

*The Sound of Music* 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Exhibition

Cesar B. Solla, Jr.



Concept art of the Academy Museum of Motion Picture

In 2017, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is slated to open the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. This museum becomes a means for the Academy to execute their mission, which is to preserve film and its history as well as to honor films that have made a significant contribution and influence towards the motion picture arts. My project proposes a special exhibition at this museum. In figuring out what type of exhibition would benefit the museum, I thought of films in 2015 that will be celebrating a milestone anniversary. *The Sound of Music* will be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in March, and a special exhibition to mark this occasion would be appropriate. Taking into consideration the goal of the Academy and their reputation and their prestige, this museum would be the best institution to house this project

*The Sound of Music* 50th Anniversary Special Exhibition will show the process of what made one of the most iconic films in the world. Maybe even a glimpse of how one can make their own iconic film. The resources of artifacts range vastly and from

different sources. The Academy has items from their own collection at the Margret Herrick Library. Artifacts from Richard Rodgers were found at the New York Public Library for Performing Arts. Others are private collections. Some artifacts come from personal collections of people who worked on the film. This makes the exhibition more personal and intimate, like the sharing of memories. Part of the popularity of *The Sound of Music* derives from the memory of seeing the film as a kid. People may remember watching this film with their family, so then this exhibition becomes about sharing memories with a family about a family. We were all von Trapps.

Having items from a personal collection also gives insight to the lifestyle of these people. For one, people see what's important to them and what they decided to keep. In addition, these artifacts provide a glimpse into a certain frame and culture that doesn't exist anymore. For example, people corresponded through letters that were typed on a letterhead through a typewriter. In showing how people at that time lived, this exhibition also preserves a lifestyle. In the rise of digital culture, tactile artifacts become even more important. They are proofs of life, a way to connect with artists, a way to know a factual person existed. It's similar to the way people feel about autographs.

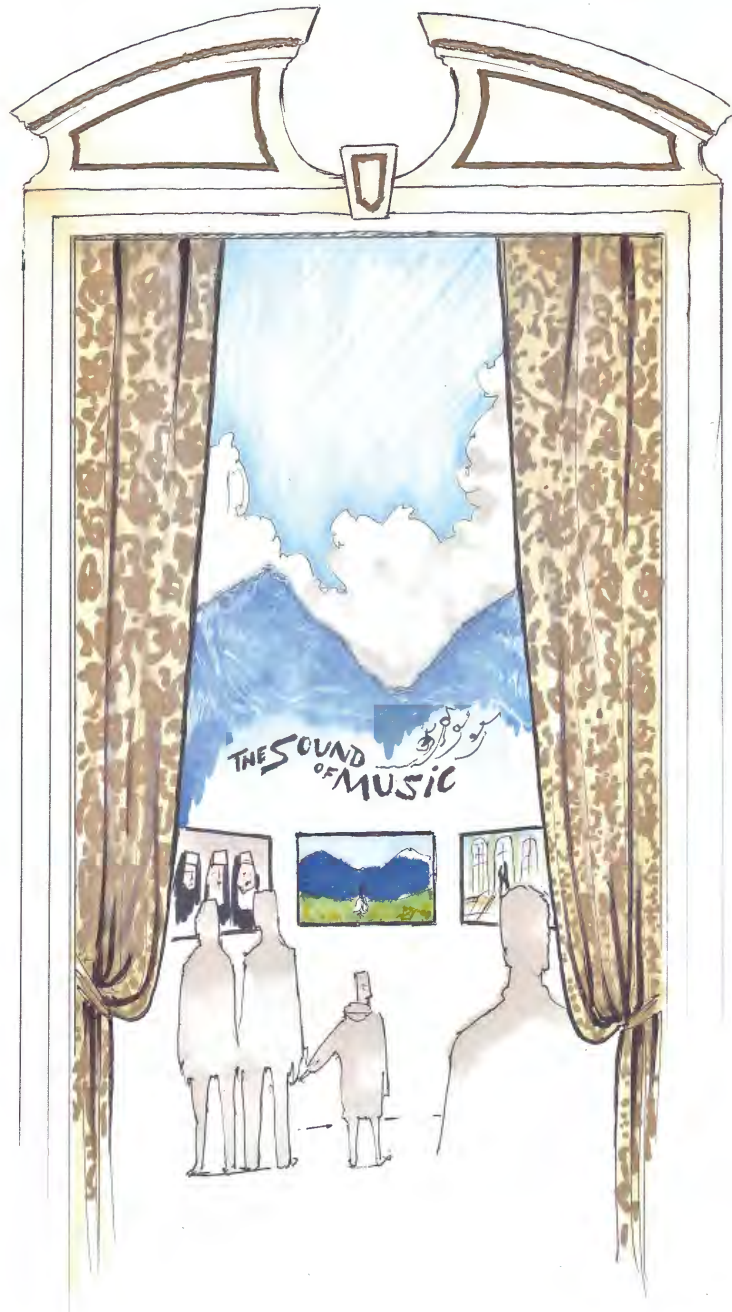
Because of our current digital lifestyle, taking into account how to present the material is important. One way to base the special exhibition off of is to look at the Hollywood Costume Exhibition currently happening through the Academy. Curated by Deborah Nadoolman Landis, who was the costume designer for *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *The Blues Brothers*, the exhibition incorporates the display of costumes with multimedia. Here is a video of Nadoolman explaining the exhibition:

[http://youtu.be/WM\\_TGNqEoT0](http://youtu.be/WM_TGNqEoT0) . Her integration of screens and moving images

remind the audience the context of the costume, that they were part of a cinematic experience. By referencing the film with the costume, it provides a way for the audience to engage with the film and bring it into their reality. Her incorporation of multimedia demonstrates a new way the current digital culture can interact with artifacts. Her exhibition informs how to engage an audience. It also gives the public a look into how the Academy Museum will plan future exhibitions.

# THE SOUND OF MUSIC

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EXHIBITION



Concept drawing of exhibit entrance

*The Sound of Music*: The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Exhibition will be split into five main sections.

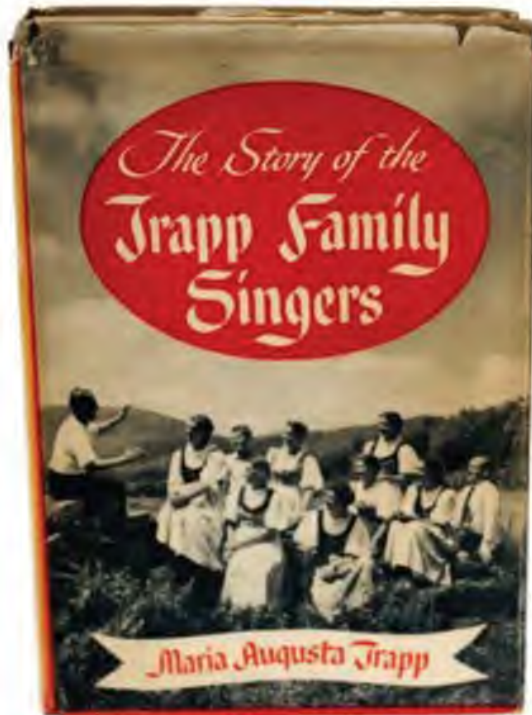


Figure 1.1: A first edition of Maria's book

**I. The Real von Trapps.** As stories are passed on from generation to generation, some information is lost, especially once a true story is dramatized. The first part of the exhibit introduces the real people the musical and film were based on. In this section, photographs show the Von Trapp family in a time frame before and during the 1940s (Figure 1.4—1.7). Since the general public recognizes the Von Trapp family as characters in a movie, the pictures of the real Von Trapps will establish the family as people who lived. The most significant photos in this section



Figure 1.2: Maria in her wedding dress

are the wedding pictures since that event is dramatized on the stage and in the film. (Figure 1.2, 1.3) Also part of this section is a first edition copy of the book *The Story of the Von Trapp Family Singers* by Maria Agatha Trapp (Figure 1.1). If available, sound clips or video clips of the family's performances would be included.





Figure 1.3: The Von Trapp wedding in 1927



Figure 2.4: The original Von Trapp children



Figure 1.5: Passport pictures of the Von Trapp children



Figure 1.6: The whole family at their lodge in Vermont





Figure 1.7: The family touring in Europe



HIRSCHFELD © Al Hirschfeld Foundation

Figure 2.1: Al Hirschfeld's drawing of Broadway's *The Sound of Music*

**II. Broadway.** Before entering this section, a square television screen in the wall presents a trailer of *Die Trapp-Familie* (1956). It was through this movie (a clip of the opening from YouTube <http://youtu.be/qeKhf5eaOBk>) and its sequel that inspired Vincent J. Donehue to create a Broadway musical for Mary Martin. Beside this television screen is a movie poster of the film (Figure 2.2).



Figure 2.2: An English Version of a movie poster for *Die Trapp-Familie*

*Life* magazine documented the process of creating the musical in their issue dated November 23, 1959. These rare pictures show patrons a glimpse behind the scenes of a Broadway musical (Figure 2.3—2.7). Also, including *Life* magazine recognizes it as an important publication that existed in the 1950s. It becomes even more vital to the exhibition as it's a publication that no longer exists, especially in paper format. Presenting this magazine contributes to preserving a lifestyle.



Figure 2.3: Broadway's *The Sound of Music* on the cover of *Life* magazine





Figure 2.4: Richard Rodgers and Mary Martin



Figure 2.5: "[F]or the first time, members of company surround Composer Rodgers."



Figure 2.6: Martin tries on a costume for the company



Figure 2.7: Director Vincent Donehue talks to Mary Martin before she goes on stage



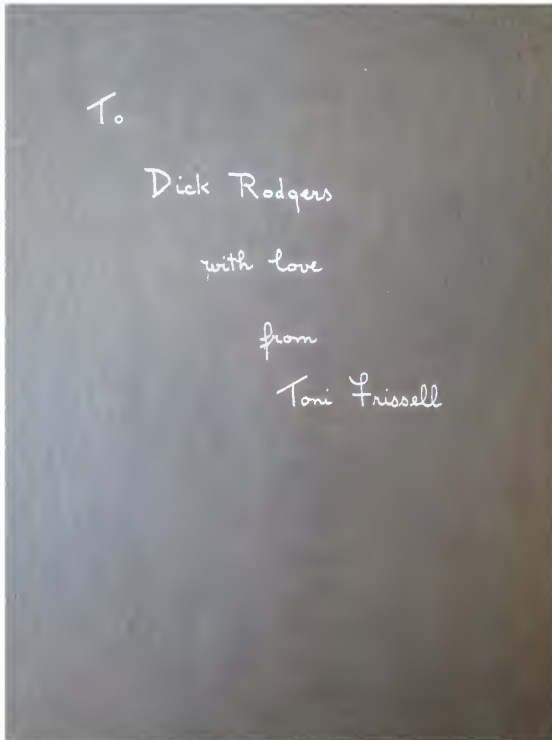


Figure 2.8: A note preceding the photos

Typical production stills of the Broadway musical are shown in this section, but a great inclusion are pictures given to Richard Rodgers from Toni Frissell, who possibly took the photos as well (Figure 2.8—2.23). This pictures come from Richard Rodger's Papers at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. It adds a personal element to the exhibition.



Figure 2.9



Figure 2.10



Figure 2.11



Figure 2.12



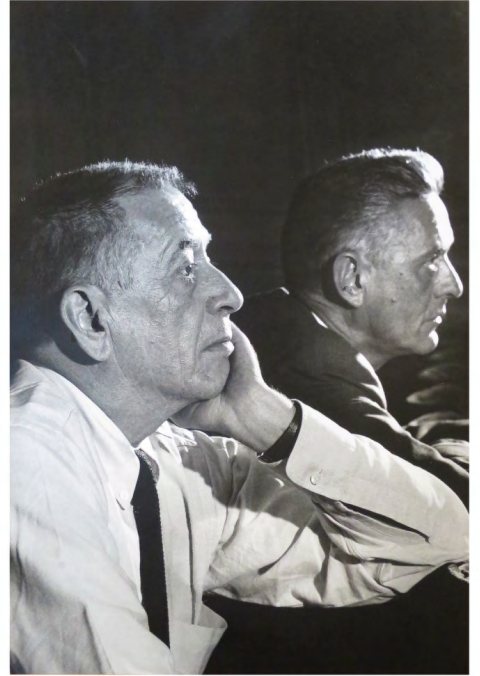


Figure 2.13 – 2.17







Figure 2.18 – 2.21



Figure 2.22 – 2.23

The *Broadway* section of the special exhibition also contains paper artifacts, such as the original Playbill, sheet music from the composers, and letters. Video could be included of the original production of the musical if available. Audio and/or video recordings of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein composing music are included in this section.

The original drawing by Al Hirschfield of the original Broadway cast of *The Sound of Music* is included in this exhibit (Figure 2.1). Hirschfield was a cartoonist who had a huge influence in New York City popular culture. He drew stage and film productions. Having a drawing made by Hirschfield marked one's importance to American culture. His drawing of *The Sound of Music* expresses the influence the musical had on the culture.



In addition, the *Broadway* section includes biographic sub-sections of *Oscar Hammerstein, II*, *Rodger Hammerstein*, and *Mary Martin*. Rodgers and Hammerstein (Figure 2.) had a very successful partnership in writing songs for Broadway. Their works are considered to be part of the Great American Songbook.



Figure 2.24: Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, II

Understanding who they are and what they accomplished provide patrons background information of the songwriters and establishes their importance. The general public is unaware of who Mary Martin is. Though she's not a well-known film actress, she was a well-respected stage actress at her time. This sub-section honors her contribution to the stage, especially *The Sound of Music*.

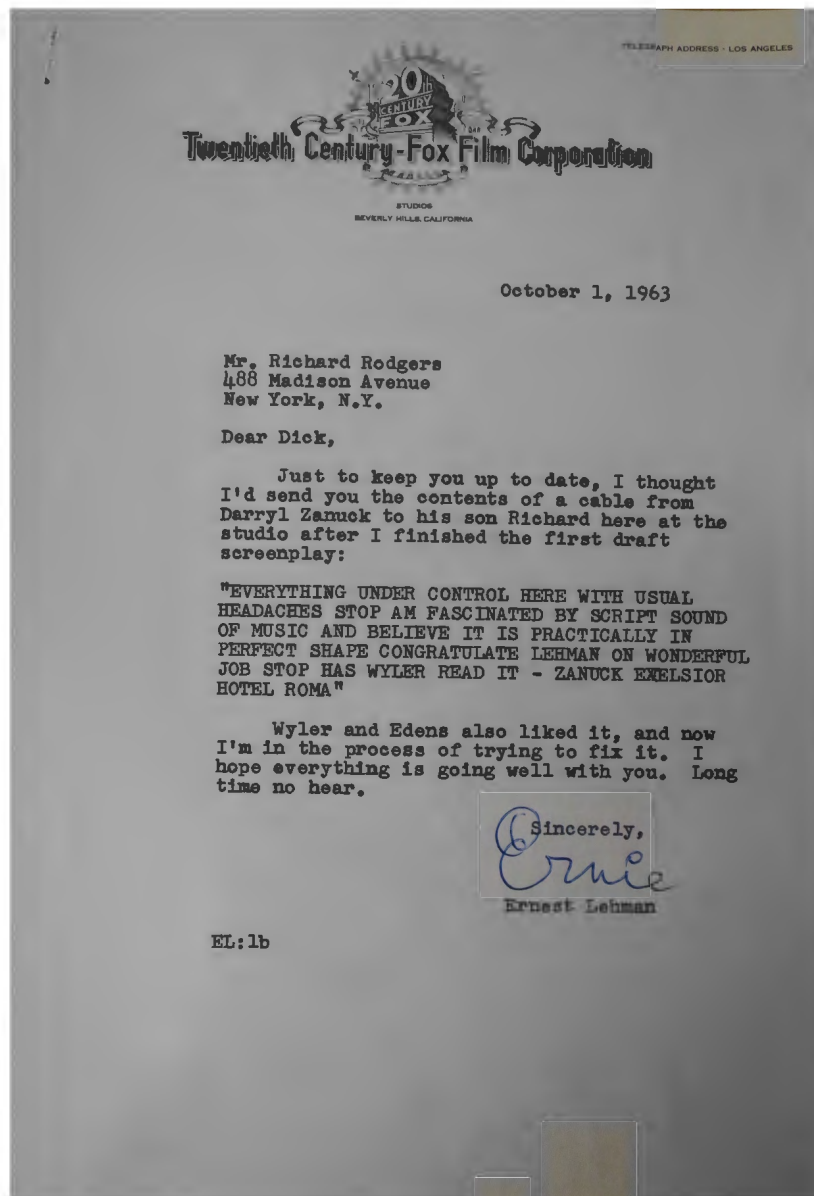


Figure 3.1: Screenwriter Ernest Lehman writes a letter to Richard Rodgers

**III. Pre-production & Production.** The *Pre-Production* segment is limited because some, or even most, pre-production material would be integrated with production material so that patrons could see the progression of film elements from an idea to fruition. Included in the *Pre-Production* section are the biographic sub-sections for the screenwriter *Ernest Lehrman*, associate producer *Saul Chaplin*, and director *Robert Wise*. All have had their own success, and all have had their accolades. What makes these three particularly special is that they've worked together before on

another movie musical, *West Side Story*. Information in this section includes how they came together again for *The Sound of Music*. Understanding these three as a team contributes to the idea that film is a collaborative effort. This collaborative effort proved successful through their last movie musical created together. Because this movie musical needed the approval of Richard Rodgers, a picture of their first meeting is important (Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2: Richard Rodgers meets with Robert Wise and Saul Chaplin

This section includes paper documents, like notes on the script or correspondence. One interesting letter included in the exhibition is a letter written to Richard Rodgers from Ernest Lehman about receiving praise from the studio about his first draft of *The Sound of Music* (Figure 3.1)

The *Pre-Production* section also contains music elements that were necessary to prepare for filming. Songs with lyrics were pre-recorded, so that these could be played back on the set. Pictures are shown of this process (Figure 3.3, 3.4).



Figure 3.3: Irwin Kostaw, Saul Chaplin, & Julie Andrews rehearsing with an orchestra

Various takes and versions of songs previously unreleased can be heard. One significant addition is the sound recordings of Christopher Plummer, whose singing was eventually dubbed by Bill Lee. Robert Wise dubbed Plummer's singing voice because it didn't fit in with the scope of the film. Plummer eventually agreed. Hearing sound clips of his singing shows at what level Plummer's singing was in contrast to where it needed to be for the film.

*Pre-Production* contains photos and some footage of dance rehearsals (Figure 3.5, 3.6). These photos show an important process before principal photography.



Figure 3.4: Charmain Carr practicing the guitar



Figure 3.5: The von Trapp kids rehearsing a dance



Figure 3.6: Choreographer Marc Breaux and Julie Andrews rehearse





Figure 3.1: Dorothy Jeakins

Another element in the *Pre-Production* section is costume design. The sketches by Dorothy Jeakins (Figure 3.1) are works of art in itself and are worth displaying as illustrations. The Academy has some of these sketches (Figure 3.2, 3.3). Costumes in *The Sound of Music* are specifically important because they are mentioned in the narrative. The kids and the captains tell Maria how ugly her dress is. Also, the drapes in Maria's room become play clothes for the kids, which then becomes a topic of argument between Maria and Georg. In addition, Baroness tells Maria to wear the

dress that the Captain couldn't keep his eyes off of.



Figure 3.2: Jeakins' costume sketches owned by the Academy



Figure 3.3: Jeakins' costume sketches owned by the Academy

Some of Jeakins' sketches will be included with costumes in display for patrons to compare the concepts with the actualizations. Also, photographs included are test shots in costumes (Figure 3.4) and other optional character looks (Figure 3.5).



Figure 3.4 Julie Andrews in costume test shots

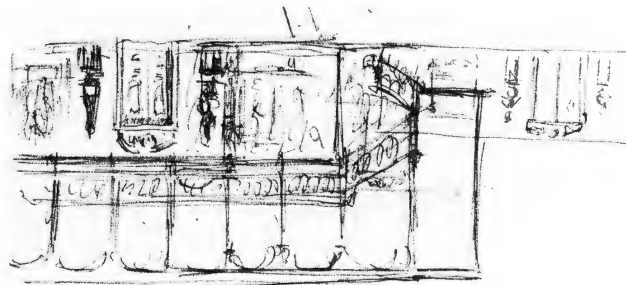


*Different looks for Liesl.*



Figure 3.5: Charmian Carr shows a couple of hairstyles for Liesl

Artifacts in the *Pre Production* subsection include sketches for the set design (Figure 3.6). These sketches show the creative process and an essential element in creating a film.



*You never know when inspiration will strike. Boris Leven, doodling, sketched the von Trapp staircase onto a Christmas card he'd received from his mailman.*



*(Below) Set design paintings: graveyard (top); Mother Abbess's reception corridor (bottom). Artist: Ed Granes.*



Figure 3.6: Set design sketches









Figure 3.10: Soaking the cast for the scene



Figure 3.10: Some of Maria's costumes



Figure 3.11, 3.12: Dorothy Jeakins' sketch of a von Trapp child's sailor dress. Below, a test shot of the sailor dresses. Some costumes on display in the *Production* section will have the sketches and test shots with them.



Figure 3.13: Playclothes made from drapes

Some of the artifacts, like photos and video, are from the cast and their families' personal collections (Figure 3.14—3.20). This makes this section more personal and adds intimacy to the exhibition. Here is a link to a montage of home videos during the filming at Salzburg: <http://youtu.be/x7ZSkbRg4sk>



*Anna Lee.*



*Waiting for the crew to set up another shot in "I Have Confidence."*



*Andrews and on-screen "son," Duane Chase.*

Figure 3.14



*Peggy Wood and Anna Lee begin a day of sightseeing. (From the personal collection of Portia Nelson.)*



*Dee Dee Wood with baby, Michael. Julie Andrews walking Emma Kate. (From the personal collection of Portia Nelson.)*

Figure 3.15





*A candid snapshot captures Julie Andrews with her daughter, enjoying the view of Salzburg from their hotel room. (From the personal collection of Portia Nelson.)*



*Portia Nelson taking a coffee break. (From the personal collection of Dee Dee Wood.)*



*Angela Cartwright. (From the personal collection of Portia Nelson.)*

Figure 3.16





*Relaxing between shots.*



*"Will the real Julie please stand up?" Julie Andrews and her stand-in, Larri Thomas (background).  
(From the personal collection of Dee Dee Wood.)*



*Chaplin, Wise, Andrews, and Danova.*

Figure 3.17



*Trying to stay warm.*



*From left: Marc Breau, Julie Andrews, Saul Chaplin, and Dee Dee Wood running through a rehearsal of "I Have Confidence." (From the personal collection of Portia Nelson.)*

Figure 3.18





*A breathtaking view.*

Figure 3.19



*Picking wildflowers.* (From the personal collection of Portia Nelson.)



*Wise looks on as the children sing.*

Figure 3.20

The best artifacts for this section show what occurred behind the scenes. Images from the film are already iconic and engrained in the minds of the people who have watched the film. To see pictures of the film in production emphasizes the process that was necessary to create those memorable scenes.

The *Production* section is organized by the final shooting schedule of the film. Arranging scenes and its corresponding artifacts in coordination with those days they were shot help the audience to understand the process of filmmaking. Because people are familiar with the structure of the plot and the sequence of scenes, changing the order of the scenes will give the audience a fresh look at the film. Here are some of the highlights:

*Los Angeles: March 26 - April 1, 1964 – Scene 17 (Int. Maria’s Bedroom-Night)*

This is the first scene ever filmed for *The Sound of Music*. It was also the first time Julie Andrews acquainted with the children (Figure 3.21, 3.22).



Figure 3.21: Rehearsing “My Favorite Things”



Figure 3.22: Robert Wise & Julie Andrews



Salzburg: May 11, 1964 – Scene 10 (Ext. Path over Toscaninihof-Day)

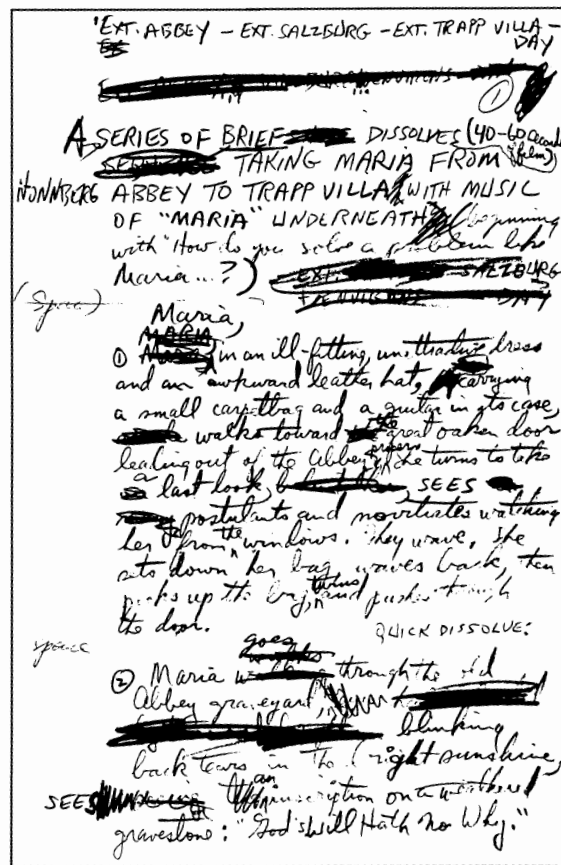


Figure 3.23: Ernest Lehman's notes on the "Walking Soliloquy" eventually becoming "I Have Confidence"

Called the "Walking Soliloquy," Ernest Lehman wrote in this scene for the movie where Maria starts at the abbey and ends in front of the Trapp Villa. It required a new song from Richard Rodgers without the lyrics of Oscar Hammerstein, II. Richard Rodgers spoke about writing the lyrics to his own song:

Bob Wise asked me if I can write a number for this place, and I did. It was a number that would take her from one place to another, and also take her mood from one attitude to another, and I hope it accomplished

both things. I wrote the lyrics for ["I Have Confidence"] and for "Something Good." I like doing my own lyrics. I felt self contained. As much as I loved Larry Hart and Oscar Hammerstein in... an accumulated forty years of work between the two, there was some sort of completion doing it all myself. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed getting up at four o'clock in the morning if I felt like it and going to work, and when it was all done, it was all mine. It may not have been as good as it might have been with somebody else doing the words, but... it was my kid.

This sound recording is included in a digital interaction of this scene.

*Salzburg: June 28 - July 2, 1964 – Scene 2 – Mellweg (Ext. Maria's Mountain-Day)*

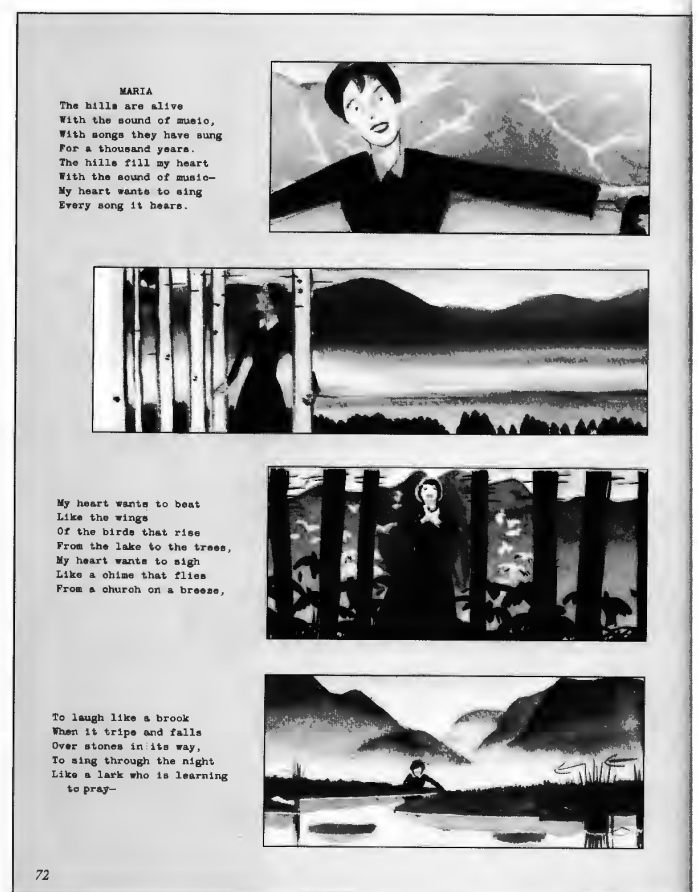


Figure 3.24: Storyboards of the opening scene



Figure 3.25: Julie Andrews and the whole crew on top of what was named "Maria's Mountain"



Figure 3.26: There were no paved roads leading up the mountain, so an ox and cart was used for transportation



Figure 3.27: Because most of the days were cloudy, lights were set up to appear sunny

*July 15 - 20, 1964 – Scene 45 (Int. Trapp Villa Ballroom-Night)*



Figure 3.X: "So Long, Farewell"

*July 29, 1964 – Scene 48 (Int. Maria's Bedroom-Night)*

This is one of the scenes that allow audiences to digitally interact. Through a touch screen, the audience can view video of the scene in three versions: the German film *Die Trapp Familie*, the Broadway play, and the film. Audiences can choose to also hear a narrator, noting the significant difference of each version. This multimedia interaction gives the audiences a look at various ways a story can be dramatized. It also shows how different people interpret a work.



*July 30 - August 3, 1964 – Scene 41 (Int. Trapp Villa-Day)*

The picture (Figure 3.29) shows the puppets on a shelf at an exhibit. These artifacts are best viewed in a glass case, so that the craftsmanship of the marionettes can be viewed from all sides. Also, Bil Baird's sketches of his marionettes are included in this section.



Figure 3.29: The marionettes from “The Lonely Goatherd” scene

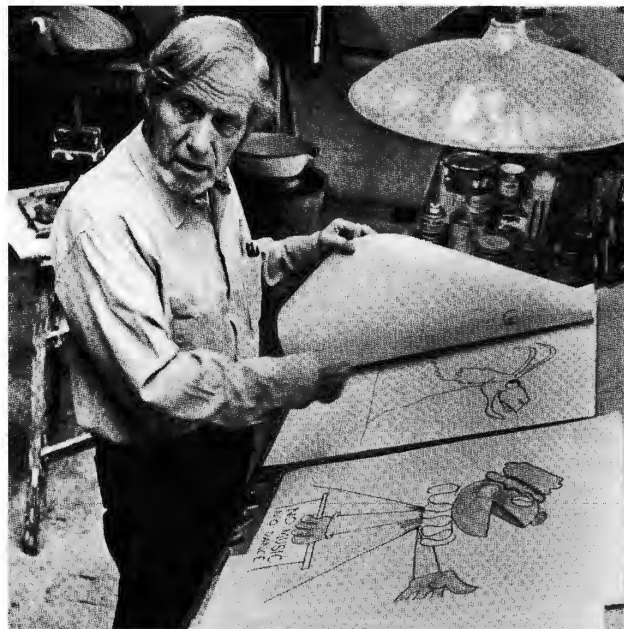


Figure 3.30: Bil Baird and his sketches



Figure 3.31: Robert Wise with the marionettes

The real Maria von Trapp came to the set in Salzburg. Robert Wise included her in the background (Figure 3.32, 3.33).



Figure 3.32: Julie Andrews meets the real Maria



Figure 3.33: Maria during the filming of *The Sound of Music*



Because many people have seen the film several times, including footage of deleted scenes provides something new for the audience (Figure 3.36).

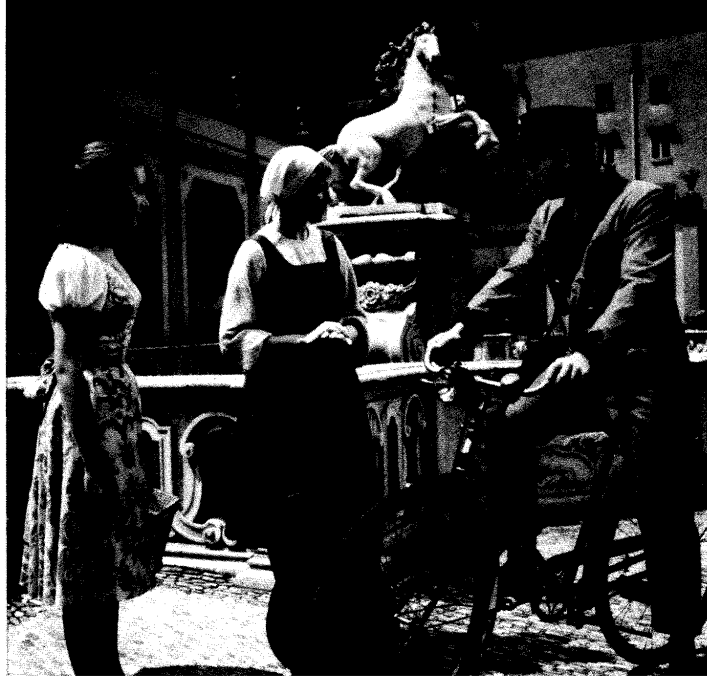


Figure 3.36: Rolf meets Maria.

Within the exhibition and in this section, there is a screening of the film *Salzburg, Sight and Sound*. It's a documentary that followed Charmian Carr around during the filming of *The Sound of Music* in Salzburg. It includes behind the scenes footage. Here is a clip of the documentary: <http://youtu.be/HNQIY43KzkM>



Figure 4.1: The original movie poster by Howard A. Terpning



Figure 4.2: International movie posters of *The Sound of Music*

IV. Marketing, Reception, Premiere, & the Academy Awards. Placed in this section are movie posters of *The Sound of Music*. The original by Howard A. Terpning (Figure 4.1) will be presented as well as other designs from different countries and languages (Figure 4.2).

The most important display of the reception of the film is a typed letter from Richard Rodgers (Figure 4.3—4.5). This is a significant part of the exhibition because it expresses what Rodgers thought of the film himself, especially since the letter hints that people didn't like the film.



RE. SOUND OF MUSIC

This is the place and time for me to explain how the film of the "Sound of Music" got to be such a mess and why I'm not responsible for any of it, where and how 20th Century broke its contract with Rodgers & Hammerstein, and, finally, ignored completely my invaluable advice and council. In this case, place and time are shouting down the wrong well. If the "Sound of Music" is a mess, it's the most delightful and endearing one I've ever encountered on the screen. Rather than insulting the stage version it compliments it and complements it. Even Oliver Smith, who did the stage sets, has to run second to the designer of the original Austrian Alps. Beautiful as these color backgrounds are, I found myself in the continual and happy predicament of not knowing whether to look at the scenery provided by the mountains or the scenery provided by Julie Andrews. As a composer I should be telling my friends that the orchestral background in the film was over-lush or over-sparse. Would that the living theater could provide such sound and such singing! Now I should begin to complain that this writer's giant brain was not put to work by the makers of the picture. According to contract it didn't have to be as 20th Century Fox made an outright purchase of the picture rights from Rodgers & Hammerstein and Lindsey and Crouse. Contrary to custom and belief, the studio through Robert Wise, the director, was in constant touch with me. There were many trans-continental phone calls and a number of personal encounters in which the approach and content of the film were discussed. The studio had the right to call upon me for the words

/2...

Figure 4.3: Page one of Richard Rodger's response to the film version of *The Sound of Music*

2.

and music of two additional songs. Mr. Wise and his associate Saul Chaplin came East to discuss these songs with me. In some unexpected way they accepted them and mysteriously managed to get them on the screen exactly as they were written. (I know this is getting out of hand but now that I realize how much I love the picture, there's no stopping me).

I hear a good deal of talk about Rodgers & Hammerstein and startling little about Lindsey & Crouse in relation to both the play and the picture. It occurs to me that there is a disheartening lack of understanding of the fact that a successful score depends basically on the book in which the score finds itself. It's pleasant indeed to read that "Do-Re-Me" is a good song but I wonder how good it would be without the play-situation behind it and the care with which it was allowed to assume its proper place in the story. Only part of the entertainment consists of music and lyrics and these would have no impact without the force and magnetism of a good story and good dialogue. These last two contributions were there originally in the stage play and have now been enhanced on the screen.

I must confess that I have become a little weary of the self-excusing howling of the original authors that the makers of a moving picture have committed every crime short of prisonable offense. At least once before, in the case of the "King And I", were Oscar and I treated to a beautiful and completely satisfying screen version. This

/3...

Figure 4.4: Page two of Richard Rodger's response to the film version of *The Sound of Music*

3.

one is even better. It has the immediacy of the stage and it has the scope and motion of film. There has been no tendency here to set up a camera and cash in on a theater hit. There has been, instead a forceful and emotional drive to use the picture medium to make a better work of the stage piece. I often wonder why so many moving pictures forget to "move". The essence of the business lies in the fact that it need never remain static. I've just made up a rule-of-thumb and a motto at the same time: "pictures that go places go places". Obviously the public is enchanted by the pace and versatility of the James Bond offerings, regardless of quality or lack of it. On the contrary it seems to resist offerings which talk and don't move. I think that to leave motion out of a film is as foolish as to omit the image itself. Thank goodness, the "Sound of Music" knows better than to make this mistake. Even the sound itself seems to move. In a rather lovely way, the sight of Julie Andrews running across a mountain meadow is as exciting as the "Guns of Navarone", especially if you prefer Julie Andrews to guns.

As the composer of, and voluntary consultant to the "Sound of Music", I have to express my delight with the way all of the piece has been handled. End of no complaint.

Richard Rodgers

Figure 4.5: Page three of Richard Rodgers's response to the film version of *The Sound of Music*



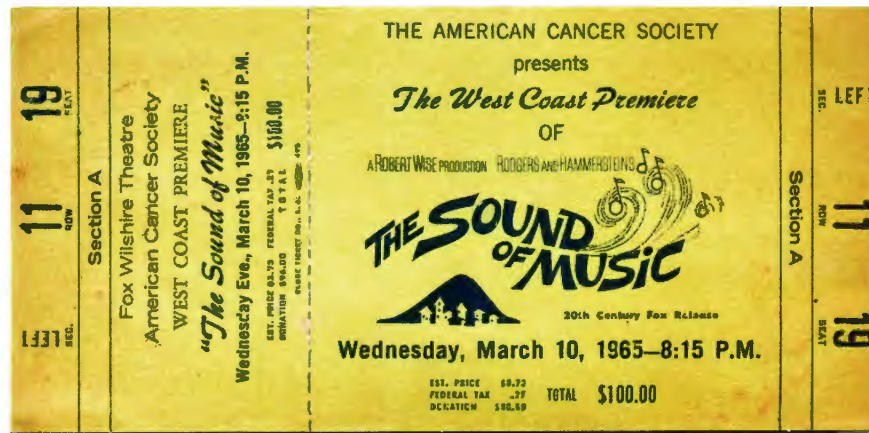


Figure 4.6: A ticket to the LA Premiere

This section also displays photographs and other artifacts (Figure 4.6) for the premiere of the film. It gives an audience a glimpse of the nights the movie opened. The photos also show what the Hollywood scene was like in the 1960s (Figure 4.7 — 4.8).



Figure 4.7: Richard Rodgers and Julie Andrews at the New York Premiere



*Gregory and Veronique Peck.*



*Andrews and date, Roddy McDowall.*



*Mia Farrow showed up at the premiere even though she had been passed over for the role of Liesl.*



*Mr. and Mrs. Groucho Marx.*

Figure 4.8: Pictures from the LA Premiere

Another part of this section recognizes the night of the 38<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards when *The Sound of Music* received five Oscars. Because the exhibition also presents a lifestyle of the past, video of the Oscar acceptance speeches are played on a television set and in a living room in a décor from the 1960s. This allows the audience to experience watching the Academy Awards the way it was watched when it first aired (Figure 4.9). Because these clips are easily accessible through YouTube, this presentation provides an experience that a new generation is unfamiliar with. Listed below are some of the videos of *The Sound of Music* receiving their Oscars:

Robert Wise Wins Best Director: [http://youtu.be/sS-4k2\\_0QQc](http://youtu.be/sS-4k2_0QQc)

The Sound of Music Wins Best Picture: <http://youtu.be/3cezcSOcJis>

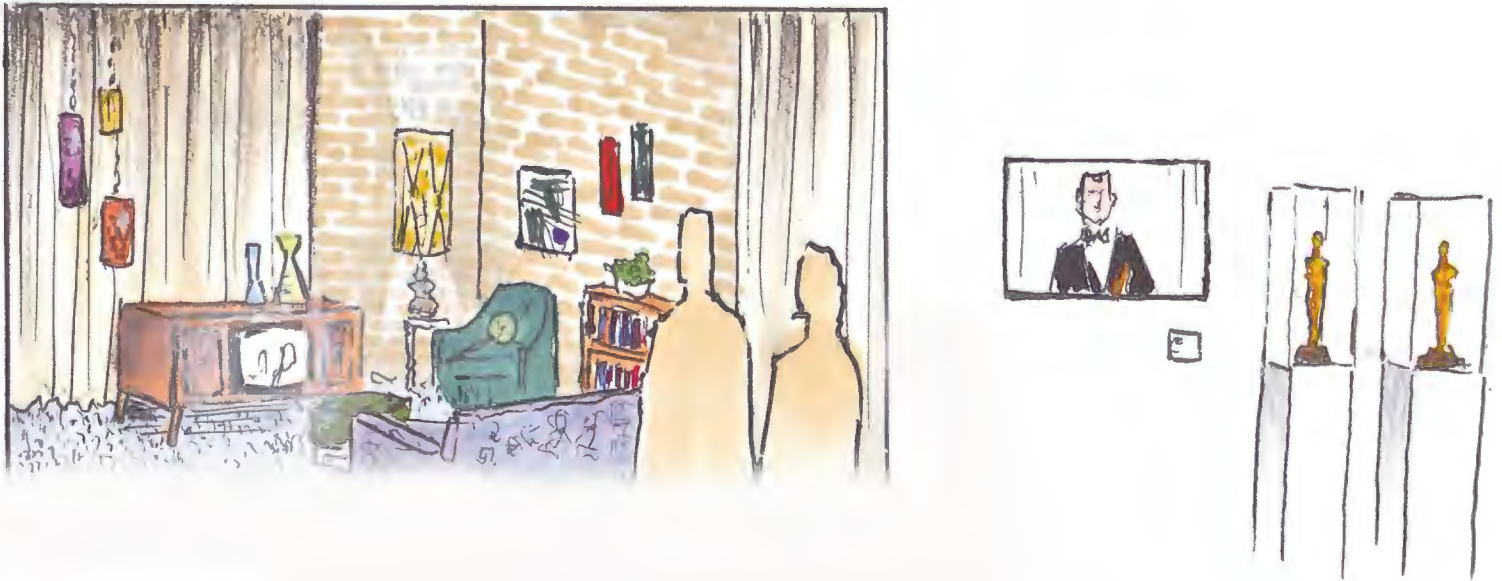


Figure 4.9: Concept drawing of 1960s living room recreation including the display of an official Oscar portrait and Oscar statuettes

Also part of this section are pictures (Figure 4.10) from the ceremony, official Oscar portraits, and the Oscar statuettes themselves.





Figure 4.10: Pictures from the ceremony

**V. After *Music* & Its Influence.** The closing of the exhibit would express the influence the film has had. Through interactive screens, audiences can find out information of what happen to both von Trapps, the real and fictional. The most sought out information is what happened to the fictional von Trapp children after *Music*.

This film clip (<http://youtu.be/g6j376yOlm4?list=UUrTfANCts5enz7j-KBo2fww>) shows Julie Andrews on her show singing with the real Maria von Trapp. Showing this in the exhibition is an example of what happened after *The Sound of Music*.

Video of interviews with musicians, actors, and filmmakers are shown to present the influence the film has had on their careers. This becomes more relevant as

this decade of films has seen more movie musicals. Here is a clip of how *The Sound of Music* influenced a pop music artist: <http://youtu.be/9sY-TsLXiDo>

Clips and merchandise of pop culture references are shown. Here is an example of *The Sound of Music* parodied in “Family Guy:”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eF04bqNIkNY>.

A form of interaction with guests through the museum is to have a section where audiences can insert their singing voice to some musical numbers from the movie. These clips can be shared through social media.

**Promotion.** Before the opening of the exhibition, a 70mm print is screened to celebrate the film’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, in which there can be a Q&A afterwards. This portion can be taped and placed on YouTube under “Academy Conversations.”

Though not through the Academy, here is an example of a screening with cast members speaking afterwards at The Last 70mm Festival:

<http://youtu.be/PZHSidnEphc>. Because of the legacy of the film, many stories of behind the scene have been documented on *The Sound of Music*, but hearing a first person version of the story adds a different level of validity. It provides intimacy with the audience and the cast member.

Sing-a-long screenings can also be in select theatres across the country.

**Why *The Sound of Music*?** 2015 will have many other films marking an anniversary. On the top of the following page is a list of some of the most popular titles of each anniversary year, including films that received Best Picture from the Academy Awards.

---

100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1915) – The Birth of a Nation  
 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1925) – The Gold Rush, The Phantom of the Opera, Battleship Potemkin  
 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1935) – Munity on the Bounty  
 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1940) – The Philadelphia Story, Rebecca  
 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1945) – The Bells of St. Mary's, The Lost Weekend  
 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1950) – All About Eve  
 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1955) – East of Eden, Rebel without a Cause, The Seven Year Itch, To Catch a Thief, Marty  
 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1965) – The Sound of Music, Help!  
 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1975) – Jaws, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Dog Day Afternoon, The Rocky Horror Picture Show  
 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1980) – The Shining, Raging Bull, Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, Ordinary People  
 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1985) – The Breakfast Club, Back to the Future, Out of Africa  
 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1990) – Dances with Wolves, Goodfellas, Ghost, Edward Scissorhands, Home Alone  
 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1995) – Seven, Toy Story, Braveheart, Casino,  
 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (2000) – Gladiator, Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Memento, Traffic  
 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (2005) – Sin City, Batman Begin, King Kong, Crash

---

Picking *The Sound of Music* required that I had to think like an Academy member. I thought about the 86<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards at the beginning of this year. They celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *The Wizard of Oz*. *Gone with the Wind* also celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and it received some Oscars, but it wasn't honored at the Academy Awards. There was no official word on why they chose *The Wizard of Oz* over *Gone with the Wind*. Many consider the subject matter in *Gone with the Wind* a bit controversial through its portrayal of African Americans and slavery. Honoring that film at the Academy Awards would contradict one of the nominated films, and eventual winner, *12 Years a Slave*. Out of all the other nominated films from 1939, another film that has stood the test of time is *The Wizard of Oz*. A huge part of that is because it's a family film, which means it resonates with many generations. *The Sound of Music* would be along the same lines as *The Wizard of Oz*, both are musical films that everyone can enjoy. Not only does the multigenerational audience give popularity to *The Sound of Music*, but also, the international success. These two factors qualify *The Sound of Music* as the best candidate to have a special exhibition.



One of the underlying themes of the film expresses the power of art and the way it can affect us. Richard Rodgers said that one of the reasons they called the show *The Sound of Music* is because it is the sound of music that the Captain hears that changes his heart and into another man. Musicals have become a relevant part in American history. They've provided America a way to escape from the hardships of life and uplift the country in times of trouble. Robert Wise believes:

...one important element for which none of us connected with *The Sound of Music* could take credit—timing. It isn't mentioned because it was the X factor, the one thing that no one could depend on and on which no one ever wanted to make a guess. *The Sound of Music* was released in the spring of 1965. The date was not picked arbitrarily, nor was it selected on the basis of some arcane chart. It was released then because, after all the work and the previews, that is simply when it was deemed ready to be shown to the public. And that, of course, was when the question of timing first came to the fore. [1965] was a volatile year in the United States and throughout the world. Newspapers carried headlines of the war in Vietnam, a cultural revolution was beginning to spread throughout the country, and people needed old-fashioned ideals to hold on to. The moviegoing public was ready, possibly even eager, for a film like this. Besides an outstanding score and an excellent cast, it had a heartwarming story, good humor, someone to love and someone to hate, and seven adorable children" (Hirsch x)

Musicals have reminded America of important values that have been aspired to.

In *The Sound of Music*, Max tells Maria the significance of the children performing: "This is for Austria." Having the children sing would establish their Austrian national identity while the country was under Anschluss by the Nazis. Anthologists note that the way culture is passed on is through language, food, and song and dance. The importance of preserving *The Sound of Music* is to pass on American heritage. The film has become so much a part of American culture, and yet has even had an effect around the world. Though the story is about an Austrian family, the way it was told was through an American filmmaker. American writers wrote the musical book and screenplay. American composers wrote the music. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, II are a couple of the most important American composers. They are part of the Great American Songbook. This film was made possible through an American film studio, and it was only through these means that the film achieved the scope that it did. This iconic piece of motion picture art establishes American culture. Preserving this film is saving a way of life.

## Bibliography

- Bronson, Fred. *The Sound of Music Family Scrapbook*. Milwaukee, WI: Applause, 2011. Print.
- Gottfried, Martin. *Broadway Musicals*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1979. Print.
- Green, Stanley, and Cary Ginell. *Broadway Musicals: Show by Show*. 7th ed. Milwaukee, WI: Applause Theater & Cinema, 2011. Print.
- Hirsch, Julia Antopol. *The Sound of Music: The Making of America's Favorite Movie*. Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1993. Print.
- Matessino, Michael. (1995). [Liner notes]. In *The Sound of Music: 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Collector's Edition* [CD]. New York, NY: BMG Music
- New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Richard Rodgers Papers, Richard Rodgers Scrapbook
- <http://www.oscars.org/library>
- The Sound of Music*. Dir. Robert Wise. Perf. Julie Andrews. 20th Century Fox, 1965.
- Blu-ray.
- <http://www.trappfamily.com/story>



Timothy Crouse wrote, “For at heart, the play is about the possibility of growth at any age—the willingness to open ourselves to the flow of our true lives and to allow ourselves to hear the sound of our own unique music, which is the door to real freedom.”

“...the Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals were always first and foremost about the people inhabiting the stories: Believable people in believable situations that audiences all over the world, and over the years, could consistently identify with. Through their songs Rodgers and Hammerstein revealed the inner workings of their characters and explored two kinds of love—the kind that was meant to be, and the kind that could never be... One underlying belief permeates their work—that humanity longs for dignity and nobility, and that these can always be found if one looks hard enough” (Matessino).