

SOUND OF MUSIC

Maria Augusta Kutschera von Trapp (1905 to 1987)

Biography

Maria

Maria Augusta Kutschera was born on a train enroute to Vienna just before midnight on January 26, 1905. Her anxious entrance into the world set in motion a life full of remarkable and challenging events that would be immortalized by the silver screen.

Maria's mother died when she was two years old. Her father left her with an elderly cousin so that he could be free to travel. She experienced a lonely and very strict upbringing without any siblings or other children in the household. The movie strongly portrays Maria as the epitome of religious devotion in and out of convent life. Most people are unaware that she was raised as a socialist and atheist and became actively cynical towards all religions. Those beliefs quickly and dramatically changed by the chance meeting of a visiting Jesuit priest to Maria's college.

Maria had entered a crowded church assuming she was about to enjoy a concert by Bach. Instead, a well known priest, Father Kronseder has just began preaching. Caught in the middle of a standing-room-only crowd, Maria soon found herself caught up in the words of this preacher.

In Maria's words, "Now I had heard from my uncle that all of these bible stories were inventions and old legends, and that there wasn't a word of truth in them. But the way

this man talked just swept me off my feet. I was completely overwhelmed by it..." When he finished his sermon and came down the pulpit stairs Maria grabbed his elbow and loudly asked, "Do you believe all this?"

A meeting between the priest and Maria changed her beliefs and the course of her life.

Though Maria was intensely devoted to her convent, she was taken away from the outdoor activities she once thrived on. Her doctor was concerned her health was failing due to a lack of fresh air and exercise. This was when the decision was made to send Maria to the home of retired naval captain Georg von Trapp. Her position was not governess to all the children, as the movie portrayed, but specifically to the captain's daughter who was bedridden with rheumatic fever. The rest is truly history. Maria never returned to the convent and married the Captain on November 26, 1927. This is the story that has been made immortalized by "The Sound of Music."