

Sound of Music plays to capacity MSS crowd

by Mary Haskill

The Sound of Music was staged last week by the students of Midland Secondary School, Wednesday through Saturday. Each night the capacity audience rewarded their efforts with an enthusiastic and prolonged standing ovation. Director Chris Thomson can be proud of them and deserves a bit of applause himself.

Their success was even more commendable when you consider that almost everyone present had seen the well-loved Rogers and Hammerstein musical over and over. It took a top notch and finely paced performance to hold an audience as enthralled and involved as were the people last week.

The strong opening helped. After a mini-travlogue using slides of Austria, its mountains and meadows, and a close-up of the central character Maria, the spotlight shifted to Maria, live, on stage, her hands filled with meadow flowers.

Then the auditorium hushed as the nuns and postulants of Nonnberg Abbey filed down the aisle in solemn candlelit procession, their unaccompanied voices lifted in praise. The reverent mood held as the curtain opened on the Abbey and the nuns entered for Vespers.

Then the Mother Abbess (Sarah Walker) and Sisters Berthe, Margaretta and Sophia (Susan Ferguson, Gillian Capps and Leslie Todd) have a heart to heart talk about Maria. Alas — she was not where she should be. Again. Their concern is an introduction to the dedicated but exuberant young postulant around whom the real life story of the von Trapp family is centred.

To allow time to think about her vocation, Maria is sent to serve as governess to the motherless von Trapp children. The year is 1938,

just before the German occupation of Austria.

Sarah Walker and the three senior nuns achieved a maturity of manner that made one forget they were teenagers decked out in coifs and habits. The solo Climb Every Mountain is a challenge to any vocalist. Sarah Walker was equal to the challenge. When the last note fell there were sighs of appreciation throughout the crowd.

Vera Armstrong was completely charming in the demanding role of Maria. She was on stage most of the time and called upon to be naive and scatterbrained and, at the same time, suggest the strength that came out in the time of crisis when she led her family over the mountains to safety. Julie Andrews is perhaps the most famous of all who have played Maria but after last week, a lot of people like Vera Armstrong too.

Allan Langlois was well cast as Captain Georg von Trapp, the navy man disciplined not to show emotion. His stiff restrained style throughout made it even more poignant when he choked and couldn't go on singing Edelweiss in farewell to his beloved Austria.

And then there were the von Trapp children — all seven of them! Awkward, rambunctious and lovable, they were, in order, Liesl (Jenny Giles), Friederich (Kevin Busch), Louisa (Paula Meridis), Brigitta (Corry Nicholls), Marta (Kim Jackson, Baron and Brewster), Gretl (Jean Tilson) and little Kurt (Kyle Naylor). If the nuns were called upon for maturity beyond their years, these students had to put their teen dignity aside and be kids again. They did it with spirit and energy and must've had as much fun as the people out front. They conveyed a feeling of family that strengthened their performance. And their singing? Some of the best

numbers in the show.

The smaller roles were equally effective, like the quietly deferent way John Sallows and Katharina Kubetz played the servants Franz and Frau Schmidt. Or Bill Kelly who brought out so clearly the conflict of 17-year-old Rolf Gruber with his love for Liesl and his newfound importance with the Nazis.

Jennifer McCallum was Elsa Schraeder, the glamorous lady who had her cap set for Capt von Trapp. It is not easy for a beautiful girl like Jennifer to play an unsympathetic character so well that when she takes her leave nobody cares.

Tim Anderson played Max Detweiler, the devious promoter who played all the angles and, to his credit, managed to do it to the benefit of all concerned. Tim had the mannerisms and gestures of his character down pat.

Other small but effective roles involved the guests of a party at the von Trapp villa which served as a turning point in the drama. If these guests seemed awkward and uncomfortable, it was exactly what the script called for. In perfectly natural conversation their well delivered lines pointed up the ominous threat that hung over the gathering and the country. I have seen other productions where this scene did not work as well. Herr and Frau Zeller were played by Duncan Leroux and Onalea Jackson, Baron and Baroness Elderfield by Paul Bertram and Wendy Webster, and another couple, unnamed, by Tricia Bertram and Allan Ruttan.

Scott Williamson played Admiral Von Schreiber of the German Navy accompanied by his Nazi guard (Brad Cook). Schreiber was splendidly menacing in gold braid. The guard had little to do except to look officious and "Heil!" at appropriate times. Small and unsym-

pathetic roles but played to perfection.

Darren Todd's small bit as the priest at the wedding of Maria and von Trapp was dignified. The wedding was lovely. The entire von Trapp family escorted Maria down the aisle accompanied by the nuns from the Abbey. It was beautiful and exciting and I was surprised when we didn't stand up as the bride walked by.

Karen Steffen, Wendy Gostick and Sherry Oliner had a nice camped-up bit as contest winners at the music festival and provided needed relief as we waited to see if the von Trapps

would escape or not.

The smallest role of all fell to Susan Leggett as a new postulant. She made the most of her second or two on stage, showing by walk and posture the hesitance of a young girl taking such an important step in life.

Of course, all the foregoing would be nothing without music. The songs of the Sound of Music have become a part of our culture. Mrs. McCullough and her pit band made the evening complete.

The Sound of Music presentation was made possible by the efforts of a

great many people over months of time. It was an experience those involved will remember for years to come. So will those fortunate to be in the audience.



Can we talk

WALLPAPER CLEARANCE HOUSE

Our Name Says It All!
Wallpaper is our
Only Business

Vinyl Coated
from \$1.99
S.R.

Large Selection
of Borders

Children's
Papers
from \$1.99
S.R.

NOW OPEN!

why pay more?

Open: Mon. - Wed. & Sat. 9 am - 6 pm
Thurs. & Fri. 9-9

370 Dunlop St. W. Cedar Pte.

OTHER LOCATIONS: Burlington, Hamilton, Kitchener,
London, Mississauga, St. Catharines, Windsor, Whitby.

F
Credit Phone
Dunlop St. W.
Hwy 90 Hwy 400
exit ramp

737-4664

Ridgeway Pools & Landscaping

521 Dunlop St. W. Barrie
(only 2 min. W. of Hwy. 400)
722-3335

**Come to the Professionals
everything for your pool, spa etc.
Very Competitive Prices**

"BEST OF THE BOOKS" SALE

Mayfair Wallcoverings
more style for your money

SAVE
30%
OFF BOOK PRICES

LIMITED TIME OFFER - CHECK STORE SALE DATES

LAMERS PAINT & WALLPAPER

313 King St. 526-7411
Midland Town Centre

Mountainview Mall
526-5511

How's this for Openers!

\$10.00 off any rental
at Hertz' new location in Midland

To celebrate the opening of Hertz' new rent-a-car location in Midland, Hertz is offering \$10.00 off any car rental before August 31, 1986.

To qualify, simply cut out the coupon below and present it when you pick up the car. We'll take \$10.00 off your bill.

Where to find us:
Bourgeois Motors
472 Hugel Ave.,
Midland.
Telephone 526-3610

\$10.00
OFF

Present this coupon when you rent a car from Hertz in Midland. You will receive \$10.00 off your rental charges. Offer valid through August 31, 1986 only at:
Bourgeois Motors
472 Hugel Ave., Midland.
Telephone 526-3610

One coupon per rental

The #1 way to rent a car.