



Pastor's Page

"Music to my ears"

The Famous Old Theatre purred with excitement as hundreds of young families settled down for their half term musical treat. Suddenly an announcement filled the air, "For copyright reasons, taking photographs or making any type of recording of the performance is strictly prohibited. Can I also ask that you switch off all mobile phones? – Thank you". The last part of the announcement reminded me that we were about to enter a world where such "essential" technology plays no part. I nervously acquiesced, as I considered my prospects of surviving a text-free afternoon! Beginning to relax I realised that I had not given the show much thought up until now, focussing more on the other family members for whom I'd bought tickets as Christmas presents. I don't think I would have chosen this show for myself, yet as soon as the house lights went down and the advancing nuns broke into their first angelic anthem, I was hooked. From "How do you solve a problem like Maria?" to "Climb every Mountain" I was completely captivated. (Yes folks, you guessed, I went to see "Oliver!")

Following the elation I felt after such a production I began to reflect on the message of the musical; Maria, the main character, is clearly a young woman who loves life. We find her at the start of the show, out in the Austrian mountains singing about her love of this spectacular scenery and the great sense of joy and freedom that she feels when out in these hills. One slightly worrying aspect of all this is that she seems to receive messages (not on her mobile phone!) but from the mountains themselves! *"But deep in the dark green shadows, there are voices that urge me to stay. So I pause and I wait and I listen, for one more sound, for one more lovely thing, that the hills might say!"* Well, let's just put it down to the intoxicating Austrian air! She then returns to the Convent where, though loved, she obviously doesn't fit in. After singing a catchy duet with Mother Superior, Maria is informed by the Chief Nun that arrangements have been made for her departure and subsequent job as the governess for a widower's seven children. To cut a long-ish story short, she goes, falls in love with the children's father, (Captain Von Trapp) then returns to the convent confused. Mother Superior tries to counsel her regarding God's will for her life (interesting!) Then as a climax to this conversation Mother Superior sings "Climb every mountain". It's a turning point as the sentiment of the song seems to drive Maria on to return to the Von Trapp home, marry the captain and help him and his family escape the Nazi threat. (That's some song!) And of course they escape via the Convent and out into the mountains where the same song leads them home. And by now there isn't a dry eye in the house (There's loads of them!) I applauded until my hands were raw, it was truly brilliant.

However, if the message of all this is "Climb every mountain, ford every stream follow every rainbow, 'till you find your dream" - we're in big trouble!! Surely "chasing rainbows" is the most futile of activities! It's a pointless pursuit.

So whilst I would highly recommend the Sound of Music at the London Palladium I would not recommend that you "Follow every rainbow, until you find your dream" but rather that you follow Jesus Christ, the Son of God who said "I am the way and the truth and the life." Follow him..., even if it involves climbing mountains!

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