

# RELAXED PERFORMANCE ACCESS GUIDE

Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 1:00 PM



## Welcome to the Grand Theatre!

We are looking forward to having you join us at the theatre.

This Relaxed Performance Access Guide will give audience members an idea of what their theatre experience will be like.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>What is a Relaxed Performance?</b> ... ..	3
<b>Getting Here</b> ... ..	4
<b>Quiet Zone</b> ... ..	5
<b>Chill Out Zone</b> ... ..	6
<b>The Theatre</b> ... ..	7
<b>Orchestra Pit</b> ... ..	8
<b>Seating Map</b> ... ..	9
<b>Quick Facts</b> ... ..	10
<b>Meet the Characters</b> ... ..	11-16
<b>Group of Characters</b> ... ..	17
<b>What We Know</b> ... ..	18
<b>Full Story Summary</b> ... ..	19-20
<b>Contact Us</b> ... ..	21

# WHAT IS A RELAXED PERFORMANCE?

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This performance is intended to be sensitive to and welcoming of neurodivergent audiences, including patrons on the autism spectrum, those with sensory and communication disorders, ADHD, learning or developmental disabilities, dementia, all members of the Disability community, or those who simply want a more relaxed theatre experience.

Relaxed Performances are specifically designed to welcome patrons who will benefit from a less restricted audience environment.

## **Audience members are encouraged to...**

- Leave or re-enter the theatre space at anytime.
- Move around, clap, speak, laugh, doodle, knit, dance, etc.
- Visit our lobby Chill Out Zone or Quiet Zone at anytime.
- Use phones or electronic devices like iPads. (*\*Please do not take photos or video recordings during the performance!*)
- Wear sunglasses or cover/close their eyes.
- Use sound dampening/cancelling headphones or cover ears.
- Wear any type of clothes that are comfortable to them.
- Bring in snacks or purchase snacks at our concessions, and eat inside the theatre. (*This is typically not allowed and we ask that you be mindful of allergies, mess, smells, etc.*)

## **During the performance ...**

- Sensory elements will be reduced (such as light and sound).
- There will be no startling effects (like strobe or heavy fog).
- The house lights will never fully go dark (ie: no “blackouts”).
- Production elements that may be a sensory overload will be explained at the beginning of the performance.

# GETTING HERE

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The Grand Theatre is located in central downtown London, Ontario, at:

**471 Richmond Street  
London, ON. N6A 3E4**

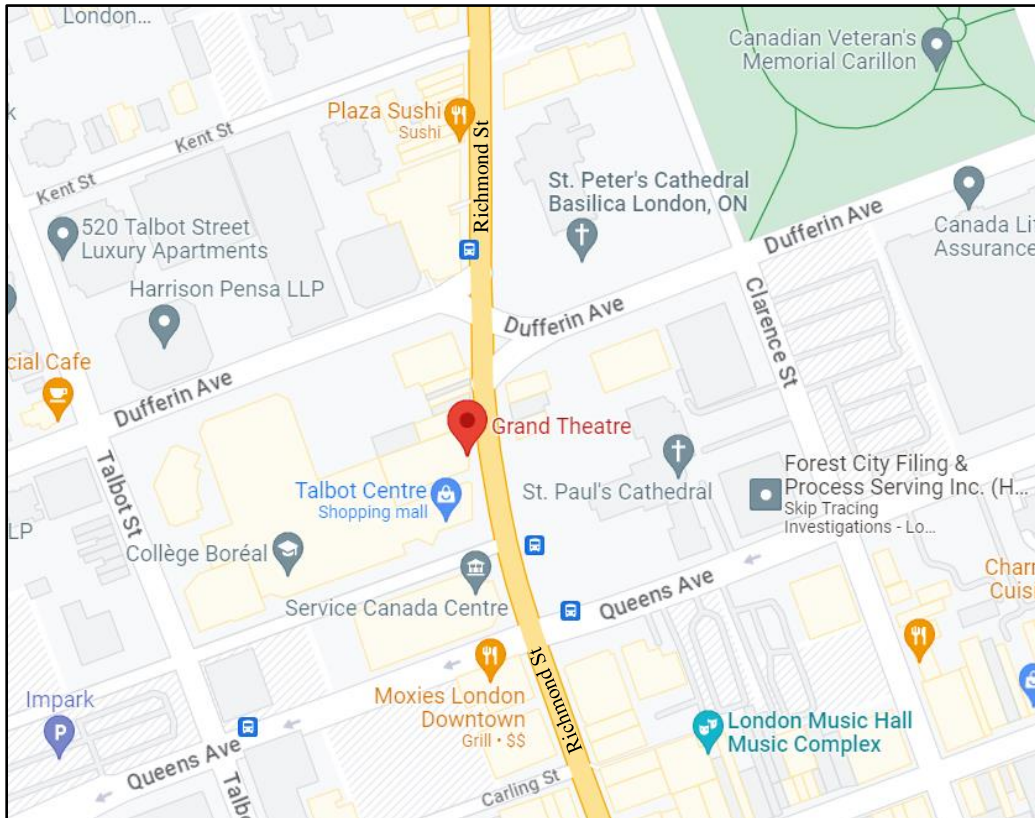
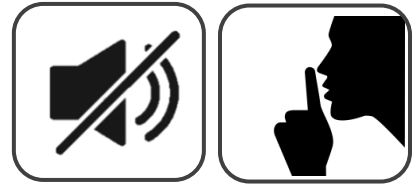


Image Description: Map of Downtown London, ON., with the Grand Theatre



Scan this QR code for a complete overview for how to get to the theatre, our spaces, and the services we offer.

# QUIET ZONE



This area is located on the first floor (1 floor below the main lobby) in the **AUBURN LOUNGE.**

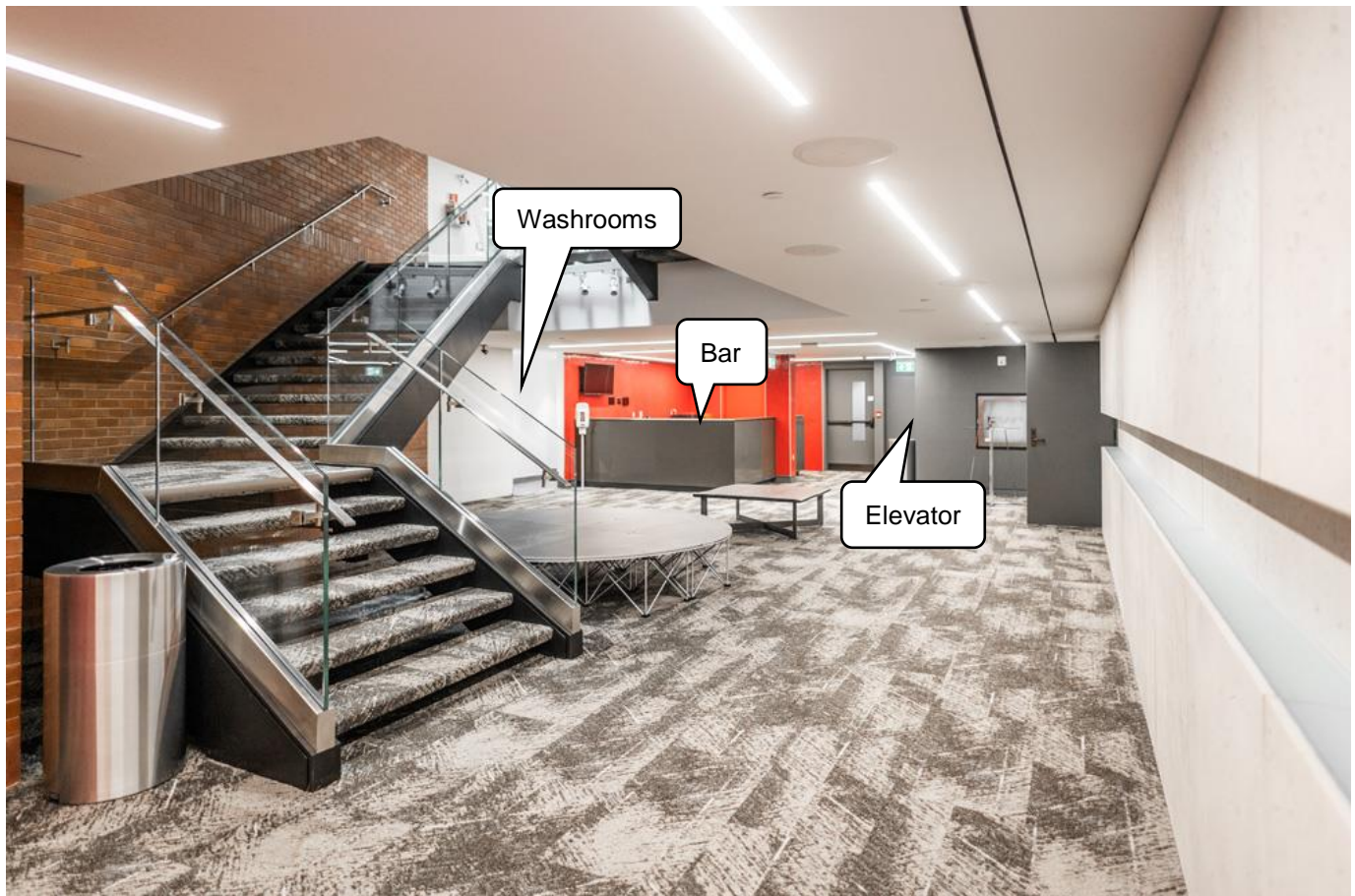
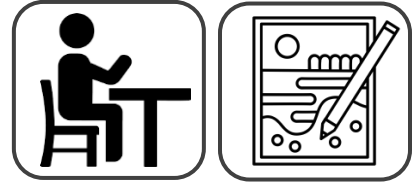


Image Description: There is a staircase to the left of the lounge. The floor is carpeted. There are many bright lights that illuminate the space.

You can access this space with stairs or by elevator. In this space, sounds, lights, and sensory elements are minimized to create a quieter area. You can eat/drink, or just hang out in this space. Feel free to use this Quiet Zone before, during, or after the performance!

# CHILL OUT ZONE



**This area is located on the fourth floor (the top floor) in the DREWLO LOUNGE.**

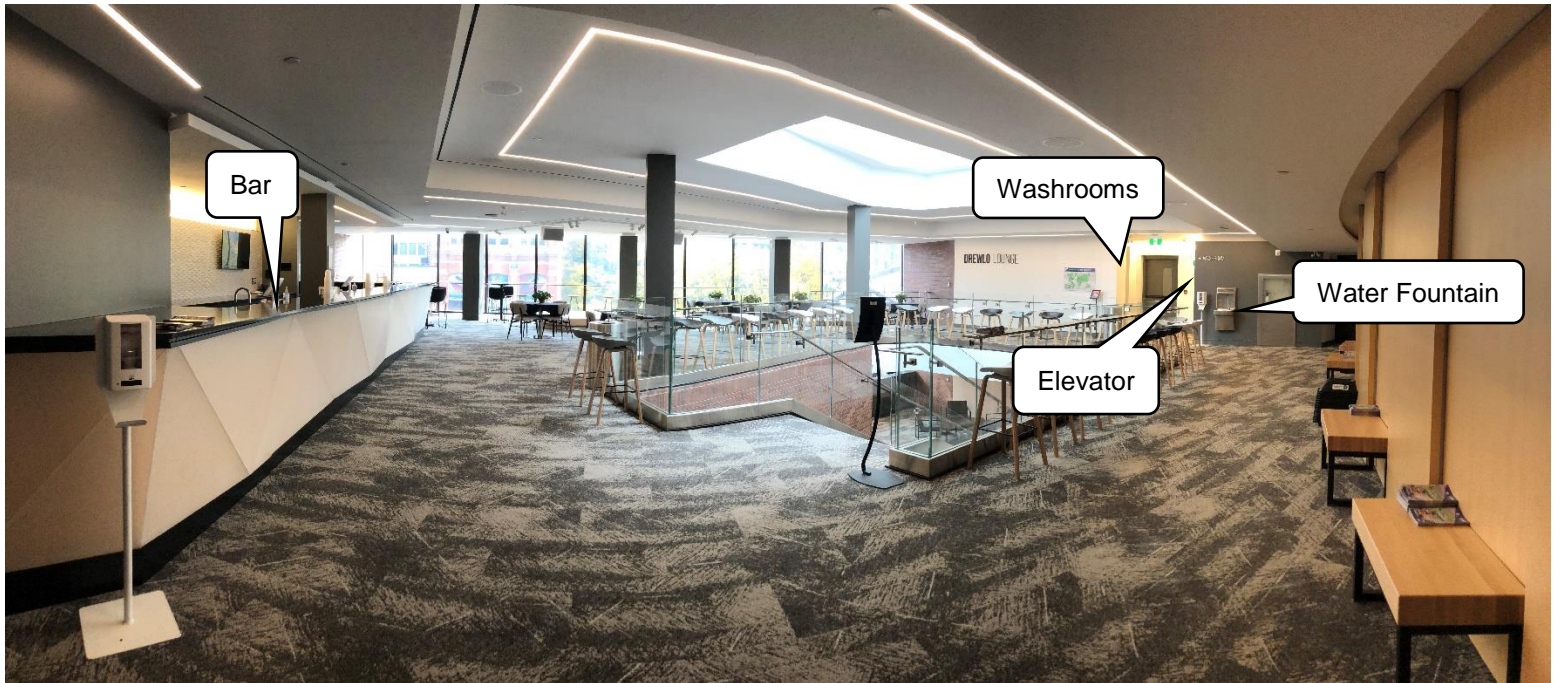


Image Description: There is a staircase in the middle of the lounge. The floor is carpeted. There is a skylight in the centre of the ceiling, and a wall full of windows on the farthest wall.

You can access this space with stairs or by elevator. In this space, there are many chairs, activities, and sensory devices for you to utilize.

You can eat/drink, or just hang out in this space. If the Chill Out Zone is a little too loud, you are welcome to use noise-cancelling headphones, or can go to our Quiet Zone on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Feel free to use this space before, during, or after the performance!

# THE THEATRE

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Image Description: Inside the Spriet Stage, looking at the stage from the side of the balcony level seating. There are several levels of red seats in rows. A red curtain is drawn across the

Thirty (30) minutes before the performance starts (at around 12:30PM for our 1:00PM matinee performance), you will hear chimes in our lobby spaces and the lights will pulse. This means it is time to wrap up in the lobby, use the washroom, and find your seat. If you aren't sure where you are sitting, you can ask a volunteer/usher to help you.

The seats are fixed, meaning they do not move. You can explore the theatre, but please do not come too close to the orchestra pit or stage for everyone's safety.

Lights will be on in the theatre and people may be talking. The show will begin with someone walking onstage to deliver a pre-show speech.

You can leave and re-enter the theatre anytime you'd like during a Relaxed Performance. Use the main doors at the back of the auditorium, or you can ask a staff member to help you exit the theatre.

# THE ORCHESTRA PIT



Image Description: Inside the Spriet Stage, looking at the stage from the right side of the orchestra level seating. There are labels pointing at the orchestra pit and the stage.

*The Sound of Music* is a musical. This means that there will be live music played on instruments by musicians in the Orchestra Pit.

## **Some moments of loud or unexpected sounds that you should expect are:**

1. After the pre-show speech at the start of the show. The instruments warm up, then bells chime before the nuns begin singing.
2. When we leave the Abbey and first see the von Trapp's home (staircase appears onstage), you will hear a high and loud whistle blast multiple times.
3. In Maria's bedroom, a thunder storm is happening outside of her window and you will hear some thunder sounds as the lights flash. It is not a real storm!
4. Some of the actors' voices get loud as they perform with emotions like anger or fear. We will lower the volume of their microphones, but their voices may still be louder than the rest of the show. Remember that the actors are only telling a story.

If these sounds are overwhelming, feel free cover your ears, use noise dampening/ cancelling headphones, or leave and re-enter the theatre anytime you'd like during this Relaxed Performance.



# SEATING MAP – SPRIET STAGE

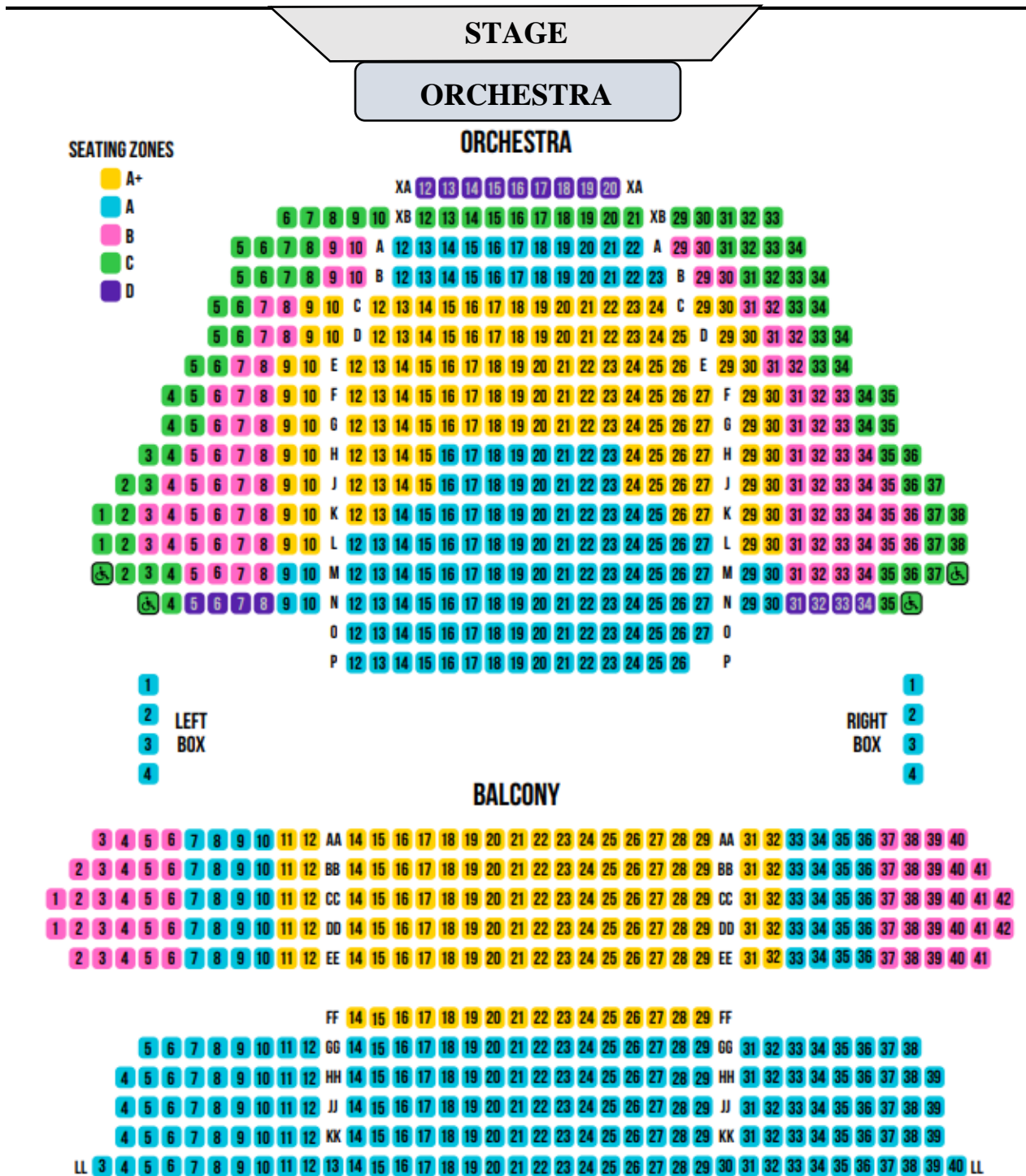


Image Description: A seating map of the Spriet Stage. The top map is the Orchestra level, and the bottom map is the Balcony level. Seats are in different colours to show different prices of tickets.

## QUICK FACTS: *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*

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**Age Recommendation:** 6+

**Production Advisory:** This production includes various sensory and visual elements. Bell chimes and whistles are used in various scenes, with thumping sounds emphasizing moments like marching & dancing. A bike headlight swings into the audience during a scene between Liesl and Rolf, while thunder sounds, and flashing lights occur when the children are in Maria’s room in Act I. The dialogue references the death of the children’s mother. Knocking sounds are heard during Maria’s visit to Mother Abbess. Political symbols, including Nazi flags, are displayed, and various characters speak “Heil Hitler” in Act I & II. Act II features searchlights, shouting, and a moment when a gun is pointed (but not fired). Actors walk through the audience in the Orchestra level in Act I & II, and may look at you throughout from stage but will not touch you.

**Content Advisory:** This production features depiction and discussion of Nazi Germany. Scenes involving Nazi imagery include discussions of the German invasion of Austria, use of the word “heil,” visual representations of swastikas, SS officers in uniforms, Nazis entering the scene through the audience, and moments that, while profound and important, may be frightening. This show also features loud noises and bright flashing lights, as well as the mention of the past death of a mother.

**Run Time:** Approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes which includes a 20-minute intermission.

When the performance should start	Intermission	When the performance should end
ACT I	(20 Minute Break)	ACT II
1:00 PM	2:20-2:40 PM	3:40 PM

### Short Summary:

*The Sound of Music* is the story of Maria, a free-spirited young woman who leaves her life at the Abbey to become a governess for the seven children of Captain Von Trapp. Through music and kindness, Maria brings joy and warmth back into the Von Trapp household, which has been dull since the death of the children's mother. As Maria and the Captain grow closer, they face the rising threat of Nazi occupation in Austria, leading the family to make a brave escape to preserve their freedom and values.



House Program



Audience Enrichment Guide

## MEET THE CHARACTERS

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### **Maria**

Played By:  
Dominique Leblanc

A spirited and warm-hearted postulant at the Nonnberg Abbey, she is curious, kind, and unafraid to speak her mind, driven by her love for life and music.



### **Captain von Trapp**

Played By:  
Adam Stevenson

The retired naval captain who has a strict exterior to suppress his grief, but deep down, is compassionate and protective of his family.



### **Mother Abbess / Party Guest / Fraulein Schweiger**

Played By:  
Janelle Cooper

Mother Abbess is strong and authoritative, and leads with wisdom and kindness, understanding Maria's struggle to find her purpose and path.



### **Max**

Played By:  
Andrew Hodwitz

A lively and charming man with a taste for luxury and witty humor; he is a loyal friend to the von Trapps.



**Elsa  
/ Nun / Trio**

Played By:  
Heather McGuigan

Elsa is a sophisticated and elegant baroness who carries herself with grace; she is strategic in her ambitions and decisions.



**Liesl / Nun**

Played By:  
Crystal Casera

Liesl is the eldest von Trapp child, navigating her teenage years and budding romantic interests; she is mature and caring, acting as a second mother to her siblings.

----- Crisp Apple Strudel Cast -----



**Friedrich**

Played By:  
Sam Harson

He presents himself with a tough and mature exterior, striving to take on a responsible and protective role in the family.



**Louisa**

Played By:  
Neela Noble

A playful and mischievous child, who enjoys pushing boundaries and testing authority.



**Kurt**

Played By:  
Lucas Zadorsky

A kind-hearted and playful boy with gentle nature, he is often the most mischievous of the siblings.



**Brigitta**

Played By:  
Alba Evora Weiler

Intelligent and perceptive, Brigitta loves reading and often provides honest and insightful observations about those around her.



**Martha**

Played By:  
Lilith Carson

Sweet and gentle, Martha is eager to please and often dreams of being special or unique.



**Gretl**

Played By:  
Freya Rajani

The youngest of the von Trapp children, Gretl is adorable and endearing, bringing joy and innocence to the family.

----- Crisp Apple Strudel Cast Ends -----



**Admiral Von Schreiber / Party Guest**

Played By:  
Robin Wilcock

Von Schreiber is a German admiral who is now working with the Nazi party to recruit Baron von Trapp.



**Rolf / Party Guest**

Played By:  
Eamon Stocks

Rolf is Liesl's charming young suitor and telegram boy who later becomes a Nazi soldier; he is gentle but conflicted by his political obligations.



**Sister Margaretta / Baroness Elberfeld / Trio**

Played By:  
Annie Ramos

Sister Margaretta is the warm and empathetic Mistress of Postulants, she is nurturing and always willing to listen to others with an open heart.



**Sister Sophia / Frau Zeller / Trio**

Played By:  
Alyssa LeClair

Sister Sophia is a rule-abiding and easygoing nun who supports her fellow sisters without judgement or criticism.



**Frau Schmidt /  
Sister Bertha**

Played By:  
Donna Garner

Sister Bertha is the stern Mistress of Novices who holds a rigid view on rules and discipline; her bluntness can be critical but grounded in her sense of duty.



**Baron Eberfeld /  
SS Guard**

Played By:  
Jeff Culbert

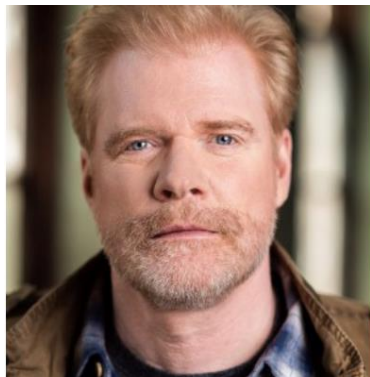
Baron Eberfeld is a neighbour and friend of Captain von Trapp. He is of the oldest family in the valley.



**Franz /  
SS Guard**

Played By:  
Curtis Sullivan

Franz is the von Trapp family's loyal butler disciplined and formal in demeanor; he secretly aligns with the Fascist regime.



**Herr Zeller /  
Priest**

Played By:  
Mark Harper

Herr Zeller is a harsh and imposing Nazi official whose main focus is enforcing order and political obedience.



**Ensemble**

Played By:  
Clea McCaffrey

Clea plays a Party Guest and a Nun. She also understudies Elsa, Ursula, New Postulant, Sister Berthe, Frau Schmidt, and Sister Margareta.



**Ensemble**

Played By:  
Vinnie Alberto

Vinnie plays a Party Guest and SS Guard. He also understudies Rolf and Franz.



Some of the groups of characters you will see in this musical are:

### Nuns



Image Description: A group of nuns are singing and wear black and white veils and habits. They stand in front of the Abbey garden arches with ivy growing across it.

### Storm Troopers



Image Description: A actor dressed in black formal uniform and hat is pointing up and looking alarmed. He also wears a red arm band which shows his affiliation with the Nazis.

### Party Guests



Image Description: Actors wear formal evening wear such as tuxedos and richly coloured gowns. Pairs of people stretch their arms out and dance with each other. A large staircase and wall are behind them.

### von Trapp



Image Description: The child actors who play the 7 von Trapp children are wearing blue and cream patterned play clothes. They stand around their father, Captain von Trapp, as he smiles at them. The Captain is wearing a dark coloured suit and has a whistle around his neck.

# WHAT WE KNOW

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## **The von Trapps:**

The von Trapp family consists of Captain Georg von Trapp and his seven children: Liesl, Friedrich, Louisa, Kurt, Brigitta, Marta, and Gretl. Captain von Trapp's wife passed away several years ago, and since her death, he has run the household in a very strict and disciplined manner. The children are used to having a stern father and obeying his every command. The family is wealthy but have experienced a lot of emotional difficulty. Their house is big and beautiful, but it feels cold and lacks the warmth of a happy family.

## **Maria:**

Maria is a young, free-spirited woman living at Nonnberg Abbey. She is training to become a nun but feels that life in the Abbey may not be her true calling. Maria loves to sing, explore, and connect with the world around her, which sometimes gets her in trouble at the Abbey. Mother Abbess notices that Maria is struggling to find her path, so she sends Maria to be the governess for Captain von Trapp's seven children. Maria is nervous about leaving the Abbey but agrees to go.

## **The Abbey:**

The Nonnberg Abbey is a place of peace, prayer, and reflection. The nuns, including the Reverend Mother, Sister Berthe, Sister Margareta, and Sister Sophia, care for each other and are devoted to their faith. They want Maria to find her purpose and happiness, even if it means leaving the Abbey.

The Abbey is like a second home for Maria, but she steps out into the world to discover where she truly belongs.

## **The Nazis:**

The story takes place in Austria in the late 1930s, during a time when the Nazis are taking control of the country. Captain von Trapp strongly opposes the Nazis, and his resistance to joining them creates tension later in the story. The Nazi threat looms over the family's happiness.

## **Music:**

Music is a central theme in the story. It represents joy, connection, and freedom. Maria's arrival brings music back into the lives of the von Trapps, who had stopped singing after the death of their mother. Songs like "Do-Re-Mi," "Edelweiss," and "My Favorite Things" play an important role in the characters' relationships.

## FULL STORY SUMMARY

There will be spoilers ahead! Special sensory flag moments (*\*appear like this\**).

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**ACT I:** In the sanctuary of Nonnberg Abbey, (*\*bell chimes\**) the nuns invoke Psalm 110 and sing songs of praise [**“Preludium”**]. One of the postulants, Maria, is nowhere to be found as she is out in the hills, where she goes “when her heart is lonely” [**“The Sound of Music”**]. Back at the Abbey, some of the sisters’ debate with Mother Abbess as to whether Maria is prepared for the monastic life [**“Maria”**]. Mother Abbess calls for Maria and discovers a shared love of a particular childhood song [**“My Favorite Things”**]. To help Maria mature before committing to the religious life, Mother Abbess sends her to serve as a governess to the seven children of a former naval officer, Captain Georg von Trapp [**“My Favorite Things” Reprise**]. Maria arrives and discovers that the Captain has, since the death of his wife, closed himself off emotionally. (*\*Captain’s whistle\**) The Captain introduces Maria to the children, who do not play, but march instead (*\*thumping\**). Realizing they have grown up without music in their lives, Maria teaches the children the basics of singing [**“Do-Re-Mi”**]. That evening, the oldest child, Liesl, sneaks away to meet Rolf (*\*bike light\**), a local boy caught up in the political fervor of the times. Warning her of the dangers of her innocence, he offers himself as a suitable protector, and Liesl accepts [**“Sixteen Going On Seventeen”**]. Meanwhile, (*\*thunder sound and flashing lights\**) a loud thunderstorm causes the frightened children to seek out Maria in her bedroom where she diverts their attention with a folk song [**“The Lonely Goatherd”**].

The Captain returns a month later with Elsa Schraeder, a sophisticated Viennese widow. They are accompanied by Max Detweiler, Third Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Culture, who is on the hunt for the perfect local singing group to perform at the annual Kaltzberg Festival. Elsa finds it charming here in the provinces but is frustrated that the Captain has yet to propose to her. Max explains what’s standing in the way, the fact that both are rich [**“How Can Love Survive?”**]. Rolf enters, looking for Liesl, (*Rolf heils Hitler\**) and the Captain orders him away, saying that he is Austrian, not German. (*\*Whistle\**) Maria arrives with the children, all wearing clothing that Maria has made from her old bedroom curtains causing the Captain to be embarrassed and enraged. Maria confronts him about how little he understands his children, and he orders her back to Nonnberg. But when he hears the children singing for Elsa [**“The Sound of Music” Reprise**], his heart opens. Moved that Maria has brought music back into his home, the Captain asks her to stay. Elsa is suspicious of Maria until she learns that Maria will be returning to the Abbey in September. The Captain throws a lavish party so the local gentry can meet Elsa [**“The Grand Waltz”**]. However, the political divide is widening between those who support the proposed German takeover and those who believe in Austrian sovereignty. As an Austrian Folk-dance play [**“Laendler”**], young Kurt tries to remember it with Maria, but the Captain steps in and, as they dance, they recognize their unspoken attraction. Brigitta confirms it to Maria, who promptly breaks away. At Elsa’s request, the children sing for the guests [**“So Long, Farewell”**]. Max is thrilled and realizes that a singing group of seven children is perfect for the festival. The children make their way to bed; the guests make their way to dinner; and Maria, confused by her encounter with the Captain, flees back to Nonnberg Abbey. (*\*Knocking\**) Maria tells Mother Abbess that she is ready to take the orders of poverty, obedience, and chastity [**“Morning Hymn”**]. But Mother Abbess, realizing that Maria has fallen in love, encourages Maria to return to the Captain and find the life she was born to live [**“Climb Ev’ry Mountain”**].

----- Intermission (20 Minutes) -----

**Act II:** Max and the children play together [**“The Lonely Goatherd Reprise”**]. In anticipation of the upcoming Kaltzberg Festival, Max rehearses with the children, but without Maria, they’d lost the joy of making music. Captain tells the children that he and Elsa are to be married. The children have mixed feelings about this news and try to cheer themselves up [**“My Favorite Things” Reprise**]. Suddenly, Maria returns, and they’re delighted! They tell Maria of the upcoming marriage between the Captain and Elsa. Maria’s heart is broken, but she resolves to fulfill her duties until arrangements can be made for a new governess.

The political situation is worsening, and Max and Elsa implore the Captain to weather the coming storm by being noncommittal [**“No Way to Stop It”**]. The Captain remains unwavering in his disgust for the Nazis, and he and Elsa realize that they cannot be together. Seeing Maria again, the Captain now understands what he and Maria have both known deep inside for many weeks [**“An Ordinary Couple”**]. They admit their love for one another and decide to be wed.

In Mother Abbess’ office, she and the Nuns of the Abbey prepare Maria for her wedding [**“Gadeamus Domino”**]. As the nuns watch, Maria walks down the aisle at her wedding in procession with the children and the Captain [**“Maria” Reprise**]. The procession continues, and the nuns appear behind the family [**“Confitemini Domino”**].

While Maria and the Captain are away on their honeymoon, the Anschluss occurs; Austria is annexed by Nazi Germany. The von Trapp house is the only one in the province not flying the flag of the Third Reich. The Captain and Maria return to find that much has changed and that many have joined ranks with the Nazis, including Rolf and Franz the butler. Max, without the Captain’s knowledge, has been readying the children for their performance at the festival, but the Captain refuses to allow his family to perform on behalf of an Austria which no longer exists, and Maria stands by him. Liesl now sees how much Maria truly loves the Captain [**“Sixteen Going on Seventeen” Reprise**].

Admiral von Schreiber of the Third Reich, accompanied by Herr Zeller, the local Nazi leader, arrives to inform Captain von Trapp that he must accept a commission in the German Navy and report immediately to Bremerhaven (*\*yelling and raised voices\**). Thinking quickly, Maria displays the program for the festival showing that the Trapp Family Singers, including the Captain as head of the family, are scheduled to perform, so he couldn’t leave. The Captain joins in the impromptu rehearsal. Admiral von Schreiber grants permission for the Captain to report to duty several days later.

(*\*Nazi Flags Drop Down\**) The festival begins [**“Do-Re-Mi” Reprise**] and the Captain himself sings a quietly defiant hymn to his beloved Austria [**“Edelweiss”**], but when Max announces that a guard of honor is waiting to escort the Captain away as soon as the concert is over, (*\*soldiers walk in the aisle\**) Maria leads the von Trapp family in more songs as they escape, one by one, into the night [**“So Long, Farewell” Reprise**]. (*\*applause\**) Max gives out the concert prizes slowly, buying time. The Trapp Family Singers are announced as winners of the festival, but they are nowhere to be found. (*\*search lights and shouting\**)

The family takes refuge in the garden of Nonnberg Abbey as Nazi soldiers swarm the hallowed ground. It is Rolf who discovers the von Trapps, (*\*Rolf points a gun, it is not fired\**) but seeing Liesl, he chooses not to reveal their hiding place. There seems to be no way out as the roads are closed. The family has no choice but to make their way to freedom by navigating the mountain. Mother Abbess reminds them that they will have help [**“Finale Ultimo: Climb Ev’ry Mountain”**].

# CONTACT US



If you have any questions about this Relaxed Performance or Access Guide, please reach out to...

**Breanne Ritchie**  
**Director of Education & Community Engagement**

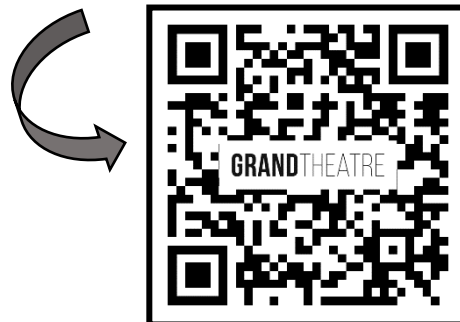


519-672-9030 ext. 224



**[britchie@grandtheatre.com](mailto:britchie@grandtheatre.com)**

Visit our website for future events and information!



We look forward to seeing you!

