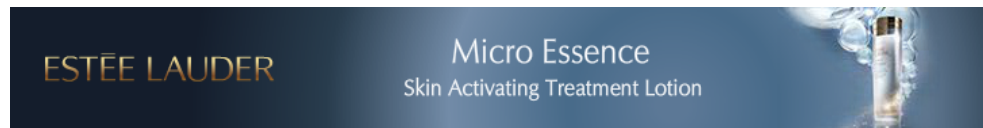


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4 of my favourite things about Sound of Music musical

July 24, 2014 10:27 AM by Lynette Chen



You don't have to be 16-going-on-17 to enjoy the iconic Sound of Music musical, but you'll find yourself clapping along with the six, beyond adorable, and amazingly talented, young Singaporean children



Meet the seven Von Trapp children and their father, Captain Von Trapp, played by Andre Schwartz. Image: Base Entertainment Asia

When it comes to the ABCs of musicals, I'm sure that Broadway classic *The Sound of Music* is definitely at the top of everyone's list. Based on the inspiring true story of the Von Trapp family, the musical tells the uplifting story of how Maria, a mischievous nun turned governess, changes the lives of the seven Von Trapp children and their widowed father with her beloved music.

Like most people, I've watched the well-loved 1965 film version starring Julie Andrews more than once (more like 20 times actually) but never the musical, so I was of course more than thrilled to see this latest production. Thankfully, despite the many differences from the film, the much loved musical doesn't disappoint, and it's not just the incredible vocals that impressed me. Here are four reasons why this Broadway classic is a must-see.

1. It has all of your favourite tunes



Look out for this fun routine during "The Lonely Goatherd" in the bedroom scene with Maria (Bethany Dickson) and the children! Image: Base Entertainment Asia

Unless you've been living under a rock (or, I don't know, in the mountains), you'd have undoubtedly heard the songs from the iconic movie and musical. "Do-Re-Mi" especially, is a song that I'm sure most of us grew up singing (if you say otherwise, I can only deduce that your parents had banned music from your life too). My delirious excitement upon hearing these songs, much to my companion's embarrassment, definitely did not lose out to the little ones seated around me, who were eagerly chirping along to the catchy tunes. This excitement, however, was slightly marred by Andre Schwartz's Captain Von Trapp, who seemed to have been saving all of his spectacular vocals only for the moving finale. Fans of the movie should also be warned that some of the songs, like "My Favourite Things" and "The Lonely Goatherd", appear out of order, and even the Captain's first romantic crooning of "Edelweiss" — where you first see the seeds of romance — was cut out.

2. It's practically eye candy



The Von Trapp family say goodbye

to you with this beautiful scene. Image: Base Entertainment Asia

Adapting the set to the tiny stage at the MasterCard Theatres, I feel, is a challenge of the same difficulty level as Brazil earning back any bit of dignity after their humiliation at the 2014 World Cup. Call me easily impressed but right from the very beginning of the musical, I was drooling at the gorgeous backdrops and amazing use of lighting. Imagine an outline of Jesus shining through the screen-curtain, almost like golden rays through a stained glass window, while nuns stream down the aisles of the pitch dark theatre with glowing candles in hand. Then, while the haunting chorus of voices slowly fade away, the entire stage lights up through the gauzy screen-curtain to reveal sloping "hills" (albeit child-sized ones), with wispy clouds of wafting mist, and an azure blue sky backdrop. You really have to see this to believe it, but trust me, you're definitely getting your money's worth — at least when it comes to the set and stage direction.

3. Cuteness overload!



Aren't they just precocious? These six children, from left, Carmen Pretorius, Jaime Chew, Felicity Bertram, Joshua Goh, Abbie Machin, Selma Hansen and Sean Harrison, make up one set of the three rotating casts for the Von Trapp children in Singapore! Image: Base Entertainment Asia

Like the movie, the seven children (kind of a stretch to apply to 24-year-old Carmen Pretorius who plays Liesl though) stole the audience's hearts from the moment they marched on stage with hilariously dramatic jerking and stomping. All seven were wonderfully talented — from precocious little Gretl, played by the bubbly Chloe Choo that night, to mischievous oldest boy Friedrich, played by Patrick Friedlander, every single one of them blew the crowd away with their lusty and clear vocals. The choreography was equally "aww"-worthy, involving lots of fun hand-clapping that made it seem almost like a game. Ultimately though, what I found most captivating about this lively bunch was their evident, and very much infectious, enjoyment in their performance.

4. It'll give you goosebumps (in the best way possible)



Image: Base Entertainment Asia

You'll never guess but during the whole musical, the characters that I looked forward to seeing the most was — other than the children, of course — the nuns. From the very opening performance, the chorus of nuns never fail to give me shivers with their hauntingly beautiful singing. The key factor was without a doubt the show-stealing Janelle Visagie as Mother Abbess (above), whose pristine and resounding soprano carried the performance into a whole new level. This, however, also meant that poor Maria, played by Bethany Dickson, was almost laughably overpowered by operatically-trained Janelle and her big voice when they shared the stage in "My Favourite Things". Thankfully, Bethany shines beautifully in scenes with the children, playing the part of doting mother and naive wannabe-nun perfectly, despite not being able to come close to Julie Andrews's unbelievable four-octave range.

Catch *The Sound of Music* at the Marina Bay Sands MasterCard Theatre from now to August 10, 2014. Tickets are priced from \$65 and are available at SISTIC. For more information, visit <https://www.sistic.com.sg/events/soundo814>.