

Visions and Voices: The Sound of Music: Home

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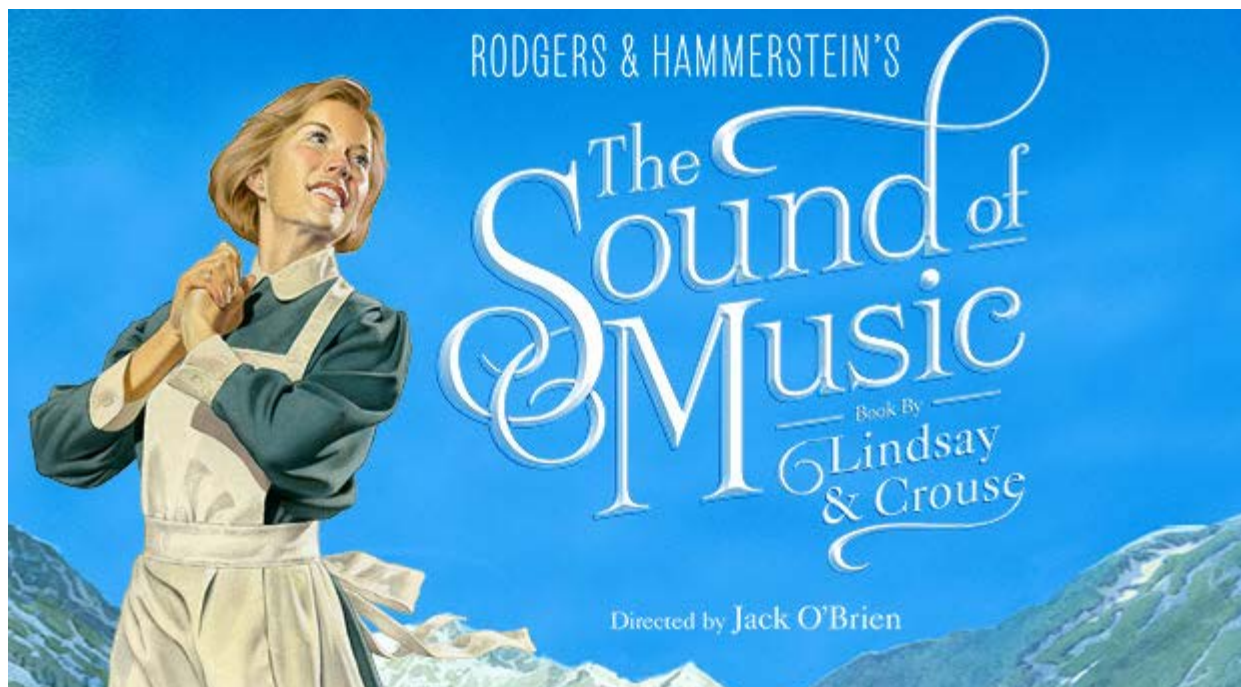
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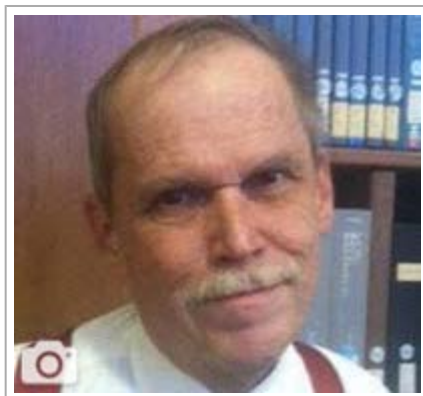
Introduction

This LibGuide was created to accompany the Visions & Voices event: ***The Sound of Music***. On Wednesday October 7th USC students will attend the Ahmanson Theatre presentation of ***The Sound of Music***. **Read more about the event at the [Visions & Voices website](#).**

About this production: "A brand new production of ***The Sound of Music***, directed by three-time Tony Award winner Jack O'Brien, will tour North America beginning September 2015. This lavish new production will launch at the [Ahmanson Theatre](#) in Los Angeles, under the auspices of the [Center Theatre Group](#), and will then tour North America for multiple seasons, playing multi-week and week-long engagements."



Subject Guide



Anthony Anderson

Subjects:

Africa, Europe, History, Holocaust & Genocide Studies, Languages & Literatures, Performing Arts, United States & Canada

About This New Production

Plot Synopsis and Information About the Play

"The Sound of Music" is officially on tour, and Tony-winning director Jack O'Brien has put a new spin on the musical theatre classic. Learn more about how the hills are coming alive around the States before the new production officially opens Sept. 20 in Los Angeles, CA.

The Sound of Music is one of the most recognizable shows in the American musical theatre canon. Whether you saw the original 1959 Broadway production starring Mary Martin, the 1965 film with Julie Andrews or the 2013 NBC live event headlined by Carrie Underwood, you know exactly what the hills are alive with. Or do you? Jack O'Brien, director of the new national tour of **The Sound of Music**, thinks that audiences may not know the show as well as they think they do.

Then I thought, 'Wait a minute. Mary Martin, when she created this role, was 46 years old, and [Maria] is what, 20? What if I lowered all of the ages about 20 years for everybody? What a different story this would be to listen to.' Then I was hooked.'

The newly staged version of the show, which began previews Sept. 14 in Boise, ID, includes all of the songs audiences know and love as well as some music that has, up until now, only been used in the film. 'Between Jack [O'Brien], Danny [Mefford, the choreographer] and myself, I've created all new transitions,' explained music supervisor Andy Einhorn, 'and we're making the score flow as seamlessly as possible, so that you're completely unaware that there's a scene change happening. We're using the music to dramatically move us from place to place. It's flowing like a movie.'

The music isn't the only thing audiences can expect to see a change in, however. Actors Kerstin Anderson (Maria Rainer), Ashley Brown (The Mother Abbess) and Ben Davis (Capt. Georg Von Trapp) have put new spins on their characters.

O'Brien was looking for a newcomer to play Maria. 'I thought, "Wouldn't it be interesting if you never saw this girl before?" If she

walked out and sang 'The Sound of Music' and you thought, 'Who's that? I like her!,' maybe you'd follow her all evening as opposed to saying, 'What is she going to do in this song?' That's the first impulse you should have: I've never been here before," he said.

For O'Brien, the breath of fresh air Anderson brought into the audition room with her was all that he needed to make the decision that she would be his Maria.

'I had gone through so many girls, and they were talented and lovely and very well trained and appropriate, but they all felt like they were falling somewhere between Julie Andrews and Mary Martin,' he said. 'This girl walks into the room, and she's tall and she's sort of a jock ð I mean, she came galloping into the room like a girl field-hockey player ð and I thought, 'You know who that is? That's the world's best babysitter.' And that's what Maria is!'

Simoes Anderson, who grew up watching Julie Andrews on a two-tape VHS set, plans to bring Maria back to her 'mountain girl' roots. As a native of Vermont (where the real von Trapp family settled), Anderson 'knows the mountains.'

'I'm a total mountain girl,' said Anderson, "and that's sort of what Jack has decided to bring out of this Maria. I think, because I was raised in Vermont, that's what I get to bring to it as well.'

When speaking of Anderson's performance, Einhorn said, 'She's bringing her personality as a spitfire because the real Maria is a spitfire. The first lyric that the nuns say about her is 'How do solve a problem like Maria?' So when you hear it that way, it actually makes you realize that this was somebody who was going outside the norm and breaking all the rules.'

As for Captain Von Trapp, audiences should expect to see a more prominent 'sensuality and sexuality' in his relationship with Maria. 'There's a sensuality and a sexuality there that [Jack O'Brien] has not been afraid to talk about and to bring out,' said Ben Davis, the tour's Georg von Trapp. "I think that's part of life, and that's part of what it was. So that part ñ without over-stating it ñ it's there and, I mean, you feel that sensuality and that sexuality between them without it beingÉ you knowÉ'

Davis also hopes to humanize the Captain as opposed to solely playing him as a strict authoritarian. 'The Captain can be played very stern, but there's got to be a reason behind it. There's got to still be a human behind it,' he said. The Mother Abbess, often played as an old woman, has been aged down by 20 years for the new production. Ashley Brown has transformed The Mother Abbess from a mother figure for Maria to a sister who's still facing some of her own struggles.

'Instead of being the one who's all resolute and 'This is how it's done, and this is how you do life,' it's like I'm still fighting too ð that Maria and I have more in common and that I've been where she's been,' said Brown. 'The Mother Abbess is human. Even nuns wake up not knowing if they're in the right place or not.'

Brown believes that the role does not have to be performed by an older actress as long as it is done by someone who can 'earn' the iconic ballad 'Climb Every Mountain.' 'There's a lot of scene work,' she said. 'You have to earn that song. It's not just closing Act Two. You have to earn itÉ So that's been a big journey for me as we've been in rehearsals finding that way to earn that song.'

All three actors agreed that O'Brien is an 'actor's dream' to work with. 'He's so detailed,' Anderson explained. 'He sees everything in his mind and he's so generous to the actor in helping them see what he sees ð especially with a piece that's so well known. The first couple days it was like breaking yourself of the norms of **The Sound of Music**, but he does that in just such a gracious way.' 'I can't wait to see what the country's going to think of something they think they know,' O'Brien said. 'Another look at it is gonna make them think, 'Wait a minuteÉI thought I knew this. Maybe I don't.'"

-- Joe Gambino, **Playbill**



(Kerstin Anderson and Ben Davis)

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Canada

Rodgers and Hammerstein

Rodgers and Hammerstein

"After long and highly distinguished careers with other collaborators, Richard Rodgers (composer) and Oscar Hammerstein II (librettist/lyricist) joined forces to create the most consistently fruitful and successful partnership in the American musical theatre.

Prior to his work with Hammerstein, Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) collaborated with lyricist Lorenz Hart on a series of musical comedies that epitomized the wit and sophistication of Broadway in its heyday. Prolific on Broadway, in London and in Hollywood from the '20s into the early '40s, Rodgers & Hart wrote more than 40 shows and film scores. Among their greatest were ON YOUR TOES, BABES IN ARMS, THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE, I MARRIED AN ANGEL and PAL JOEY.

Throughout the same era Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960) brought new life to a moribund artform: the operetta. His collaborations with such preeminent composers as Rudolf Friml, Sigmund Romberg and Vincent Youmans resulted in such operetta classics as THE DESERT SONG, ROSE-MARIE, and THE NEW MOON. With Jerome Kern he wrote SHOW BOAT, the 1927 operetta that changed the course of modern musical theatre. His last musical before embarking on an exclusive partnership with Richard Rodgers was CARMEN JONES, the highly-acclaimed 1943 all-black revision of Georges Bizet's tragic opera CARMEN.

OKLAHOMA!, the first Rodgers & Hammerstein musical, was also the first of a new genre, the musical play, representing a unique fusion of Rodgers' musical comedy and Hammerstein's operetta. A milestone in the development of the American musical, it also marked the beginning of the most successful partnership in Broadway musical history, and was followed by CAROUSEL, ALLEGRO, SOUTH PACIFIC, THE KING AND I, ME AND JULIET, PIPE DREAM, FLOWER DRUM SONG and THE SOUND OF MUSIC. Rodgers & Hammerstein wrote one musical specifically for the big screen, STATE FAIR, and one for television, CINDERELLA. Collectively, the Rodgers & Hammerstein musicals earned 35 Tony Awards, 15 Academy Awards, two Pulitzer Prizes, two Grammy Awards and 2 Emmy Awards. In 1998 Rodgers & Hammerstein were cited by Time Magazine and CBS News as among the 20 most influential artists of the 20th century and in 1999 they were jointly commemorated on a U.S. postage stamp.

Despite Hammerstein's death in 1960, Rodgers continued to write for the Broadway stage. His first solo entry, NO STRINGS, earned him two Tony Awards for music and lyrics, and was followed by DO I HEAR A WALTZ?, TWO BY TWO, REX and I REMEMBER MAMA. Richard Rodgers died on December 30, 1979, less than eight months after his last musical opened on Broadway. In March of 1990, Broadway's 46th Street Theatre was renamed The Richard Rodgers Theatre in his honor.

At the turn of the 21st century, the Rodgers and Hammerstein legacy continues to flourish, as marked by the enthusiasm that greeted their Centennials, in 1995 and 2002 respectively.

In 1995, Hammerstein's centennial was celebrated worldwide with commemorative recordings, books, concerts and an award-winning PBS special, "Some Enchanted Evening." The ultimate tribute came the following season, when he had three musicals playing on Broadway simultaneously: SHOW BOAT (1995 Tony Award winner, Best Musical Revival); THE KING AND I (1996 Tony Award winner, Best Musical Revival); and STATE FAIR(1996 Tony Award nominee for Best Score.)

In 2002, the Richard Rodgers Centennial was celebrated around the world, with tributes from Tokyo to London, from the Hollywood Bowl to the White House, featuring six new television specials, museum retrospectives, a dozen new ballets, half a dozen books, new recordings and countless concert and stage productions (including three simultaneous revivals on Broadway, matching Hammerstein's feat of six years earlier), giving testament to the enduring popularity of Richard Rodgers and the sound of

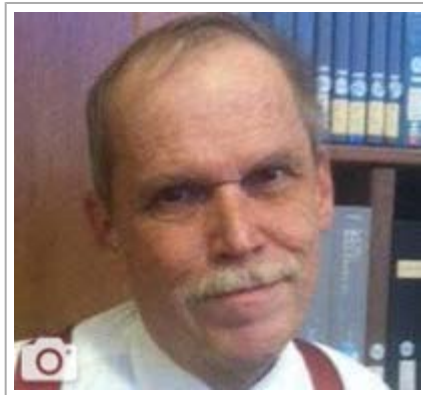
his music."

--http://www.mh.com/rodgersandhammerstein/full_bio



(Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein)

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The Plot

The Plot

ACT I

In Salzburg, Austria, just before World War II, nuns from Nonnberg Abbey sing the Dixit Dominus. One of the postulants, Maria Rainer, is on the nearby mountainside, regretting leaving the beautiful hills ("The Sound of Music") where she was brought up. She returns late. The Mother Abbess and the other nuns consider what to do about her ("Maria"). Maria explains her lateness, saying she was raised on that mountain, and apologizes for singing in the garden without permission. The Mother Abbess joins her in song ("My Favorite Things"). The Mother Abbess tells her that she should spend some time outside the abbey to decide whether she is ready for the monastic life. She will act as the governess to the seven children of a widower, Austro-Hungarian Navy submarine Captain Georg von Trapp.

Maria arrives at the villa of Captain von Trapp. He explains her duties and summons the children with a boatswain's call. They march in, clad in uniforms. He teaches her their individual signals on the call, but she openly disapproves of this militaristic approach. Alone with them, she breaks through their wariness and teaches them the basics of music ("Do-Re-Mi").

Rolf, a young messenger, delivers a telegram and then meets with the oldest child, Liesl, outside the villa. He claims he knows what is right for her because he is a year older than she ("Sixteen Going on Seventeen"). They kiss, and he runs off, leaving her screaming with joy. Meanwhile, the housekeeper, Frau Schmidt, gives Maria material to make new clothes, as she had given all her possessions to the poor. She sees Liesl slipping in through the window, wet from a sudden thunderstorm, but agrees to keep her secret. The other children are frightened by the storm. Maria sings "The Lonely Goatherd" to distract them.

Captain von Trapp arrives a month later with Elsa Schröder and Max Detweiler. Elsa tells Max that something is preventing the Captain from marrying her. He opines that only poor people have the time for great romances ("How Can Love Survive"). Rolf enters, looking for Liesl, and greets them with "Heil". The Captain orders him away, saying that he is Austrian, not German. Maria and the children leapfrog in, wearing playclothes that she made from old drapes. Infuriated, the Captain sends them off to change. She tells him that they need him to love them, and he angrily orders her back to the abbey. As she apologizes, they hear the children singing "The Sound of Music", which she had taught them, to welcome Elsa Schröder. He joins in and embraces them. Alone with Maria, he asks her to stay, thanking her for bringing music back into his house. Elsa is suspicious of her until she explains that she will be returning to the abbey in September.

The Captain gives a party to introduce Elsa, and guests argue over the Anschluss. Kurt asks Maria to teach him to dance the Ländler. When he is unable to negotiate a complicated figure, the Captain steps in to demonstrate. He and Maria dance until they come face-to-face; and she breaks away, embarrassed and confused. Discussing the expected marriage between Elsa and the Captain, Brigitta tells Maria that she thinks Maria and the Captain are really in love with each other. Elsa asks the Captain to allow the children say goodnight to the guests with a song, "So Long, Farewell". Max is amazed at their talent and wants them for the Kaltzberg Festival, which he is organizing. The guests leave for the dining room, and Maria slips out the front door with her luggage.

At the abbey, Maria says that she is ready to take her monastic vows; but the Mother Abbess realizes that she is running away from her feelings. She tells her to face the Captain and discover if they love each other, and tells her to search for and find the life she was meant to live ("Climb Ev'ry Mountain").

ACT II

Max teaches the children how to sing on stage. When the Captain tries to lead them, they complain that he is not doing it as Maria did. He tells them that he has asked Elsa to marry him. They try to cheer themselves up by singing "My Favorite Things" but are unsuccessful until they hear Maria singing on her way to rejoin them. Learning of the wedding plans, she decides to stay only until the Captain can arrange for another governess. Max and Elsa argue with him about the imminent Anschluss, trying to convince him that it is inevitable ("No Way to Stop It"). When he refuses to compromise, Elsa breaks off the engagement. Alone, the Captain and

Maria finally admit their love, desiring only to be "An Ordinary Couple". As they marry, the nuns reprise "Maria" against the wedding processional.

During the honeymoon, Max prepares the children to perform at the Kaltzberg Festival. Herr Zeller, the Gauleiter, demands to know why they are not flying the flag of the Third Reich now that the Anschluss has occurred. The Captain and Maria return early from their honeymoon before the Festival. In view of developments, he refuses to allow the children to sing. Max argues that they would sing for Austria, but the Captain points out that it no longer exists. Maria and Liesl discuss romantic love; Maria predicts that in a few years Liesl will be married ("Sixteen Going on Seventeen (Reprise)"). Rolf enters with a telegram that offers the Captain a commission in the German Navy, and Liesl is upset to discover that Rolf is now a committed Nazi. The Captain consults Maria and decides that they must secretly flee Austria. German Admiral von Schreiber arrives to find out why Captain Von Trapp has not answered the telegram. He explains that the German Navy holds him in high regard, offers him the commission, and tells him to report immediately to Bremerhaven to assume command. Maria says that he cannot leave immediately, as they are all singing in the Festival concert; and the Admiral agrees to wait.

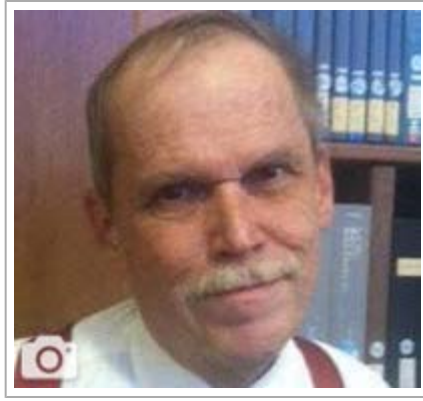
At the concert, after the von Trapps sing an elaborate reprise of "Do-Re-Mi", Max brings out the Captain's guitar. Captain von Trapp sings "Edelweiss", as a goodbye to his homeland, while using Austria's national flower as a symbol to declare his loyalty to the country. Max asks for an encore and announces that this is the von Trapp family's last chance to sing together, as the honor guard waits to escort the Captain to his new command. While the judges decide on the prizes, the von Trapps sing "So Long, Farewell", leaving the stage in small groups. Max then announces the runners-up, stalling as much as possible. When he announces that the first prize goes to the von Trapps and they do not appear, the Nazis start a search. The family hides at the Abbey, and Sister Margaretta tells them that the borders have been closed. The Nazis do not find them until Rolf comes upon them. He calls his lieutenant; but, upon seeing Liesl hiding, he reports that he has found no one. To help them flee, the nuns have secretly sabotaged the cars of the Nazis. The von Trapps flee over the Alps as the nuns reprise "Climb Ev'ry Mountain".

--Wikipedia



(Mary Martin, Theodore Bikel, cast--Broadway 1959)

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Sound of Music on Compact Disk and Film

Sound of Music on Disk and Film

COMPACT DISC

- **The Sound of Music: Music from the NBC Television Event**
- **The Sound of Music: The New Broadway Cast Recording**
- **The Sound of Music: Original Broadway Cast Recording**

FILM (DVD)

- **The Sound of Music** (1965 film)



(Mary Martin and cast in 1959 Broadway production)

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Books of Interest

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The Making of The Sound of Music

"Max Wilk tells the full story of the making of the classic show *The Sound of Music*, from the first rough ideas through the tryouts, fine tuning and it's triumph."

The Sound of Music Family Scrapbook: The Inside Story of the Beloved Movie Musical, Revealed by the Actors Who Starred As the Von Trapp Children

"From the moment Julie Andrews appears on the hills outside Salzburg to the final daring escape from the Nazis, *The Sound of Music* is embedded in the DNA of a generation. But what was it like to be part of all this? For seven children and young adults, the summer of 1964 was a magical one, spent in Salzburg, Austria, with their parents or guardians, the film's stars and director, and last - but not least - each other. *The Sound of Music Family Scrapbook* tells their story, both during the filming and once the movie was released..."

The Sound of Music FAQ: All That's Left to Know about Maria, the Von Trapps, and Their Favorite Things

"...a comprehensive, encyclopedia-like reference to the world's most popular movie musical. Rather than focusing on the often-told stories of this classic movie, this book looks at the 1965 Oscar-winner in relation to its source, including the true von Trapp family story and the Broadway musical from which it was derived. *The Sound of Music FAQ* explores such facts and trivia as the movie's phenomenal original run in cinemas, during which it dominated the box office for a staggering amount of time and became the highest grossing movie of the 1960s and of all time; its long and varied life on home video and primetime television; the bestselling soundtrack and many other related recordings; information behind the stunning Austrian locations; the critical feedback; the many stage revivals; and the continuing references, homages, reunions, and tributes related to it over the many decades since its release."

The Sound of Music Story: How a Beguiling Young Novice, a Handsome Austrian Captain, and Ten Singing Von Trapp Children Inspired the Most Beloved Film of All Time

On March 2, 1965, *The Sound of Music* was released in the United States and the love affair between moviegoers and the classic Rodgers and Hammerstein musical was on. Rarely has a film captured the love and imagination of the moviegoing public in the way that "The Sound of Music" did as it blended history, music, Austrian location filming, heartfelt emotion and the yodeling of Julie Andrews into a monster hit. Now, Tom Santopietro has written the ultimate *Sound of Music* fan book with all the inside dope from behind the scenes stories of the filming in Austria and Hollywood to new interviews with Johannes von Trapp and others. Santopietro looks back at the real life story of Maria von Trapp, goes on to chronicle the sensational success of the Broadway musical, and recounts the story of the near cancellation of the film when the *Cleopatra* bankrupted 20th Century Fox. We all know that Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer played Maria and Captain Von Trapp, but who else had been considered? Tom Santopietro knows and will tell all while providing a historian's critical analysis of the careers of director Robert Wise and screenwriter Ernest Lehman, a look at the critical controversy which greeted the movie, the film's relationship to the turbulent 1960's and the super stardom which engulfed Julie Andrews."

The Sound of Music: The Complete Book and Lyrics of the Broadway Musical

"The final collaboration between Rodgers & Hammerstein was destined to become the world's most beloved musical. When a postulant proves too high-spirited for the religious life, she is dispatched to serve as governess for the seven children of a widowed naval captain. Her growing rapport with the youngsters, coupled with her generosity of spirit, gradually captures the heart of the stern captain, and they marry. Upon returning from their honeymoon they discover that Austria has been invaded by the Nazis, who demand the captain's immediate service in their navy. The family's narrow escape over the mountains to Switzerland on the eve of World War II provides one of the most thrilling and inspirational finales ever presented in the theatre. The motion picture version remains the most popular movie musical of all time."



(Mary Martin, star of *The Sound of Music* - Broadway, 1959)

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Last Updated: Dec 7, 2015 12:59 AM

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