The Sound of Music Interactive
Teacher’s Guide

The Sound of Music Interactive is a musical touring program that will entertain and educate students, featuring songs from the Award-winning musical, “The Sound of Music.” Students will learn about the history of Maria Von Trapp and her family, and the events of Pre-World War II Austria that drove them from their home country. Students will interact with the actors as the Von Trapp children.

Maria Kutschera

Maria Augusta Kutschera was born on a train enroute to Vienna on January 26th, 1905. Her mother died in a very tragic accident when Maria was only two years old, and Maria was raised by her father’s elderly cousin. She would visit with her father periodically, but he was nearly a stranger to her, and also died while Maria was still at a relatively young age. She lived in a strict household, raised as a socialist and atheist, cynical towards religion.

Her love for music pulled her into a church, thinking she was attending a concert by Bach. Instead, Maria found herself caught up in the words of the priest, and was overwhelmed. The course of her life was changed, and she would devote herself to the Nonnberg Benedictine Convent. Having previously spent her entire life devoted to outdoor activities, the sudden change to the confinement of the convent severely affected her health. This played a large part in the decision that would send Maria to the Von Trapp home.

FACT FROM FICTION: The musical and movie portray Maria as a governess to all seven children, when in fact, she was to take care of one child who was bedridden with rheumatic fever.

Julie Andrews, who plays Maria in the film version of “The Sound of Music,” invited Maria Von Trapp onto her show, “The Julie Andrews Hour.” Visit the links below to see the real Maria and the film’s Maria interact:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6j376yOlI4 (Maria teaches Julie to yodel)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Juaz5UI6gs (Interview; poor video quality)

The Von Trapp Family

George Von Trapp was born on April 4th, 1880. He carried the title of Ritter Von Trapp, which, translated to English, is the equivalent to being knighted. He was awarded knighthood for his actions at sea, serving as a Captain in the Austro-Hungarian Navy. As a U-Boat commander, he sunk or captured over a dozen enemy vessels in World War I.

He married his first wife, Agathe Whitehead, on January 10, 1911. She was the daughter of Robert Whitehead, who invented the first self-propelled torpedoes.

Together, George and Agathe had seven children. While caring for the children, Agathe contracted Scarlet Fever, and consequently died September 3rd, 1922.
FACT FROM FICTION: The names, ages and sexes of the Von Trapp children were changed for the movie. For example, the eldest child was a boy, but in the movie they made the eldest at female.

Family Biography: http://www.trappfamily.com/trapp-family-biography.htm

Continents
In “The Sound of Music Interactive!” we talk about the location of Austria, and how it is located within the continent of Europe. As a comparison, the United States is located in the continent of North America.

COLORING WORKSHEETS
The following websites will allow you to create your own worksheets to help identify the different continents. Pinpoint the approximate location of Austria, and also the approximate location of Oklahoma!

http://www.worksheetworks.com/geography/world/robinson/oceans-continents.html

Original Movie Rights
Hollywood approached Maria Von Trapp for the rights to her story, but she denied them when they informed her that they only wanted the title. They were planning to create their own story to fit within the title.

Years later, an agent for a German film producer offered Maria $10,000 for the film rights to the book. Maria was advised to ask for a percentage in royalties, but was informed that a law forbade the German film company from paying royalties to foreigners (Don't forget, Maria was an American citizen by this time). Promised $10,000 within a year, another phone call offered immediate payment if Maria would accept only $9,000. She agreed, the payment arrived within two days, and she had officially signed away all film rights for the book.

This German-made movie is Die Trapp Familie, and was followed two years later by a sequel titled Die Trapp Familie in Amerika. Both films are available for purchase on Amazon, and the first film can be viewed on YouTube with English subtitles in a series of seven videos:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeKhf5eaOBk
Omitted Characters & Their Real-Life Parallels
Since we perform such a brief selection of “The Sound of Music,” there are many characters that our Interactive show does not talk about. Below are two characters that were not mentioned in our presentation, and the true-to-life character that he/she represents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the Musical</th>
<th>In Real Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Max Detweiler, a charming, energetic family friend, and Elsa Schrader’s sidekick. He is always looking out for himself, but still likeable, and pushes to promote the talent of the Von Trapps.</td>
<td>Dr. Franz Wasner, a priest, who recognized the family’s musical talent and taught them varied repertoire. He traveled with them when they left Austria, serving as their music director for 20 years (in addition to being a cherished family-friend).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the Musical</th>
<th>In Real Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elsa Schrader, a wealthy, attractive and sophisticated Baroness engaged to Captain Von Trapp. She is unaccustomed to having children in her life.</td>
<td>Princess Yvonne was supposed to be the future mother of the Von Trapp children. She continuously gave the Captain excuses as to why they should postpone their engagement. She informed Maria that the children would not be present when Yvonne and the Captain married, and that the children would be sent away to school as soon as they returned from their honeymoon.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vocabulary
If you would like to prepare your students beforehand for some of the questions we may ask and terms we may use, the following information might be helpful!

- In what country is Austria located?
- What is the primary language spoken in Austria?
- Abbey: a religious community where women would go to live their lives as nuns
- Governess: a lady employed to take charge of a child’s upbringing and education, often living in the same house
- U-Boat: a type of submarine developed in Germany
- Fraulein: a German term, equivalent to “Miss” (a young lady or woman who is not married)
- Telegraph: a way to communicate over long distances, transmitting and receiving messages using Morse code
- Edelweiss: a plant with small white flowers
The Sound of their Music!

While the music in the musical is written by Rodgers and Hammerstein, the music the Von Trapps actually sang was quite different. Father Wasner introduced them to the a capella music of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (“a capella” refers to music performed only by the voice, with no additional accompaniment from other instruments). However, they were also known to play all their own instruments for some performances. Visit the YouTube links below to hear/see the Von Trapp Family Choir:

Bach Chorale:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yb3U5IoyQp4

Es Wollt ein Jagerlein Jagen:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EdFHBOwMOE

Carol of the Drum:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwBSy3dVAKo

“Dancing in Gold” (original composition by the great-grandchildren of Captain Von Trapp)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rN6n12nXyPg

FACT FROM FICTION: The Von Trapps were “discovered” by the great opera singer, Lotte Lehman, who overheard them singing one day. She persuaded them to give a concert during the Salzburg Festival. Their performance at this festival is what initiated the offers of contracts from all over Europe and the United States.

Books:
All the information provided within our Interactive production and this study guide is just the tip of the iceberg! There is so much history and heart within the story of the Von Trapps, and exploring any or all of these books is highly suggested:

“The Last Salute” by Georg Von Trapp
“The Story of the Trapp Family Singers” by Maria Von Trapp
“Maria” by Maria Von Trapp
“The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany” by William L. Shirer