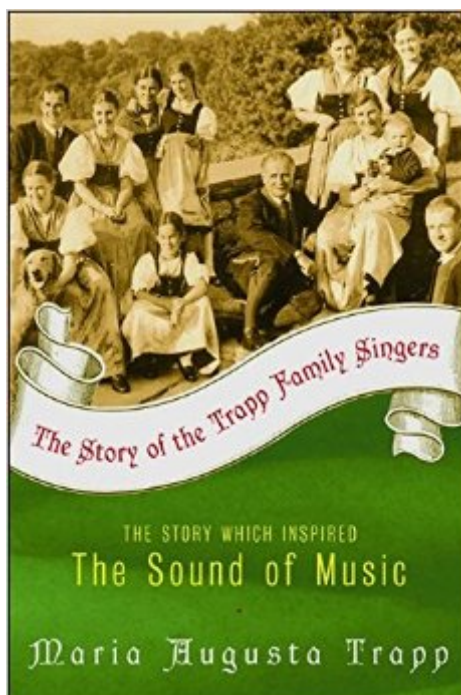


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The Story Of The Trapp Family Singers



Synopsis

With nearly 1,500 Broadway performances, six Tony Awards, more than three million albums sold, and five Academy Awards, *The Sound of Music*, based on the lives of Maria, the baron, and their singing children, is as familiar to most of us as our own family history. But much about the real-life woman and her family was left untold. Here, Baroness Maria Augusta Trapp tells in her own beautiful, simple words the extraordinary story of her romance with the baron, their escape from Nazi-occupied Austria, and their life in America. Now with photographs from the original edition.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (513 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This book is a personal family history of the Trapp Family Singers. It begins with Maria's days in the convent, traces the migrations of the family during the War years, and finishes in their family home in Vermont. Ever since seeing *The Sound of Music* for the first time, I have always been curious about what happened next- -did the entire family manage to safely climb the Alps to freedom? How did they pay for their journey to the US? And what connection do they have to the Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe, Vermont? Maria Trapp answers all of these questions in this book. While the musical version of their life did convey many of the main episodes, the storyline of the musical compressed these episodes so that they seemed to happen one after the other: Maria leaves the convent, teaches the children how to sing, marries their father, and they flee the country at the outbreak of the war, all within 2 hours. Phew! Like the musical, this book also starts with Maria's last day in the convent, but more than a year passed before she and the Baron were married, in 1927.

They were married some 12 years and had 2 additional children along the way before leaving Austria. Yes, as unknowns, the family did win a song festival, but that was in 1936, and by the time they fled Austria, they were already quite well-known and had toured Europe as a family singing group. Indeed, one additional reason for leaving the country when they did was that they had been invited to sing at Hitler's birthday. When driving past the Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe, I have always thought of it as a ritzy place, and assumed that the money to purchase it and develop it had come from the Baron's family fortune. In reading this book, I found that that was not the case at all.

My mother ran the gift shop at the Trapp Family summer camps in Stowe in the late '40s, and I spent my summers with her when I was three and four, the youngest child there. Agatha, the oldest daughter, appointed herself as my caretaker during those two summers, and I have many clear and wonderful memories of those times - Cor Unum, their home which later became the original Lodge, just completed; singing and dancing all day and evening, indoors and out; hiking Pico Peak singing; the family with their dirndls and braided crowns; and always, the figure of Maria, the Baroness, looming over all, larger than life, laughing and singing and leading the fun. That said, this book was one of my earliest attempts to read a "big people's" book. I loved it - still do! - and the way it captured the characters of the people I knew. But I also recall my mother telling me that while the Baroness was a wonderful raconteur, her book, like all memoirs, was somewhat skewed and biased. She was not the holy innocent who had no idea that the Captain was in love with her and who meekly married him only because it was the will of God. She was an immensely strong-willed woman who knew exactly what was going on and also knew that she was entirely ill-suited to contemplative convent life. Which isn't to say that her account is untrue; light that passes through a prism is still light, although bent, and her account, while similarly bent, is still fundamentally true. There is some truth in all she says, but some of the details have been fluffed up a bit. The family probably wouldn't have survived without her strength, will, and humor, and there is no doubt of her religiosity - she turned to charismatic Catholicism in her later years and was speaking in tongues.

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