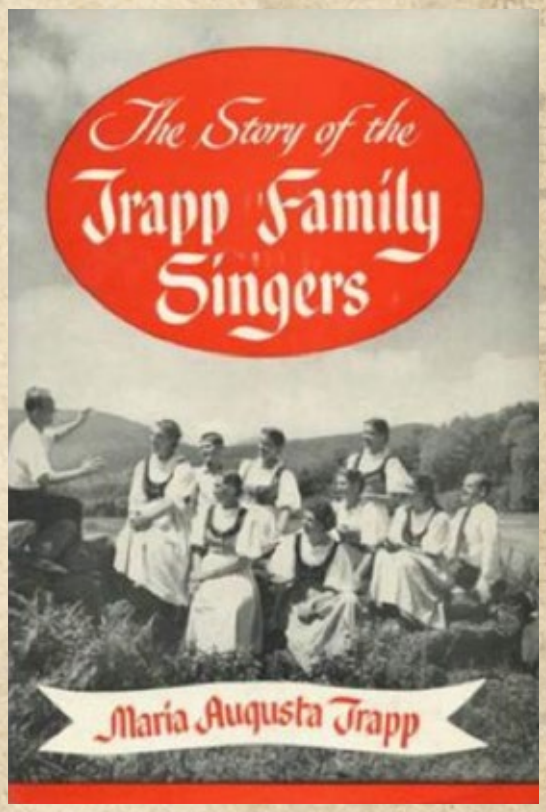
This ending is symbolic of their journey, and all people who seek freedom from oppression.







From Salzburg to Broadway



Maria von Trapp published a memoir in 1949, THE STORY OF THE TRAPP FAMILY SINGERS.

The story was adapted for the stage by Lindsay and Crouse with songs by Rodgers and Hammerstein.

The musical opened on Broadway in 1959. It was nominated for 11 Tony Awards, winning 7, including Best Musical.

Some details of the real story of the von Trapp family were changed for the musical. The writers changed the names and ages of the children. They also compressed the timeline of the show to happen in one year: 1938.

Meet the writers

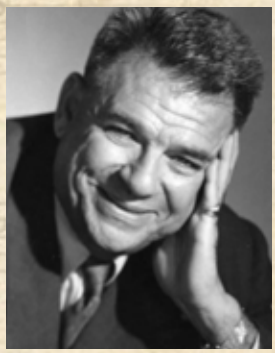


Richard Rodgers

1902-1979. An American composer with 43 Broadway musicals and over 900 songs to his name.

With Hammerstein, he wrote musicals through the 1940s and 1950s, such as OKLAHOMA!, FLOWER DRUM SONG, CAROUSEL, SOUTH PACIFIC, THE KING AND I and THE SOUND OF MUSIC.

Rodgers was the first person to win an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony (EGOT), as well as a Pulitzer Prize.



Oscar Hammerstein II

1895 –1960. An American song writer and script writer. He won 8 Tony Awards and 2 Academy Awards for Best Original Song. He co-wrote 850 songs.

With Rodgers, Hammerstein developed a new kind of American musical that focused on stories, character and drama rather than just light-hearted entertainment.



Howard Lindsay & Russel Crouse

1889 –1968 & 1893-1966. American playwrights. Together they won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for the 1945 play STATE OF THE UNION.

They co-wrote the book for THE SOUND OF MUSIC.

1965 film

In 1965, the show was adapted into a film starring Julie Andrews as Maria.

Two songs were written by Rodgers specifically for the film, *I Have Confidence* and *Something Good*.

The film won five Oscars at the Academy Awards, including Best Picture.











Photograph: **Jonathan Pryke** (Bradgate Park video)

Meet the characters

MARIA
Orphaned as a child, Maria is a free-spirited postulant (trainee nun) at Nonnberg Abbey. She is warm and compassionate – a lover of music who doesn't think twice about speaking her mind. When she is sent to serve as governess to the seven children of Captain von Trapp, Maria faces a crisis when she unexpectedly falls in love with the Captain.

CAPTAIN GEORG VON TRAPP
A distinguished, retired Navy Officer. He still feels a deep sadness from the loss of his wife. The Captain begins to open up his heart again when Maria brings music and joy back to his house. The Captain remains fiercely loyal to his Austrian homeland, as threats from Nazi Germany start to grow more serious.

MOTHER ABBESS
The leader of Nonnberg Abbey. Mother Abbess guides the novices and postulants (trainees) through the process of becoming a nun. She has a natural authority, but she is deeply warm and compassionate. Mother Abbess guides Maria towards finding happiness, even when the road looks difficult.

LIESL
16, going on 17. Liesl is at that awkward age between childhood and adulthood. She is confident, but still naïve – she realises she still wants and needs advice from someone like Maria. She is secretly seeing Rolf, a young delivery boy.

ROLF GRUBER
17, going on 18. Rolf is a delivery boy who is interested in Liesl. He is an impressionable teen, that gets caught up in the growing political tension. He finds himself torn between his affection for Liesl and a need to prove his masculinity.

MAX DETWEILER
A charming friend of the Captain. He is Secretary of Education and Culture, and looking for performers for an upcoming music festival. When he hears the family singing together, he knows they would be perfect.

ELSA SCHRAEDER
A beautiful, cosmopolitan woman in her late thirties. She is determined to marry the Captain, despite his strange resistance. She is a businesswoman, who feels that the way to deal with the rising political tension is not to fight it and let it pass. When she and the Captain realize they don't see the future the same way, she knows the relationship is over.



Photograph: **Marc Brenner** (rehearsals)

THE VON TRAPP CHILDREN

As well as Leisel, the Captain's children include:

FRIEDRICH (14). He is the oldest boy in the family, and remembers what the von Trapp house was like before his mother passed away. He is learning what it means to grow up and become a man.

LOUISA (13). She misses her mother very much. Louisa has become quite skilled at playing tricks on the governesses, but with Maria it seems she's met her match.

KURT (10, but almost 11). He is the youngest boy. Kurt is sensitive and, although he misses his mother, he greatly warms to Maria from the start.

BRIGITTA (9). She is keenly observant for her age. She is thoughtful and never lies.

MARTA (7). She is very honest and speaks her mind.

GRETL (5). She is the youngest of the children. Gretl is soft-spoken and shy, but sweet.

OTHER CHARACTERS

The play also features a range of other characters, including other nuns, soldiers, servants and people from Salzburg. These characters are played by the Ensemble.

In our Curve version, as well as the adult company, there is a Community Company of young actors who also play a range of roles in the ensemble.

The von Trapp Children are played by 3 teams of young actors who swap each performance. Except for Liesl, who is played by an adult actress. You can read more about our Young Company in the 'MAKING OF' section.





THE MAKING OF

The Sound of Music

This section gives you an insight into the Creative Process and explores how our production was made at Curve.

Photograph: **Nikolai Foster**

From research to rehearsal room

"Location is such a huge character in the play"

How do you understand what it might have been like to live in Nonnberg Abbey in 1938? Or what it might feel like to walk up and explore the mountains like Maria did so many times?

Director Nikolai Foster took a trip to Salzburg earlier this year to answer these questions and build a personal understanding of the city where the real von Trapps lived in.

Location plays such an important role in the play. The first glance we get of Maria is her on the mountains. She feels a deep connection to them, as does the Captain for his homeland. The mountains become symbolic of Austria and the love characters have for their country.

It was Nikolai's visit to Salzburg, following in the footsteps of Maria up those iconic mountains, that inspired the show's design.

Nikolai also found Nonnberg Abbey particularly powerful and moving. The nuns of the Abbey still sing there every day, and the smell of incense still fills its halls. The visit gave Nikolai a unique insight to understand this location where the real Maria lived, worked and eventually married Georg von Trapp.

Notes from Director Nikolai Foster on his research trip



"It was incredible to spend a couple of days in Salzburg and to explore and literally walk the same roads and paths and mountain tracks that possibly the real Maria walked and experienced.

And because the location is such a huge character in the play, to actually meet it and to be inhabited by it and to feel it first hand made a lot more sense for me, and put it all in context.

I spent a lot of time in Nonnberg Abbey. It was profoundly moving and very powerful - and to know that's where the real Maria lived and work, and that's where she married Georg.

And because it's such an old abbey, you can see all of the architecture sort of bolted together through different periods of time. It's a really magical and special place."









Photographs: **Nikolai Foster**



The casting process

For THE SOUND OF MUSIC at Curve, we worked with a Casting Director who helped run auditions and the casting process for the show. Actors would come in 1-3 times to work on material from the show in front of an audition panel made up of the Director, Musical Director and Choreographer, as well as some other members of the creative team.

Auditions included a dance call, where everyone learnt a small section of choreography with Choreographer **Ebony Molina**. Actors also then read some material from the show, including dialogue from scenes and short sections of some of the show's iconic songs.

At the end of this process, we had our full adult cast assembled. But the show was not fully cast... we still needed to find young actors to play the von Trapp Children.

We held open auditions for the young actors, which means anyone can apply. A staggering 1,132 young people sent in an audition video! From those applications, we invited 334 young actors to come and audition in-person – we held 6 audition sessions to make sure we had time and space to fit everyone in.

At the end of this process, we had our final company of 18 young people who are playing the von Trapps. This includes 3 actors for each of the 6 children. Liesl is played by an adult actress. We use 3 teams of von Trapp Children who rotate each performance.

As well as the von Trapps, we have 2 teams of our Community Company. These are young actors who live nearby in Curve's local community. They play a range of roles in the ensemble throughout the show. The two teams swap each performance.

If you live locally to Curve and are interested in auditioning for our Young Company on future productions, please keep an eye out on our website for opportunities on our next projects!



Photograph: **Marc Brenner** (rehearsals)


UNICORNS
NIKE
adidas





Photographs: **Jonathan Pryke** (Bradgate Park video)

Announcing the show

Once the cast is confirmed, we want to tell as many people as possible about the production. This involves marketing on social media, in newspapers, on posters and buses, and sometimes on TV.

One of key parts of the marketing process is making a Video Trailer which we can share on our social media channels, and give people an insight as to what they can expect from our new version of THE SOUND OF MUSIC.

For our trailer, Salzburg was sadly too far from Curve. But Leicester's own Bradgate Park played the part wonderfully! The team headed up into the luscious greenery to film two music videos featuring **Molly Lynch** and **David Seadon-Young**, who are staring as our Maria and Georg.

The music tracks were recorded with our Musical Director **George Dyer** in Curve's own recording studio. This was edited together with the footage to produce our music video trailers.

Have a watch and see what you think!

Watch Molly (Maria) performing the title song



Watch David performing *Edelweiss*





The creative team

A massive team of people have come together to make THE SOUND OF MUSIC happen: our entire acting company (including our teams of young actors), the stage management team, the production and technical team and the creative team.

They are all supported by the entire staff at Curve, who include the producing team, the marketing team, the education team, the box office, the front of house team, the hospitality team, and others. Everyone plays their part in getting the show ready for Opening Night, and keeping the show running as planned each performance.

The core creative team for THE SOUND OF MUSIC includes:

DIRECTOR
Nikolai Foster

The director sits at the heart of the production. They often lead the creative process, facilitating collaboration between all creatives and production teams. They also lead rehearsals with the actors, along with the Music and Choreographic departments. The director is usually supported by an Associate or Assistant Director, who will run understudy rehearsals.

MUSICAL SUPERVISOR AND
ORCHESTRATIONS ADAPTATION
George Dyer

The Musical Supervisor looks after the entire sound of the show. They will put together a band to play the show each night, and arrange the score to fit to the size of the band. This can sometimes include reorchestrating pieces of music. They work closely with the Musical Director to rehearse with actors. They also work closely with the Sound Designer to ensure the mix of sound for an audience is the best it can be.

MUSICAL DIRECTOR
David Doidge

The Musical Director works closely with the Musical Supervisor to rehearse with the actors. They will lead vocal warm ups each day. During rehearsals, they play a piano arrangement of the score so the actors learn what the full band will sound like. The Musical Director will conduct the show each night, often standing in the band pit so they can see both the actors and the band.

CHOREOGRAPHER
Ebony Molina

The Choreographer creates all movement and dance in the show. They work with the actors to in rehearsals, and collaborate closely with the Director to build a unified storytelling. They are often supported by an Associate or Assistant, as well as a Dance Captain (an actor in the ensemble), who leads the physical warm up each day.

SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER
Michael Taylor

The Designer collaborates with the Director to decide what the show will look like. This includes building a model box for the set design and producing costume sketches. They will work closely with the production team and set builders to ensure the full scale set is finished with the right details and works as planned. They will also work closely with a Costume Supervisor and a Props Supervisor, who both look after and source costume and props according to the needs of the play and the design.

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Mark Henderson

The Lighting Designer will work closely with the director to sculpt the show with light. They play an important role in providing clarity in the storytelling, creating mood and atmosphere, and signalling location and time of day. They will work with the production team to decide what lighting fixtures are needed, and produce a plan for the lighting rig. They will work with a team of lighting programmers and operators to pre-program all the lighting cues for the show.

SOUND DESIGNER
Nick Lodge

The Sound Designer will work closely with the Director and Musical Supervisor to ensure the audience hears the show as desired. They work with the production team to ensure the right sound equipment is rigged up around the theatre. Every actor and musician are fitted with microphones. During a show, the sound team will mix the levels to ensure the right balance of sound reaches the audience. This is especially important on a musical like THE SOUND OF MUSIC.



Photograph: **Marc Brenner** (rehearsals)

Interview with Choreographer Ebony Molina

We caught up with choreographer Ebony Molina in rehearsals for THE SOUND OF MUSIC to chat about how she is approaching the movement for the show and why she is excited to be working on it.



Photographs: **Marc Brenner** (rehearsals)

Having worked briefly with Nikolai and at Curve previously, how does it feel to be returning?
It's lovely! The first time I worked with Nikolai, it was quite brief the time we shared together so to actually be developing something together from our initial meeting to now being in the room is thrilling. I've worked as a performer at Curve a few times as well so it's nice to revisit the theatre in a creative capacity.

How will you be approaching THE SOUND OF MUSIC?
We're approaching THE SOUND OF MUSIC with a lot of respect for the piece whilst looking at it with fresh eyes, rediscovering what it means to us now. We've had lots of really exciting conversations about how we want the show to feel and we're exploring those currently.

Are there any moments you are most looking forward to choreographing?
Initially it was quite challenging because THE SOUND OF MUSIC is so iconic, so loved and so nostalgic for a lot of people. What I've loved about developing the movement is that there's a lot more room for variety which I wasn't expecting. I've started to play with the world for the von Trapp children that feels really physical, youthful and free, compared to a the language for the European elite at the party.

Why do you think THE SOUND OF MUSIC has had such a lasting impact?
I think it's a story of family, heart, love, loss and resilience which resonates with so many people and continues to do so. I have friends that as children remember the story and they still watch it now because they have those connections with their children and love to share that with them today. It's a beautifully written story with such rich layers which we're discovering more and more as we explore it together in rehearsals.

Are you looking forward to working with so many children and young company actors?
Yes! We of course have the young von Trapp children who are an absolute riot! I feel exhilarated having spent the last few days with them! They're so inventive, so creative and fun to be around. They give you so much that you just want to give that back to them. We also have the community company which is a lovely opportunity for these young people that we desperately need in our theatre world. I feel it's a special moment to really be able to invest in them. We've only met a few times so far but I feel really lucky to work with them and hope I can inspire them all and teach them something new.

Why should audiences come and see the show?
I think it's going to be really special. It's going to be really moving, really heartwarming and feel like a big giant hug. I also think you're going to walk away from it and discover the story in a new and exciting way.

Watch the fill interview with Choreographer Ebony Molina here:





Set design with Michael Taylor

Following last year's MY FAIR LADY, Michael Taylor's set once again fills Curve's vast stage with an epic, breathtaking design.

The hills and mountains surrounding Salzburg are an integral part of the story. They almost seem like their own character in the musical. On his visit there, Director Nikolai Foster was deeply impacted by the awe-inspiring landscape, which directly inspired his collaboration with Michael.

Michael's bold design dramatically brings the Salzburg mountains to Leicester, impressively sprawling onto Curve's stage. Nikolai and Michael wanted the hills to be ever-present in the space throughout the play, providing a monumental backdrop to every scene.

The design underscores the importance of the natural landscape, and its symbolic relationship to Austria and the character's love of their homeland. Even the more intimate and personal interior scenes are put in perspective of these rolling hills.

Inspiration

Nikolai captured a whole range of detail while exploring the mountainous landscape. From wildflowers flourishing despite the harsh conditions, to the craggy rocks, to remnants of last winter's snow, these details directly inspired the design.

1. Wild heather and blue flowers
2. Details of the rocky surface
3. Wild alpine flowers
4. Last winter's melting snow

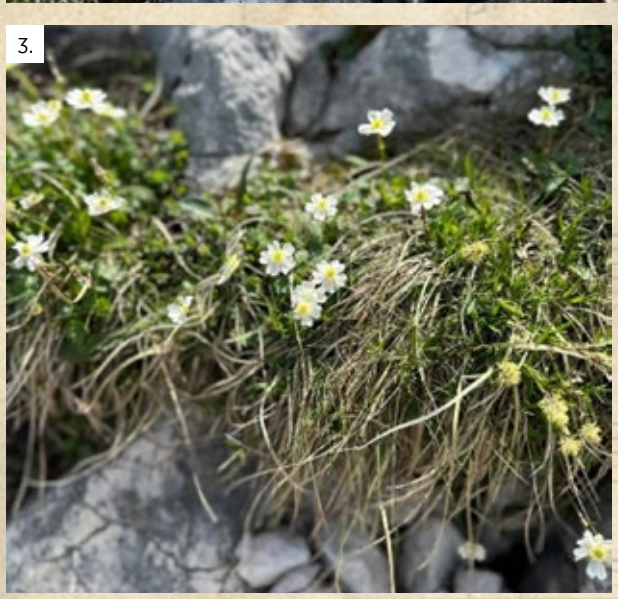
1.



2.



3.



4.



Model Box

A model box is almost always used when designing a production. It allows the creative and technical team to imagine the full set, before it's been build.

This photo was taken at the final design presentation, where Michael and Nikolai discussed the design with the entire production team.

Michael's model box is an exact 1:25 model of the set design. This model is then given to the set builders, along with technical drawings, to build the design full scale.

Moving Mountains

As you can see from the model box, Michael has rendered the mountains with a rugged physicality. The physical mound stretches 12 metres wide and nearly 5 metres tall. Complete with all the details Maria and Nikolai would have walked past on their mountain hikes.

The illusion of mountains continuing into the distance is achieved with a curved cyclorama – this is a thin piece of material stretched to initiate the Salzburg sky. The cyclorama has been printed with an artwork specially painted for this production, which intricately details mountains in the distance. For reference, see Nikolai's view from the Salzburg mountains (below).

Michael has brought the raw power of nature into the space. Running water and 4 pools creates the effect of a mountain spring, or *"a brook as it trips and falls over stones in its way"* as Maria gleefully sings.

The landscape is completed by 16 towering birch trees. Michael has incorporated real trees into the set design, sustainably sourced from the grounds of Blenheim Palace.

The many other locations of the play are created efficiently using key pieces of scenery which interrupt the mountainous landscape. They help focus down for more intimate and interior scenes, whilst still keeping the mountains in perspective.







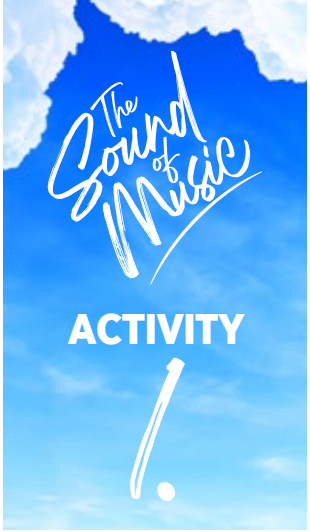






ACTIVITIES

Photograph: **Marc Brenner** (rehearsals)



Songwriting task

My Favorite Things

This is an iconic song from the show. You might have heard or sung it in school.

It is heard in Act 1, Scene 3 where the free-spirited Maria bonds with the Mother Superior over their shared love for music. Through this song, the Mother Abbess realises that Maria needs to explore life outside the Abbey to properly consider if she is ready for life as a nun. They sing this song together and later it is reprised when the children sing it in Act 2.

*Please note that this is the American spelling of favourite – Rodgers and Hammerstein were American, after all. The British spelling is favourite.

Watch this short extract



Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens
Bright copper kettles and warm woollen mittens
Brown paper packages tied up with strings
These are a few of my favorite things

Cream-colored ponies and crisp apple strudels
Doorbells and sleigh bells, and schnitzel with noodles
Wild geese that fly with the moon on their wings
These are a few of my favorite things

Girls in white dresses with blue satin sashes
Snowflakes that stay on my nose and eyelashes
Silver-white winters that melt into springs
These are a few of my favorite things

When the dog bites
When the bee stings
When I'm feeling sad
I simply remember my favorite things
And then I don't feel so bad

Your Task

A challenge in groups of 4 or 5.

Listen to the short extract of the song, which you might need to play a few times to learn the tune.

Can you re-write one of the verses to express some of your favourite things?

Take it in turns to share 1-3 things that you like, keep it simple and only share what you want to share. Think about what could work well and be appropriate for the song.

Look at the kind of things Maria sings about. Can you count the number of syllables in each line? When you write your own lyrics, your favourite things need to have the same number of syllables. This will help the song flow nicely.

Lyric writing is like solving a puzzle – you need to work together to make your verse work, and the words fit musically. Have fun exploring your new lyrics, and keep tweaking your ideas until you are all happy with it.

Once you've written your verse as a group, share it with the rest of your class.

Did you know?

"Crisp apple strudels"
This is a traditional dessert from Vienna in Austria. The word strudel means swirl, and is used to describe its shape.

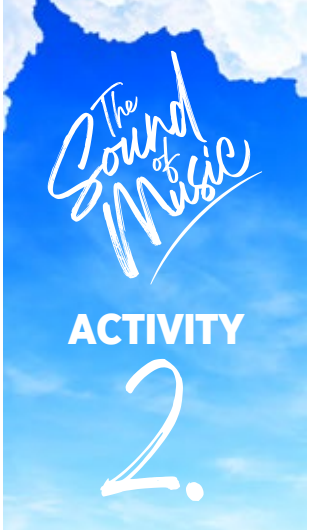
Apple strudel is made up of layered pastry with a sweet apple filling inside. It is considered to be the national dish of Austria.

"Schnitzel with noodles"
Schnitzel is a thin slice of meat that is breaded and fried. In particular, the Weiner schnitzel is dish traditional in Austria.

It is sometimes served with pasta noodles.







Music Theory

The Story Behind The Song *DO-RE-MI*

Do-Re-Mi is an iconic song from the musical. But many people might not know that the lyrics to the song are inspired by actual historical ways people used to teach music theory.

In the song, Maria teaches the children the names of the notes. She uses a system called 'Soflège', where each note of the major musical scale is given a name: do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti.

In order to help the von Trapp children learn these names, she teaches them using English homophones. A pair of homophone is two words that have different meanings but sound the same. So in the song, *"Do"* becomes *"Doe, a deer, a female deer"*. Maria's playful lyrics inject music learning with fun and energy for the von Trapp children.

The history of Soflège dates way back to the 11th Century in Italy. It has been used for centuries to teach children the basics of music and the major scale.

Listen to the song on YouTube



The lyrics, which link the Solfège syllables with English homophones:

Do	*Doe: a deer, a female deer.*
Re	*Ray: a drop of golden sun.*
Mi	*Me: a name I call myself.*
Fa	*Far: a long, long way to run.*
So	*Sew: a needle pulling thread.*
La	*La: a note to follow so.*
Ti	*Tea: a drink with jam and bread.*

As the song concludes:

"When you know the notes to sing,
you can sing most anything"

Did You Know?

While each line of the lyrics playfully renames a note from the solfège scale, the line *"La, a note to follow so"* does not fit that pattern.

It has been suggested that this lyric was probably a placeholder that was just never replaced. Most likely, Oscar Hammerstein just wrote *"a note to follow so"* and thought he would come back to rewrite it later. It seems like he could not come up with anything better!

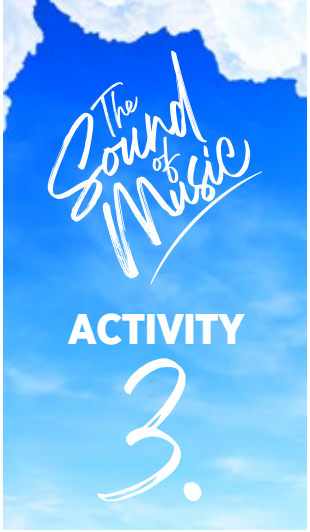
ACTIVITY

Pick a popular nursery rhyme you know. Try *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*, *Hot Cross Buns* or *Mary Had A Little Lamb*.

See if you can write out the tune of the nursery rhyme using Soflège.

The starting note will be Do. Each note of the scale becomes Do-Re-Mi-Fa-So-La-Ti

Now can you try singing the nursery rhyme, using your Soflège notes?



Story board

Can you pick out the SIX key moments in THE SOUND OF MUSIC. Draw these moments in the large box, and then add a word, sentence or a line of dialogue that sums up the moment below.

Add more boxes of your own, if you want to show more!



Postcards from the past

Following your discussion with your teacher and the whole class about the show, your task is to write a Postcard from the Past. Pick a character from THE SOUND OF MUSIC – you are writing in role as that character. Choose when in the story the postcard is being written – is it before, during or after Maria comes to the von Trapp family? Pick who you are writing to. Use the postcard template below.

Dear	Stamp **To** _____ _____ _____ _____

Writing in role:
Who are you? Who do you want to send this to?
What would you tell them? What things wouldn't you tell them?
What are some of your worries, but what is your hope for the future?



Acrostic poem

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

Create an acrostic poem. In groups of 5, can you write a poem where each line starts with the letters that spell THE SOUND OF MUSIC?

Your poem could:

- Summarise the story of THE SOUND OF MUSIC.
- Describe the production you have just watched. What did you enjoy most?
- Explore the historical context of the show.
- Be your own creative response. Follow whatever you are inspired to write about!

T _____

H _____

E _____

S _____

O _____

U _____

N _____

D _____

O _____

F _____

M _____

U _____

S _____

I _____

C _____

ACTIVITY 6.

National symbols

Edelweiss
Your task



Captain von Trapp sings *Edelweiss* as a love song to his country. He uses the white flower as a symbol for Austria.

What flower would you pick as the national symbol for England? What about the United Kingdom? What about other countries that you or other people in your class have a connection to?

- Can you think of any songs that are a national song for England?
- Do you or members of your class know any different national songs?
- Try learning one and share it with each other.

Your school community will be very diverse, with people who have roots and ancestors in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, as well as across the globe, from India, China, Australia, Africa and more. It's great to look at and celebrate all the things we have in common, that unite and bring us together to learn and understand each other better.





Climb ev'ry mountain

A massive team of people have come together to make THE SOUND OF MUSIC, and to keep the show running every night. Do you know all the roles it takes to create a production like this?

Your task in 2s: Colour the following list in **RED**, **AMBER** and **GREEN**.

RED Which roles have you never heard of?

AMBER Which roles have you heard of, but wouldn't feel confident explaining to someone else?

GREEN Which roles do you know already and feel confident explaining in detail what they do?

DIRECTOR **MUSICAL DIRECTOR** **ACTOR** **DESIGNER**

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **CHOREOGRAPHER** **STAGE MANAGER**

DEPUTY STAGE MANAGER **ACTOR** **COMPANY STAGE MANAGER**

COSTUME SUPERVISOR **THE BAND** **SOUND DESIGNER**

PRODUCER **FOLLOW SPOT OPERATOR** **LIGHTING DESIGNER**

FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF **PRODUCTION MANAGER** **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

Your chance to dig a little deeper

Choose one role which you coloured **RED** or **AMBER**, and research online, at your local library or by watching the videos below to find out more about it.

Then present what you find to your partner or the class.

If you need any more help, you can find out more about some of these roles in the 'THE MAKING OF' section of this pack.

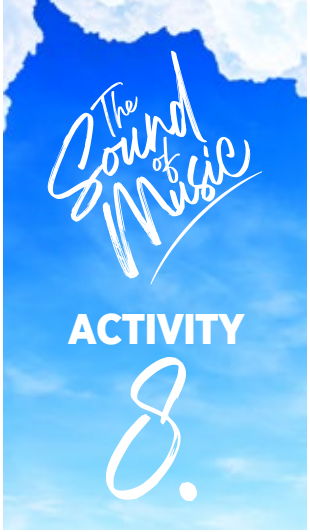
Watch these shorts clips to learn more!

Insights from Curve's Technical Team



Set and Costume Design Process with Kate Urwin





Finding your place

Part One

Do-Re-Mi

Your task

In THE SOUND OF MUSIC, Maria's special place is the surrounding hills beyond the abbey walls. This is where she can think, breathe, dream, play and hope! Enjoying nature, the elements and being outdoors. Can you think of a place in your **SCHOOL**, **HOME**, **STREET**, **TOWN** or **CITY** that has that special something!

Explore this further by finding everyday movements that you might do whilst playing outdoors, for example:

- Hopscotch
- Jump rope
- Throwing stones
- Hopping over logs
- Slingshots
- Bow and arrows
- Climbing trees

What movements can you think of?
Use the list and or create your own.

Try putting a sequence of movements together to build a section of choreography, this could be 6-8 counts that can be repeated.

Now make it musical!

Add accents – stops, starts, pauses, emphasis on certain counts.

Play with canon – in a group, perform a movement, one after the other.

Play with unison – in a group, perform the movement together, synchronised!

Change the timing or pace – how fast can it be performed, could you even perform it in **SLOW MOTION**.

Make it exciting and unpredictable!

This can show how the Von Trapps learn to play again once Maria has brought fun and play back to the household.

The activities on these two pages are developed from rehearsal techniques used by Assistant Director **Ollie Khurshid**, and Choreographer **Ebony Molina** working with the von Trapp performers at Curve..

Part Two

Exploring through drama!

Your task

Think about your place and how it makes you feel or why it is important to you.

Write 5 sentences, 5 bullet points or a paragraph, that expresses how you feel about that place or why it's important to you.

This can now become **NARRATION**, for a group to perform or a **MONOLOGUE**, which can be performed by one person. If you don't know what these are... It's over to you to find out!

Let's put the two together. Part One and Part Two.

Perform your **NARRATION** as a group, using individual voices and some **CHORUS SPEAKING** or the **MONOLOGUE**.

This will set the scene for the audience and transport them to your location or place, then perform your dance sequence, straight after it!

Well done...Now you've found your place!





Beyond the silver whistle



"THE SOUND OF MUSIC" ©1965 20th Century Studios, Inc. All rights reserved.

Exploring and building a character

Your task

Read the extract below, taken from **Act 1 Scene 5** where Captain von Trapp introduces each child through a signal by a silver whistle, and Maria meets the children for the first time.

CAPTAIN

[...] Now, you will be in charge of my children. There are seven of them. You will find out how far they have progressed in their studies and carry on from there. Each morning will be spent in the classroom. Each afternoon, they march. You will see that at all times they conduct themselves with decorum and orderliness. The first rule in this house is discipline.

MARIA

*Yes, sir. (The CAPTAIN takes out his silver whistle and blows a siren-like summoning blast which continues while his **CHILDREN** enter from both sides of the balcony, the outside door, the French windows and the library, and end by forming a single line with **GRETL** and **MARTA** on the stairs, **KURT**, **LOUISA**, **FRIEDRICH** and **LIESL**, in that order, on the balcony behind them. They are dressed in white sailor uniforms; the girls, of course, in white skirts. The CAPTAIN changes his signal to one that marks time for marching, and, led by GRETL, they march down the stairs and, with a military left turn at the foot of the stairs, line up across the stage. MARIA has watched this with considerable astonishment. There is an empty space between MARTA and KURT. Slowly through the dining-room door, **BRIGITTA** enters, reading a book. The CAPTAIN sees her, takes the book away from her, puts it on the sofa, and gives her an admonishing pat on the behind, which sends her running to take her place in formation. The CAPTAIN crosses in front of them to the other side of LIESL and addresses them.)*

CAPTAIN

This is your new governess – Fraulein Maria. As I sound your signal you will step forward and repeat your name [...]

End of Extract

Maria is shocked by this and refuses to use the whistle or learn their signals and will not answer to the signal given to her by the captain. Sending the message, these young people are more than a musical signal.

Your task is to look beyond the whistle, like Maria does, and tries to know each child for who they are.

Decide on one of the von Trapp children to build a character study by asking these **6 questions**
(you can draw or write your answers! (Their names are in Bold in the extract)

1. **Who am I?**
   (NAME, AGE, APPREAREANCE, LIKES, DISLIKES & PERSONALITY)
2. **What are my immediate circumstances?**
   (DAY, TIME, MONTH, LOCATION, WHAT HAD HAPPENED OR ABOUT TO HAPPEN)
3. **What relationships do I have?**
   (FAMILY, FRIENDS, PARENTS, COMMUNITY, COUNTRY)
4. **What do I want?**
   (WHAT DO I WANT IN THIS SCENE, OR ANY INTERACTIONS IN THE PLAY)
5. **What are the obstacles?**
   (WHAT BARRIERS ARE STANDING IN MY WAY)
6. **What do I do to get what I want?**
   (WHAT ACTIONS DO I TAKE PHYSICALLY AND VERBALLY TO GET IT)

Please note, these are based on Uta Hagen's 6 Questions. Find out more about this drama and theatre practitioner!



FURTHER BACKGROUND READING

Photograph: **Marc Brenner** (rehearsals)

Historical context

This section is aimed at Key Stage 3 learners and above

THE SOUND OF MUSIC is set in 1938 in Austria.

In 1933, the Nazi Party took power in Germany. In 1938, Nazi Germany invaded Austria. They took control of the government as part of their new empire. The Nazis' invasion of Austria and other countries ultimately led to the start of World War Two.

The Nazis tightly controlled Austria and treated their opponents harshly. This is why the von Trapp family felt they had to flee the country. They were strongly opposed to the Nazis' politics and ideology.

This section includes more information on the history of the Nazis and their invasion of Austria.



Who were the Nazis?

The Nazis were a right-wing extremist political party. They took power in Germany in 1933, and began changing laws and German society to fit with their extremist ideas.

This climaxed in the invasion of other European countries, eventually leading to World War Two. At the end of the war, the Nazis were defeated and removed from power.

The main beliefs of the Nazi Party were antisemitism*, racism, nationalism, and strong hostility towards other political parties who disagreed with them.



How did they come to power?

The Nazis won support during the Great Depression in 1929. Hitler took advantage of the economic problems to spread hate and falsely blamed them on Jewish people, who were a tiny minority – less than 1% of the German population.

The Nazis also blamed foreign countries, and the peace treaty that had ended World War One – The Treaty of Versailles. The Nazis began attacking their political opponents and intimidating voters.

By 1932, the Nazis had become Germany's most popular political party, and Hitler became Chancellor in 1933. Hitler wanted to be a dictator, and to be able to pass laws on his own without the need for an elected government.

In 1933, the Nazis arrested and intimidated members of parliament. They did this to forcibly pass a vote to give full powers to Hitler to make laws without the need for parliament.

In August 1934, the German President died. Hitler combined the roles of Chancellor and President into one position, making himself Führer, or 'leader'. The Nazis now had no political opposition, and began passing laws to transform Germany in line with their ideology.



*Antisemitism is a form of prejudice, and includes hostility to or discrimination against Jewish people.

Historical context

Why did the Nazis invade Austria in 1938?

Once Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in 1933, he had aggressive and ambitious foreign policy aims. His three main aims were:

1. To unite all German-speaking people. Including those beyond the borders of Germany.
2. To achieve 'Lebensraum' – which was meant 'living space' for the German people. This was based on the Nazis' racist policies, which were rooted in the idea that 'Aryan' people were 'superior' to Eastern Europeans.
3. To destroy the Treaty of Versailles – the peace agreement that was signed in 1919 following World War One.

In 1938, Hitler decided to invade Austria in order to unite the country with Germany. This was known as the Anschluss. It was part of Hitler's desire to bring all German-speaking people under one Nazi empire.





What happened in 1938?

When conflict was escalating in early 1938, the Austrian Chancellor announced a referendum on the question of unification with Germany. This was supposed to take place on 13th March.

Hitler threatened an invasion and forced the chancellor to resign. He resigned on 11th March, and on 12th March, Nazi German troops entered Austria, who met celebrating crowds.

The invasion met no resistance from the Austrian military.

Hitler's march through Austria climaxed in Vienna where he spoke to a crowd of 200,000 cheering Austrians.

A rigged referendum on 10th April was used to falsely prove support for unification from a majority of 99.73% of the Austrian population.

According to modern estimates of the Austrian government, about 70% of Austrians would have voted to preserve the Austrian independence, if the election had been fair and free.

As a result, Austria ceased to exist as an independent country.

Thousands of Austrians tried to flee, but other Austrians cheered and welcomed the German troops entering their territory.

From March to November 1938, 130,000 people emigrated and escaped from Austria.

What did this period of time look like for young people?

The Nazis built support from young people and children through the Hitler Youth.

It began in 1922. Once the Nazis took power, it became the only permitted youth organisation in Germany.

By 1936, it had 5 million members. The increase came from the forced takeover of many local youth organisations across Germany.

In 1939, membership became compulsory for all German youths, even if their parents objected.

The Hitler Youth only included boys. The League of German Girls was the equivalent for young girls.

The members of the Hitler Youth were seen as the future of Nazi Germany and they were indoctrinated in Nazi ideology.

Young members were encouraged to spy on their parents, and even report them to the police if they did not agree with Nazi ideology.

The Hitler Youth copied many of the activities from the Boy Scout movement. They also began early military training. The aim was to turn the Hitler Youth into soldiers of the future.







Geographical context

Salzberg

The SOUND OF MUSIC is set in the Austrian town of Salzberg. The city is nestled in between mountains, at the northern boundary of the Alps.

The mountains to Salzburg's south contrast with the rolling plains to the north. The closest alpine peak is only miles from the city centre.

The old town is surrounded by two smaller hills, where Nonnberg Abbey stands.

The Villa Trapp

The villa that belonged to the von Trapp family is in a quiet suburb of Salzburg.

Following the death of his wife, Georg moved the family to the Villa Trapp in 1924. The villa had been built in 1863 and, after the family purchased it, they expanded the house to a 22 room mansion.

You can still see the Villa today, which sits right below the mountains, and is surrounded by large gardens.













MUSIC **RICHARD RODGERS**
LYRICS **OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II**
BOOK **HOWARD LINDSAY and RUSSEL CROUSE**

Suggested by "The Trapp Family Singers" by Maria Augusta Trapp. Presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

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CHOREOGRAPHER **EBONY MOLINA** MUSICAL SUPERVISOR AND ORCHESTRATIONS ADAPTATION **GEORGE DYER** SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER **MICHAEL TAYLOR**
LIGHTING DESIGNER **MARK HENDERSON** SOUND DESIGNER **NICK LODGE** CASTING DIRECTOR **OLIVIA LAYDON** for **JILL GREEN CASTING**
MUSICAL DIRECTOR **DAVID DOIDGE** ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR **OLLIE KHURSHID** ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR **WILL LUCKETT** ASSOCIATE CHOREOGRAPHER **DALE WHITE**

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