

# Celebrating 60 Years of *The Sound of Music*

**"The Sound of Music"**

**"My Favorite Things"**

**"Laendler"**

**"Sixteen Going on Seventeen"**

**"Climb Ev'ry Mountain"**

## **The Hills Are Alive in Perfect Harmony!**

**This month, we honor the 60th anniversary of the beloved film *The Sound of Music* by singing and moving to songs that have inspired generations. First released in 1965, the film's unforgettable melodies and heartfelt story continue to resonate around the world 60 years later. Join us in reflecting on the enduring impact of this classic musical and experience the joy, nostalgia, and connection that its songs continue to bring.**



Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.



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## Film History & Synopsis

### The Sound of Music

***The Sound of Music* is a much-loved musical and movie. The music is by Richard Rodgers and the lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, with a book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse. The musical won the Tony Award for Best Musical in 1960 and the movie won the Oscar for Best Picture released in 1965.**

**The story is set in Austria in the late 1930s as World War II approaches. Maria, in training to become a nun, is employed as a governess for a large family. The widowed father, Captain von Trapp, uses military methods to run the household, but Maria brings spirit and adventure to the lives of the children. She is smitten with the children and eventually falls in love with their father. When Captain von Trapp is ordered to take a commission in the German Navy, the family makes plans to flee Austria.**

**Learn more by visiting our friends at:**

**[Rodgers and Hammerstein](https://rodgersandhammerstein.com/show/the-sound-of-music)**

**(<https://rodgersandhammerstein.com/show/the-sound-of-music>)**



**Song: "The Sound of Music" (1959)**

**Songwriters: Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein II**

**Brief Context:**

"The Sound of Music" is the title song from the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, introducing Maria and her love of music through vivid natural imagery—hills, birds, breeze, and more. To promote the show, singer Patti Page recorded the song and performed it on her national TV variety show. Mary Martin introduced it on Broadway in 1959, followed by Julie Andrews in the 1965 film. Still widely recognized, the song has appeared in films like *Yellow Submarine*, *Moulin Rouge*, and *Addams Family Values*, and continues to be covered over 60 years later.

**Activity: Singing and Discussion**

**What do you need?**

- **Perfect Harmony "The Sound of Music" video (YOUTUBE)**
- **Perfect Harmony "The Sound of Music" lyrics**

**Suggested Discussion Prompt**

The Sound of Music has been a cornerstone of many people's lives, offering timeless songs and themes of love, courage, and joy. Musical films like this connect us across generations, becoming more than entertainment—they are a source of comfort and inspiration.

Tell someone about a musical film that has shaped your life, and why the story resonates so deeply with you.



# **The Sound of Music**

**The hills are alive with the sound of music**

**With songs, they have sung for a thousand years**

**The hills fill my heart with the sound of music**

**My heart wants to sing every song it hears**

**My heart wants to beat like the wings of the birds**

**that rise from the lake to the trees**

**My heart wants to sigh like the chime that flies**

**from a church on a breeze**

**To laugh like a brook as it trips and falls over**

**stones on its way**

**To sing through the night like a lark who is**

**learning to pray**

**I go to the hills when my heart is lonely**

**I know I will hear what I've heard before**

**My heart will be blessed with the sound of music**

**And I'll sing once more**

## **Song: "My Favorite Things" (1959)**

**Songwriters: Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II**

### ***Brief Context:***

"My Favorite Things" is a song from *The Sound of Music*, with lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II inspired by a personal list of favorite things. He used vivid imagery, everyday experiences, and alliteration—like "raindrops on roses" and "warm woolen mittens." Set to a waltz-like melody that shifts from minor to major, the song is sung by Maria during a thunderstorm in the film, while in the stage version, it's sung by Maria and the Mother Abbess before Maria becomes a governess.

### ***Activity: Listening***

#### ***What do you need?***

- Perfect Harmony "My Favorite Things" video ([YOUTUBE](#))

#### ***Intentional Listening Activity***

This Perfect Harmony performance of "My Favorite Things" offers a fresh jazz vocal and instrumental take on the classic song from *The Sound of Music*. Listen closely to how the leader interprets the melody, rhythm, and phrasing differently than in the traditional film version. Then, [listen to Julie Andrews' original performance](#), where Maria sings the lyrics to comfort the children during a thunderstorm.

- How does the jazz style change the mood or feel of the song?
- Do the lyrics take on new meaning when paired with a different musical arrangement?
- Which version speaks to you more—and why?

There's no right or wrong answer—just listen with curiosity and see how music can be reinterpreted while keeping the heart of a song intact.



**Song: "Laendler" (original recording from the 1965 film)  
Based on The Ländler (a traditional Austrian Folk dance)**

**Brief Context:**

The Ländler is a traditional partner folk dance that originated in rural areas of Bavaria and Alpine Austria. It influenced the waltz, and composers from many European countries wrote accompanying music for the dance. A choreographed version was included in the movie, *The Sound of Music*, set to the film's score arranged by Irwin Kostal. Set against the backdrop of a grand party at the von Trapp estate, the scene begins as an innocent dance lesson. The dance between Captain von Trapp and Maria in *The Sound of Music* is one of the film's most powerful moments, filled with unspoken emotions and attraction.

**Activity: Movement**

**What do you need?**

- Perfect Harmony "Laendler" video ([YOUTUBE](#))

**Suggested Seated Movement**

Follow Perfect Harmony leader Karen or create your own seated movement!

**Use movements like . . .**

- Alternating triple step (quick-quick-slow)
- Alternating step-kick-kick
- Bows from side to side and facing front
- Alternating high claps (two at a time)



Julie Andrews (as Maria) and Christopher Plummer (as Captain von Trapp) dance the Ländler in the 1965 film, *The Sound of Music*.

**Song: "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" (1959)**

**Songwriters: Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II**

**Brief Context:**

"Sixteen Going on Seventeen" is a song from *The Sound of Music* that centers on Liesl von Trapp, the eldest child, as she experiences her first love. With a distant father and no mother for guidance, Liesl turns to a local boy, Rolf, for support. In the song, they exchange somewhat ironic lyrics—Liesl sees Rolf as mature and wise, while Rolf patronizingly treats her as a child in need of his advice.

**Activity: Singing**

In this solo rendition of the tune, the leader will only use the lyrics as sung by the character, Liesl.

**What do you need?**

- Perfect Harmony "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" video ([YOUTUBE](#))
- Perfect Harmony "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" lyrics

**Fun Fact**

Did you know "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" was the last musical number filmed for *The Sound of Music*? During the first day of shooting the charming gazebo dance, actress Charmian Carr (who played Liesl) slipped and crashed through a plate-glass window, spraining her ankle. Ever the professional, she continued filming—with her ankle bandaged. In earlier versions of the film, you can actually spot the bandage if you look closely!



Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., via Everett Collection



# **Sixteen Going on Seventeen**

**I am sixteen going on seventeen**

**I know that I'm naive**

**Fellows I meet may tell me I'm sweet**

**And willingly I believe**

**I am sixteen going on seventeen**

**Innocent as a rose**

**Bachelors dandies, drinkers of brandies**

**What do I know of those?**

**Totally unprepared am I**

**To face a world of men**

**Timid and shy and scared am I**

**Of things beyond my ken**

**I need someone older and wiser**

**Telling me what to do**

**You are seventeen going on eighteen**

**I'll depend on you**



## **Song: "Climb Ev'ry Mountain" (1959)**

**Songwriters: Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II**

### **Brief Context:**

"Climb Ev'ry Mountain" is an inspirational song from *The Sound of Music*, with a melody that mirrors the upward motion described in the lyrics. Using imagery of a journey—mountains, paths, streams—it symbolizes the search for purpose and the pursuit of dreams. In the show, the Mother Abbess sings it to Maria as she wrestles with her feelings and life direction. The song remains a powerful reminder to face life's challenges and follow your dreams.

### **Activity: Singing**

#### **What do you need?**

- Perfect Harmony "Climb Ev'ry Mountain" video ([YOUTUBE](#))
- Perfect Harmony "Climb Ev'ry Mountain" lyrics

### **Explore the Archives**

In the Songbook Library & Archives, we are proud to preserve the collection of Herbert Spencer, a Chilean-born American composer, arranger, and orchestrator for many films and shows from the 1940s through the 1990s. In his later years, he worked with John Williams on the scores for *Star Wars*, the *Indiana Jones* movies, *ET*, *Jaws* and many other iconic films. He also worked on *The Sound of Music*.

His collection contains the pencil written cues for several songs from *The Sound of Music* including "I'll Climb Every Mountain" (officially "Climb Ev'ry Mountain"). Upon donation of his collection, Carmen Spencer shared, "Everyone in town was working on the movie as it had 'wall to wall' music and time was always short."



Headshot of Herbert W. Spencer, source unknown.



# **Pencil written cues for "I'll Climb Every Mountain" by Herbert Spencer**

*I'll climb Every Mountain*

W.W.

Trpts

Horns

Tromb

Straps

W.W.

Trpts

Horns

Tromb

Straps

**Herbert Spencer Collection, Great American Songbook Foundation**



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# **Climb Ev'ry Mountain**

**Climb ev'ry mountain,  
Search high and low,  
Follow ev'ry byway,  
Every path you know.**

**Climb ev'ry mountain,  
Ford ev'ry stream,  
Follow ev'ry rainbow  
Till you find your dream.**

**A dream that will need all the love you can give  
Ev'ry day of your life for as long as you live.**

**Climb ev'ry mountain,  
Ford ev'ry stream,  
Follow ev'ry rainbow  
Till you find your dream.**