

From the Directors – The Sound of Music: An Important Show Content Reminder

The Sound of Music is a heartwarming story of love and courage, based on the real life of the Von Trapp Family Singers, one of the world's best-known concert groups in the era immediately preceding World War II. The musical won five Tony Awards on Broadway in 1959 including Best Musical and then in 1965 the film adaptation won five Academy Awards including Best Film! **It is a powerful, true story delivering beautiful and inspirational musical numbers.**

When an Austrian postulant proves too high-spirited for the religious life, she is sent out to serve as governess for the seven children of a widowed naval Captain. She falls in love with the children and their father, Captain Von Trapp. They are soon married and immediately upon returning from their honeymoon, the Captain is ordered to accept a commission in the German Navy. Opposing the Nazis, Captain Von Trapp and Maria flee Austria with their children to escape the horrors of the frightening new regime.

In this story the Nazi regime is the malevolent antagonist. The Nazi characters, the Nazi Swastika, and the immoral and evil history they represent triggers powerful negative emotions in us all. To all our valued families and friends - we are compelled to state clearly what should be obvious. ESCAPE, our Santa Clarita community and all clear-thinking members of society are against Nazis, the Swastika symbol, the murder of over 11 million Holocaust victims and anything to do with hate of that kind! To remove these elements from the story, by removing the Nazi symbol for example, is to try to erase history. These elements have their proper place in this historical, theatrical performance. They have *no rightful place* in our everyday lives.

Yes, the symbol *is* offensive. It is supposed to feel offensive in the context of this production. The use of this historic symbol of hate serves to cement the true and evil nature of our story's antagonist while also reminding us of this terrible travesty in history. To not include this clear representation of Hitler's Third Reich would diminish this story and devalue the tremendous suffering of its victims and equal sacrifice of all who fought against it. Our production serves both an artistic and educational purpose for our students and our audience.

Maria Von Trapp published her memoir, "The Trapp Family Singers" in 1949. Some of the real-life events and timeline were altered to heighten the events in the musical. But the key story points in her memoir (and that are dramatized in ***The Sound of Music***) were *not* heightened. Georg Von Trapp did write to the Nonnberg Abbey seeking a Nun to help tutor his children, following his wife's death. Soon after, he fell in love with, and married Maria. Georg eventually found the courage to oppose the Nazis regime and escaped the Nazi Anschluss with his whole family bringing their story, and their music with them. We hope you enjoy ESCAPE's production of ***The Sound of Music***.