

## SOUND OF MUSIC

### Maria Augusta Kutschera von Trapp (1905 to 1987)

#### Biography

#### Marriage

Maria was asked to teach one of the seven children (Maria Franziska) of widowed naval commander Georg von Trapp in 1926, while she was still a schoolteacher at the abbey.<sup>[7][10]</sup> His wife, Agathe Whitehead, had died in 1922 from scarlet fever.<sup>[11]</sup> Eventually, Maria began to look after the other children (Rupert, Agathe, Werner, Hedwig, Johanna and Martina), as well.

Captain von Trapp saw how much she cared about his children and asked her to marry him, although he was 25 years her senior. She was frightened and fled back to Nonnberg Abbey to seek guidance from the mother abbess, who advised her that it was God's will that she should marry him. She then returned to the family and accepted the proposal. She wrote in her autobiography

that she was very angry on her wedding day, both at God and at her husband, because what she really wanted was to be a nun. "I really and truly was not in love. I liked him but didn't love him. However, I loved the children, so in a way I really married the children. I learned to love him more than I have ever loved before or after."<sup>[12]</sup> They were married on 26 November 1927 and had three children together: Rosmarie (born 1929), Eleonore ("Lorli") (born 1931) and Johannes (born 1939).

#### Medical problems

The Von Trapps loved to hike and on one trip, they spent a night at a farmer's house. It was the next morning before he informed them that two of his daughters had scarlet fever. Unfortunately, Georg's children Maria, Johanna, and Martina all caught it. They all recovered, but Maria's case, due to lack of hydration, resulted in more serious issues.<sup>[12]</sup> She began experiencing aches in her lower back and her doctor informed her that she had kidney stones and required an operation. Her stepmother Maria accompanied her to Vienna for the operation, which was a success. Nineteen stones were removed, but Maria's kidneys were a lifelong problem for her.<sup>[12]</sup>

#### Financial problems

The family faced financial ruin in 1935. Georg had transferred his savings from a bank in London to an Austrian bank run by a friend named Frau Lammer. Austria was experiencing economic difficulties during a worldwide depression because of the Crash of 1929 and Lammer's bank failed.<sup>[13]</sup> To survive, the Trapps discharged most of their servants, moved into the top floor of their home and rented out the other rooms. The archbishop sent Father Franz Wasner to stay with them as their chaplain and this began their singing career.<sup>[12]</sup>